

HOSPITALITY

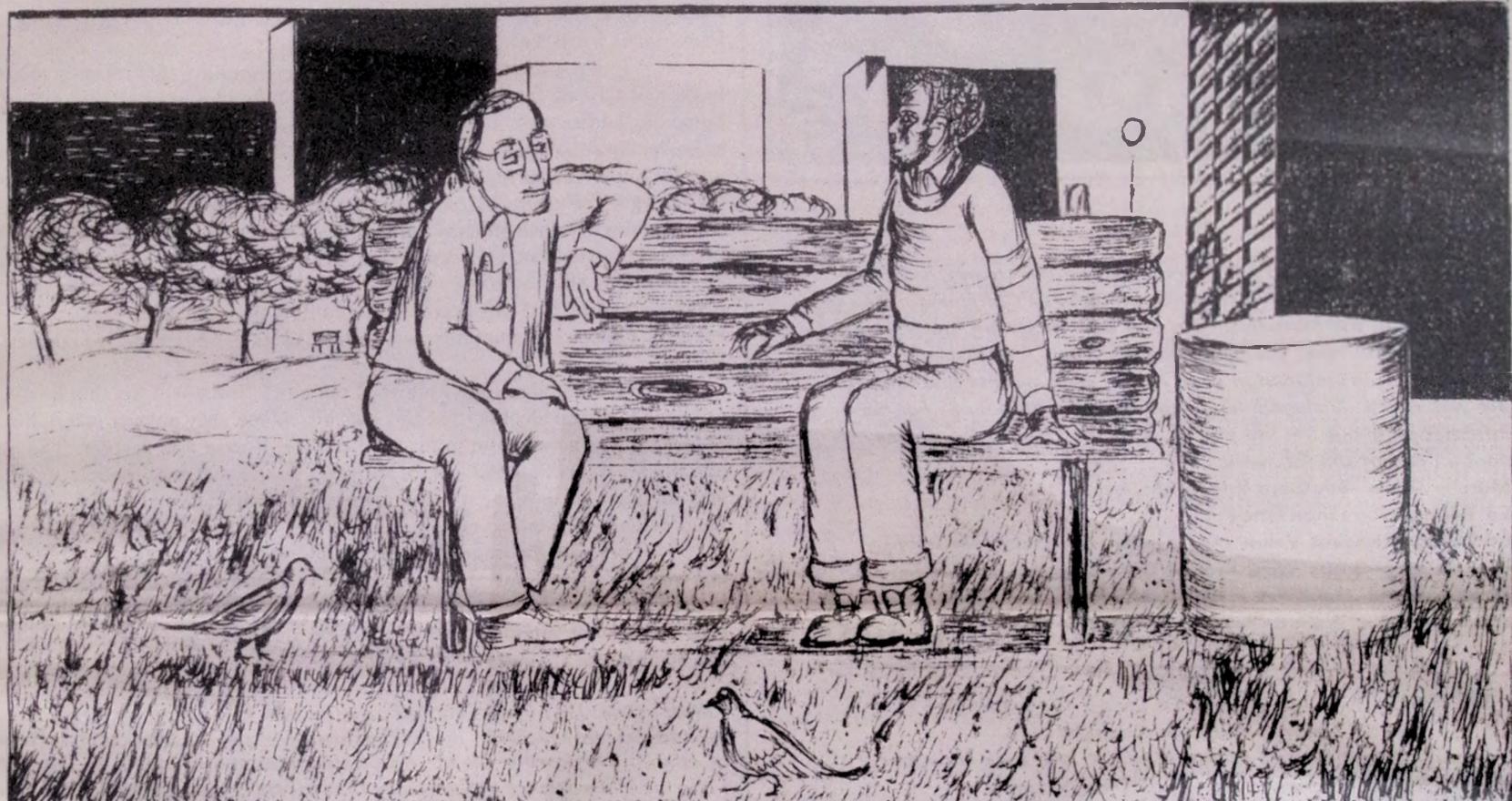
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vol. 14, no. 7

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

July 1995



My Neighbor

by Martin Moran, M.D.

Fifteen years ago, my wife Harriet was reading our church bulletin and noticed a request from Clifton Presbyterian Church for volunteers to work in the church kitchen. She asked if I wanted to help. I said yes, and we volunteered for Monday nights. The small church, located in DeKalb County, had established a night shelter for thirty-five homeless men to provide dinner and breakfast, baths, washing of clothes and protection from the elements. It was there we met Reverend Ed Loring and his wife, Reverend Murphy Davis, a couple who have remained our friends through all these years.

For the next several years, I arrived home from work around 6 p.m. on Monday night, and Harriet and I drove immediately to the church. The menu we were to serve was preprinted for us, but Harriet would always bring some meat or spices from our home to "jazz" up the soup. I frequently brought cigars, a vice which my wife abhorred but one which the homeless men enjoyed.

We cooked and, regardless of the outside temperature, the small kitchen was always hot. Typically, before I asked a guest to help us serve the food and then help Harriet and me clean the kitchen after the meal, someone would volunteer. The guest and I would work together, talk, and after dinner, sit around a table and continue the conversation with a cigar.

One night I met Stuart Reid, a black male who shuffled when he walked. We talked and I probably offered him a cigar. Some weeks later, I asked Stuart to help in the kitchen but he declined. The next week, I asked again and, again, he declined. I mildly chided him

reminding him that I had worked all day and I could not understand why he refused to help. He stated simply that "my feet hurt." I examined him and found that he had developed "claw toes," something I had never seen in pediatrics. Every step he took was painful which explained his shuffling gait. I asked Dr. Basil Griffin, an orthopedic friend, to examine Stuart. Basil ruled out surgery but arranged for Stuart to receive proper fitting shoes with a metatarsal bar. Stuart later told me that, for the first time in fifteen years, he was walking pain-free.

Stuart and I bonded, as much as a Northside Atlanta pediatrician could bond with an inner-city homeless man. I never once had to ask for his help in the kitchen, he simply volunteered. One evening Stuart asked me where I had grown up. I replied that I was born in the Bronx but moved to Arizona while in high school. The following is part of the conversation as best I remember:

Stuart: Where in the Bronx, Doc?

Me: Three places: 139th Street, 159th Street area and the Fordham Road section.

Stuart: I grew up near 159th Street.

Me: What block?

Stuart: Fulton Avenue.

Me: I was right around the corner on Franklin Avenue.

(continued on page 2)

HOSPITALITY

MICHAEL SCHWARZ



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, please contact any of the following:

Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry

Ed Loring--Correspondence

Ed Loring--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator; Guest Ministry

Dick Rustay--Group Work Project Co-ordinator

Murphy Davis--Hardwick Prison Trip

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Newspaper

Editorial Staff--Murphy Davis, Ed Loring, Gladys Rustay, Michael Galovic, and Dick Groepper

Layout--Gladys Rustay, Michael Galovic, and Dick Groepper

Copy Editing--Michael Galovic and Dick Groepper

Circulation--Phillip Williams and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests

Subscriptions or change of address--Gladys Rustay

(A \$7 donation to the Open Door would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing **Hospitality**.)

Stuart and I were the same age. I was a doctor. He was a homeless black man with an alcohol problem and probably used some drugs. Stuart had grown up on a street that was predominately inhabited by African Americans. I had grown up around the corner on a street primarily inhabited by whites. We were childhood neighbors, but probably never met. We took separate paths in life.

I continued to see Stuart intermittently for the next few years. He would find work in a restaurant kitchen, get an apartment and with money in his pocket, begin drinking again. Then he would lose his job, become broke, and wander back to the shelter. He died several years ago at Grady Hospital. Near the end, he asked Reverend Loring if I would visit him. Unfortunately, Harriet and I were on vacation, and I did not know about his illness or his request until I returned home. By that time, Stuart had died.

I continue to work with the homeless in a small way. I serve on the Board of the Open Door Community. I also serve as a board member of the Atlanta Day Shelter for Women and Children, a day shelter that cares for approximately 130 women and 30 children each day, but also works to obtain jobs and housing for the homeless. Sometimes I find it depressing. Other times I feel that I just made an impact.

I find it most disconcerting that our community was recently able to build a new home for the Atlanta Falcons, will build a future \$207 million home for the Braves and has the desire to build a new \$200 million facility to house the Atlanta Hawks. Meanwhile, 20,000 men, women and children wander our streets at night. Yet, when I drive down Interstate 75 and pass the Georgia Tech campus, I now see a beautiful complex of buildings under construction to house athletes during the 1996 games, one which will then be used by Georgia State University students. I think it is great that our community is able to do such things. I think it is marvelous that 40,000 people including 600 physicians will volunteer their talents to make the Olympic Games run smoothly and allow visitors to our city to see our best side.

But what about the Stuarts of our city? Some will say that he did not have to abuse alcohol, that this was his choice. My answer is his choice of alcohol was a symptom of his problem, his disease was despair. The lack of a quality education, the lack of an intact family with role models, and the lack of any hope to make it in our society led to his downfall and will lead to the downfall of countless others.

These are the issues we need to address. I believe that by volunteering with the appropriate group, physicians can and are making a difference to the benefit of us all. I encourage health care professionals to continue to lend this kind of support to our community and to the people who could be our neighbors.

Editor's note: Dr. Moran is a Pediatrician with Sandy Springs Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, and is President-Elect of the Medical Association of Atlanta. This spring, the Medical Association awarded him its Avey Cup in honor of his service to the community. Marty is also a friend of the Open Door Community, a valued member of our Advisory Board, and pediatrician to all the children who have spent time growing up with us.

"My Neighbor" is reprinted with permission from **Atlanta Medicine**, the official magazine of the Medical Association of Atlanta.

The Open Door Community Needs Resident Volunteers!

Spend 6 to 12 months as a Resident Volunteer

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

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MICHAEL GALOVIC



Jeremy Bergen, a student from Winnipeg, Canada, is our most recent Resident Volunteer.

Take a Bath, Have a Laugh

One morning in May when I was feeling blue, I went for a walk to look for another color. As I was standing in front of the group home up the street, waiting for a break in traffic, one of our friends came bounding up to me with a big smile on his face. "Hello!" he said. I replied, "Good morning," and stuck out my hand to greet him with a handshake.

Still smiling, almost giggling, he asked, "Did you take a bath this morning?" I thought this schizophrenic friend of ours was leaning towards the paranoid, afraid to shake my dirty, germ-ridden hand, so I quickly and enthusiastically answered, "Oh, yes! I did take a bath this morning." To which he responded very seriously, "Then I want you to go right now and put it back, and promise me you'll never take another bath again." I laughed, and he laughed, and pleased with himself, he went off chuckling, telling his housemates over and over again, "She took a bath this morning, and I told her to put it back."

Ponce de Leon Avenue is something like the Red Sea—you can't get across it short of a miracle, even if Pharaoh's army is at your heels and safety is on the other side. At that moment, as our friend was laughing with his friends, Moses must have smote the water because the traffic parted, and a clear path was made for me to cross on dry land.

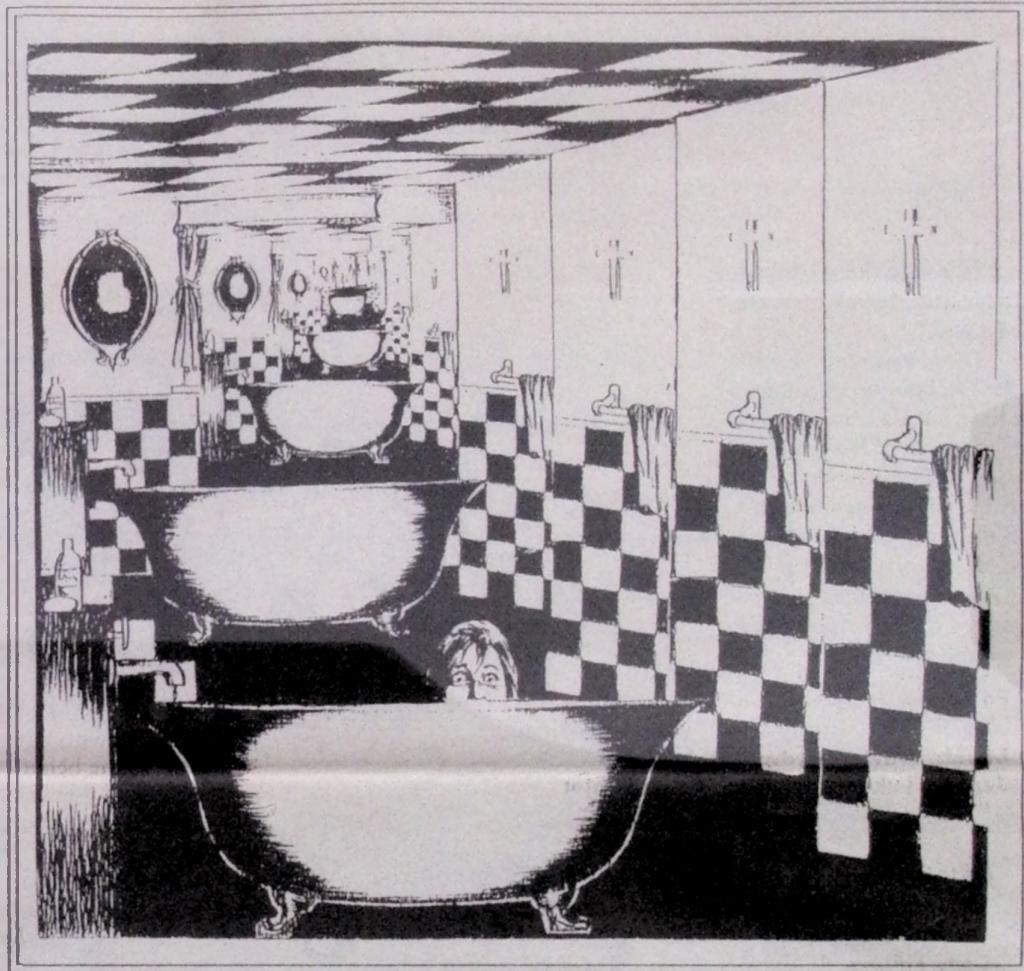
I strolled on towards home, smiling and thinking about footwashing.

I imagined this scene:

Jesus and his followers are eating dinner. When they have finished, he gets up, strips down to his underwear, takes a bowl of water, goes to each one, kneels down, and washes their feet. Apparently, no one but Peter thinks this is strange because he's the only one who balks at the idea of Jesus washing his feet. Ever inquisitive, Peter asks, "Jesus, are you gonna wash my feet?" And Jesus tells Peter that having his feet washed is a mark of discipleship. With profuse enthusiasm, Peter decides that if a little is good, more is better, so he requests a bath. And I can just hear Jesus asking, "Did you take a bath this morning, Peter?" To which Peter eagerly and reverently answers, "Oh yes, Lord! Thou knowest I did!" And then Jesus says, "Well, put it back, and go and sin no more."

Jesus laughs, sticking his elbow in the ribs of the other disciples: "Did you hear what I said to Peter? Put back that bath you took this morning!" He's gleeful and laughing so he can hardly talk. Soon they're all guffawing and tears are streaming down their faces.

By now, I was home, hopping up the steps, saying, "Hey!" to Shortman and James and Rick and Larry. I came into the dim entry, and I think I had found bright yellow on that walk. While my eyes adjusted from the brilliant morning outside, I thought of a hymn that I often sang in my childhood during communion:



LEO BUSCAGLIA

Soul, adorn yourself with gladness,
Leave the gloomy haunts of sadness,
Come into the daylight's splendor,
There with joy your praises render.
Bless the one whose grace unbounded
This amazing banquet founded:
He, though heavenly, high, and holy,
Deigns to dwell with you most lowly.

I was so happy, I wanted to try that joke out on everyone I met. I wanted to splash in a bathtub. I wanted to wash somebody's feet.

Joy comes in the morning, and like CS Lewis, I am surprised by joy. It is found in the most unlikely places: God's holy child is a lowly footwasher and tells us how happy we will be as servants; the amazing banquet that shows the Lord's death until he comes again gives us abundant life; the jester Jesus, who lives in the group home for the mentally ill, and who is rejected by some as worthless, bestows the precious gift of laughter. My soul, my whole being, is dressed in gladness, and it is like the armor of God that makes me able to hold out in the evil day.

I will take a bath, and put it back, and laugh until my ribs hurt.

Elizabeth Dede is a partner at the Open Door.

Reconstruction Today, conclusion: Where Do We Go From Here?

by Nibs Stroupe

Editor's note: We continue here with the conclusion of this ten-part series on Reconstruction. Nibs Stroupe, pastor at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia, is active in the Civil Rights Movement and author of While We Run This Race: Confronting The Power Of Racism In The Southern Church. It is available from Orbis Press. We thank Nibs for this moving and educational contribution to our pages over the past several months.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

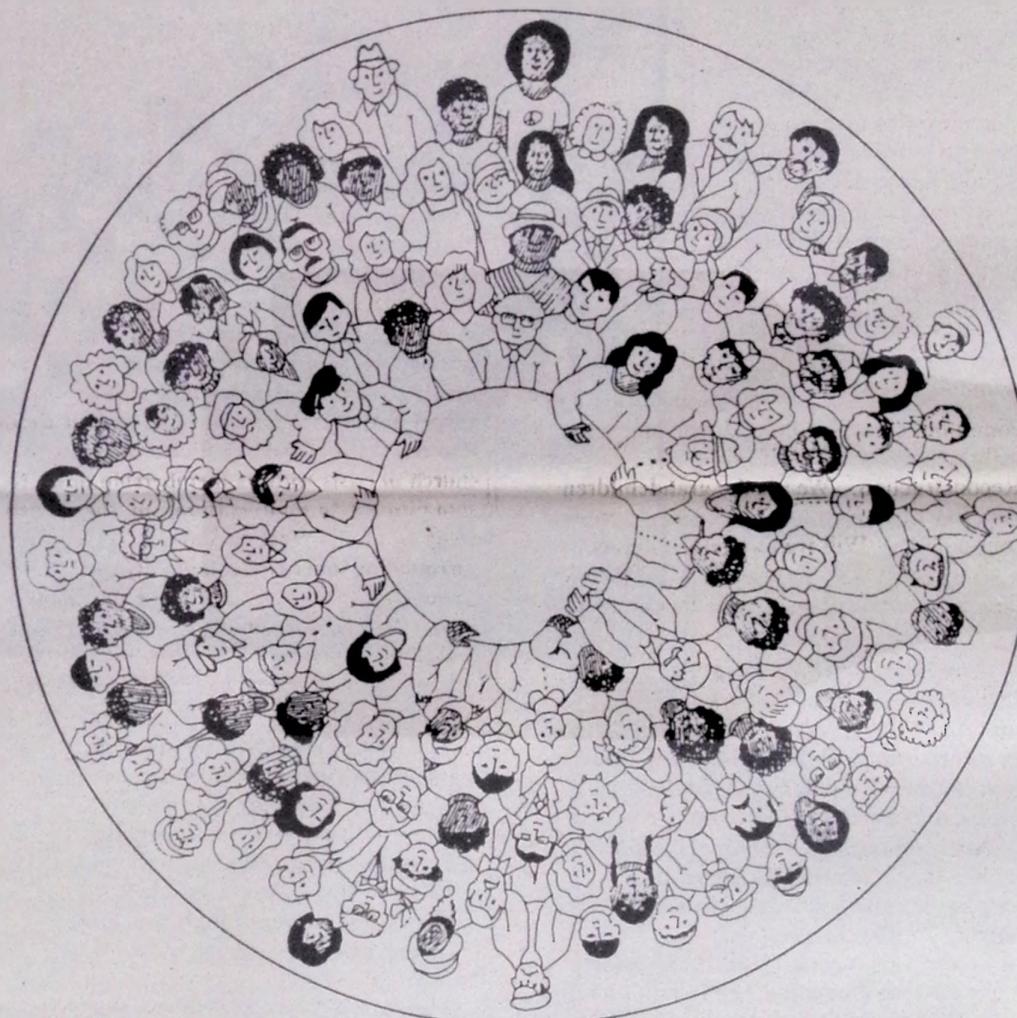
These hallmark words from the Declaration of Independence have been a driving force in the formation of the American character. Reformers have returned again and again to this idea of the equal dignity of each person. It has propelled the call by women to be seen as persons, the work of African-Americans to be seen as human beings, the push of Native Americans to be treated as peers.

The idea of equality is powerful in our psyche as a people. It is not without controversy, however. As we have seen earlier, in Part 6, the idea of "race" usually wins the struggle with the idea of equality. Indeed, Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration was altered by the Congress to drop references to slavery. We have come to re-visit that struggle again as the 20th century ends.

The harsh but realistic truth is that those who have claimed the name "white" have racism deeply imbedded in us. We may not go out and assault those we call "non-white" but much of the movement of our lives is determined by racial classification, whether it is schools, housing, worship, play, or work. This central position of race is undisputable, but those of us who call ourselves "white" seek to dispute, anyway. We deny that racial classification has such influence over us, yet most of our decisions center on race. We are a people in denial.

In this sense, we are addicted to racial classification, as in the model of addiction, an individual has been invaded by a foreign agent, but over time, the individual has come to accept dependency on the addictive substance as necessary to life. If the individual is to move back towards health, they must first confront their dependence on the substance. Until this step is taken, very little treatment will be effective. Saying "I am an addict" is the only first step that will lead to health.

White folks are in denial about our addiction to race. In the face of overwhelming evidence concerning its importance to us, we continue to say that we do not see skin color. Or, if we accept the evidence of its importance to us,



we seek to blame others for our addiction, i.e., there is something wrong with black people. In order to come to terms with the continuing power of race, white people must come out of denial. The model of addiction for white people is also helpful on another level. White people often feel that if we admit how central "race" is to us, then we will be seen as terrible people. If we confess our addiction to race, then we won't be seen as good people anymore. Yet, we must remember that good and decent people become addicted to all kinds of substances. To admit addiction is not to give up decency—it is, rather, to acknowledge a reality that mitigates our being a real person.

Can we do this? Can we admit our addiction to race and seek to build a human community from there? The historical record is not optimistic. Race has prevailed again and again in our history, but fortunately for us, our

history is not the final word. God's grace and God's movement are the final word. The Biblical witness overwhelmingly proclaims that God intends for us to live as a human community, not as a bunch of fragmented tribes. What would this shift look like? What would it mean to begin to seek to see human beings rather than races?

First of all, we would acknowledge that God intends diversity. Diversity is not a problem but rather is a gift and an opportunity. It is an opportunity to learn about God, to learn that our individual and tribal perception of God is important but is not complete. Diversity tells us that one of the most important aspects of our lives is listening—listening to God, listening to ourselves, listening to others. In this listening, we will learn of many different interpretations of life, but we will also learn how similar our lives are. We all struggle, make music, make amends, make love, long for peace, hope for things unseen.

(continued on page 5)

(Reconstruction, continued from page 4)

Secondly, we would try to see one another as human beings with equal dignity. It may be that we will never see others as people without racial categories, but we can try to see others as people like us. People who want to love and be loved. People who want to find ways to cope with the stresses of life; people who want to find meaning in love and trust and peace. This is a difficult step for us—it means that rather than seeing a black man as someone to fear, we would see him as someone from whom we could learn. We as white people are a long way from there! When we encounter black men, if we see them as human beings at all, it is usually in the mode of their being in need of our assistance.

Finally, it would mean that we would look upon life as a tapestry to be woven rather than a race to be run. It is no accident that this arbitrary classification of humanity is called "race," for one of the root meanings of this word is a competition whose purpose is to see who is strongest and swiftest. The system of race has been designed to assert that one group of people, those called "white," are supposed to win the race of life because we are the smartest and strongest. So, it should be no great surprise that the basic categories of life are called "race." After all, life is a race to see who will win and be on top.

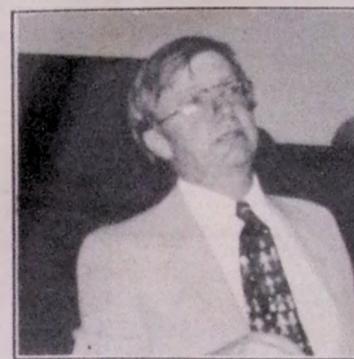
Yet, what if life is meant to be a co-operative venture rather than a competitive race? Many cultures around the world see life as a community effort rather than a race which goes to the swift. How would our lives change if we saw its purpose as being an effort to work for the common good? Many of our current problems are the result of our refusal to see life as a cooperative venture. Our polluted earth, our love of guns and violence, our clinging to materialism—all these result from our seeing life as a competitive race, and from believing that those other "races" out there are inferior to us and must serve us. What if we sought to live out of the wisdom of the African proverb: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors: we borrow it from our grandchildren."

Let us make no mistakes here. We live in an exceedingly dangerous time. The political and cultural milieu of our time is that race is necessary and that life belongs to the swift. Our communities are breaking down, and we seem to be arming ourselves and walling ourselves. It is a formula for disaster, but we have seen it before in post-Reconstruction. We are the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of that generation who returned to race and its oppression. We face a watershed time in our country. Will we too, return to race? Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will look back and tell us. Where do we go from here? Content of character or color of skin? Our descendants await our answer.

This concludes this ten-part series on Reconstruction.



WHILE WE RUN THIS RACE



Nibs Stroupe

Confronting the Power of Racism in a Southern Church

Nibs Stroupe and Inez Fleming

In a book that is challenging, illuminating, and ultimately hopeful, Nibs Stroupe, the white pastor of the multi-cultural Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia, grapples with this question: why, after the Civil Rights movement has become part of American history, does racism still pervade society? What can be done to change this? As Stroupe unflinchingly examines racism in the United States, adding her voice is Inez Fleming, a black elder at Oakhurst, who tells the story of tears and laughter within the congregation as blacks and whites struggle together, creating an extraordinary church family.

Stroupe shows how and why race continues to entrap all Americans in its grip. He steadfastly maintains that acknowledging the power of the system of race throughout society—in our schools, courts, prisons, and housing—is the necessary first step to dismantling it. Using themes from gospel music, Stroupe convinces us that we cannot give in, or give up. This is also the story of Oakhurst, once a prosperous white church, that became a church in crisis with its membership down to 80. Yet because of a deep commitment to multi-culturalism, the church again thrives and its large congregation, almost equally black and white, actively reaches out into the surrounding inner-city community of Decatur. How did they do it? As Stroupe says, "by risking to trust one another." This inspiring book demonstrates clearly that, although racism is powerful, it is not inexorable: it can be overcome.

NIBS STROUPE has been an activist for the homeless and prison reform, as well as pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church.

INEZ FLEMMING has worked closely with Pastor Stroupe in developing and leading workshops that promote multi-racial leadership and understanding.

"The diversity which we feared has empowered us to confront God's truth in the world."

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ISBN 1-57075-000-9
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Inez Fleming

- Surprise Visit by City Council - Marvin Arrington celebrates public toilets at the Open Door

Mr. Arrington visited the Open Door recently to help celebrate the action by City Council to install public toilets in downtown Atlanta. Although there were some legal entanglements to be worked out (reported in prior Hospitality), those problems have been resolved. Thank you Mr. Arrington and other Council members.



GLADYS RUSTAY

Marvin Arrington and Martin Lehfeldt



GLADYS RUSTAY

Frances Pauley and Marvin Arrington

Book Signing Party

The Open Door hosted a book signing party for Nibs Stroupe and Inez Fleming, authors of "While We Run This Race." Old friends, new faces, good food and lively discussions were part of the evening.



GLADYS RUSTAY

Nibs Stroupe and Inez Fleming



GLADYS RUSTAY

Attendees at the book signing party at the Open Door

MICHAEL GALOVIC



Mary Davis, City Council Representative from the District where the Open Door Community resides, visited recently to discuss the needs of the homeless as part of Atlanta's larger community.

Mary Wall

Oct. 31, 1921 - May 30, 1995



We at the Open Door Community remember with gratitude and appreciation the loving support Mary gave to us and our friends among the poor and homeless. Mary was a long-time volunteer in St. Luke's Community Kitchen, the Poverty Rights Office and lobbyist for the needs of the poor and oppressed.

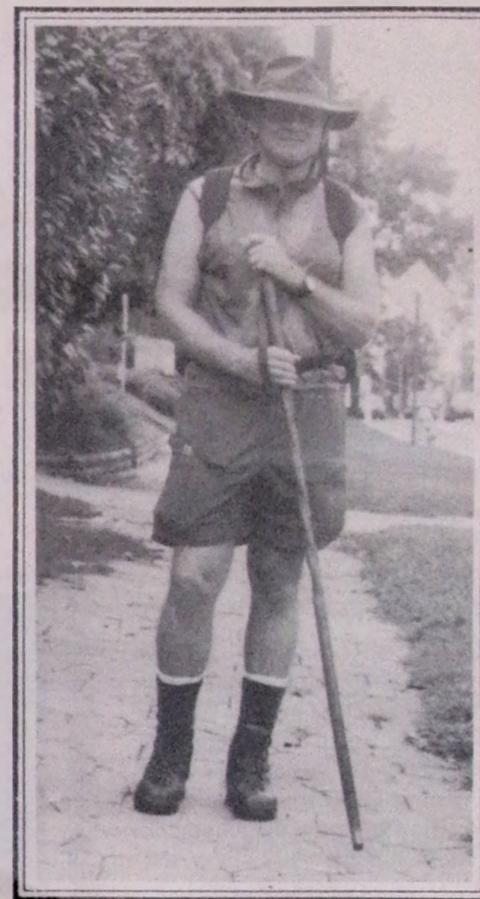
She was part of the Open Door worshipping community and a dear friend. We will miss Mary and continue to remember her husband, David, and family in our prayers.

Sam Sheppard Stops at the Open Door

Sam Sheppard, whose mother was murdered and whose father was accused and convicted of the crime, and twelve years later proved his innocence, stopped by the Open Door Community along his Alternative Walk to New Orleans from his home in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He offers this 1600 mile walk to promote Alternatives to Violence, Alternatives to the Death Penalty, and Alternatives to Hatred and Revenge.

In his own words, "Murder and execution almost destroyed my life. I find I must walk to ask for alternatives to violence and will attend the national convention of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP) in New Orleans, on August 3rd-6th."

He will walk through Montgomery and Mobile, Alabama, on the final leg of his journey. His walk also is intended to support the work of the Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation organization. Anyone interested in further details, please contact the Open Door Community.



MICHAEL GALOWIC

Sam Sheppard

Good News!

by Murphy Davis

South Africa's new government this year created a new constitutional court as an equal to the legislative and executive branches. The first order of business of the court in early June was to abolish the death penalty in South Africa, which for many years had one of the highest rates of executions in the world.

The court emphasized that the death penalty had been used for decades as an instrument of terror in enforcing the system of racial separation.

The court's 244-page opinion was supported by a separate written opinion from each of the 11 justices, underscoring the unanimity and urgency of the change. President of the court, Arthur Chaskalson, in announcing the decision said, "retribution cannot be accorded the same weight under our constitution as the right to life and dignity. It has not been shown that the death sentence would be materially more effective to deter or prevent murder than the alternative sentence of life imprisonment."

Remarkably, a moratorium on executions was declared in 1992 by an order of the National Party government. There seemed to be recognition that to move toward a multi-racial government and real democracy, the death penalty would have to go.

Now it is official. The Justice Minister announced that the 443 prisoners awaiting execution would be moved quickly off death row. South Africa has joined Haiti, the Philippines, Nicaragua and other nations, which in their early days of restored democracy, abolished the death penalty.

The United States in its continued and accelerating use of the death penalty is increasingly isolated in the world community. We remain with countries like Iran, China, Russia, Turkey as executioners while all of our Western industrialized neighbors have long since abolished use of death as punishment.

May we hear the fresh and hopeful word from our neighbors in South Africa. A nation that would renew itself as a true democracy and move toward inclusion of all its people in the common life and decision-making has no place for the death penalty.

Murphy Davis is a partner in the Open Door Community.



Michael Galowic

Jim Alford

by Murphy Davis

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger,
Trav'ling through this world of woe;
But there's no sickness, no toil or danger
In that bright land to which I go.
I'm going there, to see my mother;
I'm going there, no more to roam.
I'm only going over Jordan,
I'm only going over home.

We sing "Waysfaring Stranger" often here in the Community and it's one of my favorites. We are together here because in one way or another we all know ourselves as waysfaring strangers. All of us have wandered; all of us know something of the world's woe; all of us know the longing for the bright land that holds no sickness, toil or danger.

Into this little band of waysfaring strangers came another. Jim Alford joined us in February as a Resident Volunteer. We knew him for only three months, but he will continue to live in our hearts. We miss him terribly.

In his weeks and months with us, Jim quickly became a part of our life and work. Though he had no experience in cooking for large groups, he donned an apron in his first few days and had learned to cook the soup and run the soup kitchen within six weeks. He gravitated immediately to the monthly Hardwick prison trip, and from the first month's trip he was driving and hosting our passengers with ease and grace. He found ways to help with hundreds of administrative tasks and he was always ready to drive someone to a doctor's appointment or Hannah to her music lesson. It was Jim who took James Fain to the hospital for the last time, and stayed with him and cared for him as he settled in, and visited him often before he died.

Little did we know that Jim himself was dying.

He lived with us for three months and shared so much of himself. What a deep pain it is for us to realize now that we had no idea the depth of pain and suffering he was carrying. We worked side by side and shared table and home and sacrament; and yet, there was something we couldn't see—couldn't hear.

And so he bore his pain, at least in large measure, alone; and sought solace in a bottle. While we knew he was on a deep spiritual search, we did not realize that his hunger and thirst were leading him (as they can and will so easily for any of us) toward destruction and death.

The lines are so thin. The way is so often cloudy and dark.

We anticipated—and hoped for—many months and years of life and shared work together. But the demon of addiction will not stay hidden forever. It became clear, all in one very sad day, that Jim must leave us to seek help. He returned to his family home in Tennessee and seemed determined to enter a treatment program and later return to the Open Door. Before he made it, he died in his own bedroom of apparent alcohol poisoning.

Jim's parents called with the news. He was buried with a loving family and friends gathered around him. They said Jim had told them that his three months at the Open Door were the happiest months of his life. He was a natural here: the details of home making seemed to come spontaneously.

While "Waysfaring Stranger" is sung in a minor key and has a sad tone in the lyrics, it is not just a song of woe. When we sing "I'm going there to meet my mother/father/Savior, I'm going there no more to roam...I'm only going over home," we sing affirming the hope that our journey is based on promise: community which has been broken will be restored. Relationships torn by death or addiction will be healed.

And in the meantime, the promise deepens our hope that we might always live in a way that we listen more deeply for each other's pain and despair; that we resist the power of addiction with the structure of our common life and the day-by-day disciplines of our individual lives; that we keep hope alive; that, as Peter Maurin said, we "build a world in which it's easier to be good"—and, we might add, easier to be sober.

Good-bye, Jim. We knew you only for a little while. But you blessed us and so many forgotten ones with your sweet spirit and your helpful presence in our life. In your life and in your death you have taught us well.

I know dark clouds will gather 'round me,
I know my way is hard and steep;
But beauteous fields lie just beyond me
Where souls redeemed their vigil keep.
I'm going there to meet my father
I'm going there no more to roam.
I'm only going over Jordan,
I'm only going over home.

Murphy Davis is a partner at the Open Door.

Underground Atlanta: The Struggle Continues

People for Urban Justice Update

We the People for Urban Justice, advocates for homeless people in the city of Atlanta, are concerned about the financial restructuring and the social role of Underground Atlanta. The leadership and function of Underground Atlanta tends to be classist and racist. In a front page article on May 20, the Atlanta Constitution quoted Mr. Neil Thall, a consultant for Underground Atlanta, as having said: "The basic problem with Underground is not Underground, per se. It's like an oasis, but people don't find the whole area to be friendly." That comment is patently racist. What he is trying to say is that the poor people, and primarily African American people, around the MARTA Five Points station and across Alabama Street, are the problem. Why do white business people continue to blame African Americans and the poor for their financial woes? We must put a halt to this kind of covert and veiled racism in our city. It does nothing but build dividing walls in those precise places where we hammer away to build bridges of friendship and reconciliation.

We continue to be concerned about Underground Atlanta being a primary source of stealing the paltry financial resources from the poor in our good city. We are very hopeful the land deal proposed once again by Mr. Joe Martin will not work, so that the \$10 million will come back to the City of Atlanta and its taxpayers. We need this money because the Underground Development Corporation borrowed the money which was designated by the Block Grant Program as money for the poor. If the land is given, the poor will realize nothing from the \$10 million that already belongs to them. So we are asking that the Atlanta City Council demand that the money come back to the City and that the land deal not go forward. We are asking that this \$10 million be used in ways that will help the homeless and the poor in the city of Atlanta.

(Editors Note: June 15 marks the sixth anniversary of the Underground Atlanta Action protesting the opening ceremonies.)

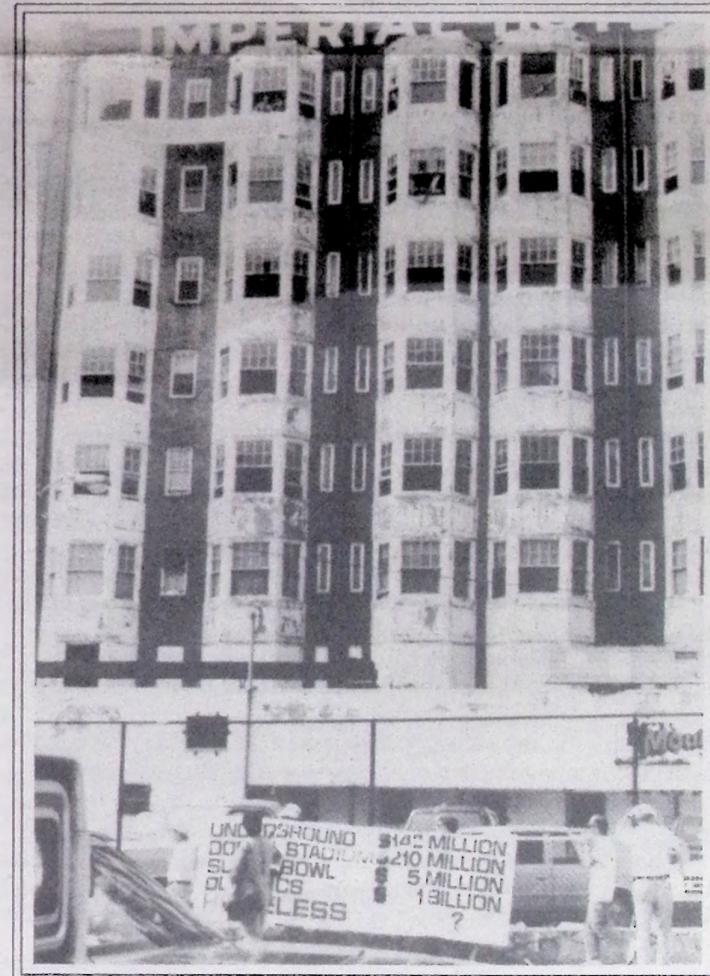
**We need your response on this issue.
Please boycott Underground Atlanta.**

Imperial Hotel Celebration

The 5th anniversary of the Imperial Hotel takeover was celebrated and remembered during the worship at the Open Door Community on June 18.

In addition, last month, Progressive Redevelopment, Inc. (Atlanta-based affordable housing developers) held a celebration at the Imperial Hotel to mark the upcoming renovation of the hotel as housing for the working and homeless poor.

In 1990, People for Urban Justice along with 300 homeless people occupied the hotel for 16 days.



Imperial Hotel, June 1990

Special Book Review of:

While We Run This Race: Confronting the Power of Racism in a Southern Church

by Nibs Stroupe and Inez Fleming

by David Billings

This is a book particularly, but not exclusively, for white people. What is new about that, you ask? Good point. But this is new. It is a book about racism that really gets at the heart of the racism beast in ways that few, if any, have before it. Co-written by Stroupe, a white man, it pulls no punches. Racism is a white problem in the United States. Race is a concept crafted by Europeans to create a privileged caste of people who came to be called "white." It is the reality of "whiteness" in a race-constructed society that has oppressed people of darker color (to use Stroupe's term) and which has prevented "white" people from joining the majority of humankind as true sisters and brothers. Strong words. As Stroupe asserts, when given the choice between "race" and "equality" in this country, white people have historically chosen race. *Newt's Contract* is only the latest testimony to this truth.

But it is a hard truth. It is a difficult and complex truth. That is what makes this book so important to white people. Stroupe puts forth an explanation and an analysis that is real and understandable for those who want to grapple with what racism is all about and how racism is something different from prejudice, discrimination, or even bigotry. But While We Run This Race is also an irritating book; it is uncomfortable for all of us white folks of good works and good intentions. The racists, according to Stroupe, are not just the Kluxers or the Rednecks. They're not just the Newts and the Dukes. Racists are the good white people who serve in soup kitchens and who walk picket lines, too. Racists are good white people like those who read Hospitality—good white folks like me and maybe you. There is no escaping Stroupe's blanket indictment if you're white. Good intentions are not enough. It is the results that count. And in this society, because of the construct of race, the results benefit white people, to a person, and that is a hard truth. A bitter pill, but as Stroupe says time and again, the acceptance of this reality is the first step toward doing something about it. Denial is the primary obstacle that white people who want to be anti-racist must overcome in this society.

What about poor white people, you ask? What about white women? How about those white people who are themselves oppressed by class or gender or sexual orientation? What about them? Isn't a strict "race" analysis too limiting? What about people of darker color? Can't they be racist? Why lay it all on white people? Aren't people responsible in some measure for their own situations and predicaments? These are questions that Stroupe takes up and analyzes using his prism of a race-constructed society. While the book is too short to do an in-depth discussion of any of these questions, While We Run This Race is a provocative and challenging starting point to the conventional wisdom of both the white right and left on all these matters. What I like best about the book is its boldness and its honesty on the primacy of whiteness in this country. Stroupe doesn't back off or down, which in the annals of white anti-racism is rare and refreshing. Some, maybe many whites, will not agree with him, but they won't wonder where he stands.

Now, book reviews are supposed to critique. So, even though I grew up with Nibs Stroupe and count him as my oldest and best friend, let me hurl a few darts at While We Run This Race. The cover. I don't like it. I know this is the publisher's call and not the author's, but what's the big deal anyway? Well, covers say a lot, and when a cover depicts church people on the steps all happy and together, it sends a message about the "seriousness" of the work and more importantly the targeted audience. This is a serious book and not one to be confined to the "Parish Ministry" section of seminary bookstores. The general public should read this book. Academics should read this book. Activists and radicals should read this book. So Orbis, do a new cover in the second edition.

Also the subtitle and co-authorship is misleading. Very little in the book is about "confronting the power of racism in a southern church." Stroupe's church members may agree with everything he says, or they may not, but While We Run This Race is primarily Stroupe's analysis. The few vignettes about how Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, (a Decatur, Georgia, congregation where Stroupe is co-pastor), dealt with race doesn't make this a book about Oakhurst confronting the power of racism. Maybe that can be his next book.

Also, about Inez Fleming, (a former church elder and current member of the congregation)—twelve pages in just one chapter is not enough. Her voice is one that demands to be heard. However, listing her as co-author frustrates the reader, who catches just a glimpse of her in the pages of this book, and so listing her name runs the risk of appearing patronizing. The voice we hear throughout is that of Nibs Stroupe, and that is fine, but it would be better to let Stroupe's name stand alone as author. I hope that Inez Fleming and Nibs Stroupe will truly co-author a work soon. The working out of their relationship is a story in itself, yet this book merely teases us with what would

promise to be a fascinating learning experience which could be valuable to all who seek to do anti-racist work.

What then is to be done with While We Run This Race? Its legacy will be in what has really happened at Oakhurst. Will the lessons put forth in the book take root and survive the passing era of Stroupe and his wife/co-pastor, Caroline Leach—an era which one day surely will come? Especially if Nibs becomes famous and has to spend all his time on "Donahue" and "Good Morning America?" Has leadership been developed to the point that the baton can be passed without a hitch or a misstep? This will be a big challenge to Oakhurst and maybe too big of a burden to place on a small congregation. But it is an important challenge. What if Oakhurst Presbyterian Church becomes truly anti-racist? What will that mean for the denomination and other churches not yet ready to "run the race" in the same way? Can Oakhurst and Nibs Stroupe resist the temptation of becoming "special" and thus marginalized? The potential of an Oakhurst to work with other church congregations to the same end is very exciting. But, not just churches. Anti-racism cannot be limited to the religious set. Oakhurst is an institution undergoing transformation and those lessons transcend this race constructed society.

So, on to it. While We Run This Race in every hotel and motel room in America. Gideon, be gone. Bedside reading for all Christians. Everybody, in fact.

POETRY from PRISON

SILENT TRUCE

by Terri Rachals,

For my son Chad, with regret for all of your pain.

Bugle boy pants
High-top Reeboks
Psychedelic cap of purple and green
Seven years old
Flesh of my flesh
Grown under my heart and in it...

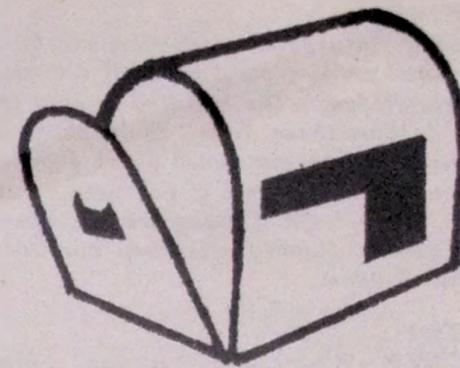
Visitation is over
Time to say good-bye
Silence...
So much to say...

You talked of
Braves' Games
Your best buddy Bret
Diving into the swimming pool
Daddy
Your brand new red bat
Tell me of when I was little you said,
of when you were at home...
I talked of
Lullabies and rocking chairs
Cups of water thrown from your bathtub ship
Giggles
Of things you've now outgrown...

Home...
You never ask anymore
Afraid of the repeated reply;
Silence screams with unspoken pain.

Two sets of green eyes meet
To reiterate the truce;
As the unrelenting war
Rages on in our kindred souls.

Grace and Peaces of Mail



To Open Door Community,

With the name, Allah, I testify that there is no God but Allah alone, who has no partner, that Muhammad is Allah's slave and messenger, that Jesus is Allah's slave messenger, the son of Allah's handmaid created by Allah's word which Allah cast into Mary and a spirit created by Allah, and that paradise and hell are very, very real. I like to greet you as Salaamu-Alaikum.

I would like to say first, that I very much like reading your paper, Hospitality. We are of a different faith but we both see the trouble of the world. We both see the heartache of the homeless, and we both hear the cry of prisoners—because I am an inmate in the Georgia State Prison system. But as I read your February issue, the article titled, "History as Teacher: Reconstruction Today, part 5," by Nibs Stroupe, I was somewhat lost. It is very rare to hear someone speak of what Mr. Stroupe was saying about African-Americans, and how they were stripped of freedom. What was said was all good, but now in this day and time, slavery still exists, only it has a different name. Back then they used a whip, but now they don't need that, they use the law. There is a lot I would like to speak on, but I won't.

To Mr. Nibs Stroupe and Inez Fleming, what you are doing at the Presbyterian church is good and may God bless your church community. I wish I could read your book but I could not pay for it anyway.

Also I want to speak on something else I read in the same issue: "Living and Dying on a Chair" [reflection by D. Andrew Harvill]. When one reads something and it's true, one can only acknowledge it. This makes me reflect back on something I had read once when one of Jesus' followers asked Him, "Are You the only one who knows the truth?" and Jesus said, "No, there are others who know, but I am the only one who will stand and tell the truth." This is how I felt as I read some of the articles in Hospitality. Well, I won't ask anymore of your time, but there is so much I want to say...maybe next time.

Thanks,

Cedric Williams
Reidsville, GA

Dear Hospitality,

I just received and read the April Hospitality. It's powerfully moving as always. Ed's passion and cold hard facts—quite a balancing act! Bless you all and your work in "the belly of the beast."

Ann Darby
Athens, GA

Dear Friends,

Reading Hospitality is always an upper for me. Just knowing you are in Atlanta. "Doing, being, giving" is a sign of God's love among us. In the same vein, Rev. Thomas Jackson is in Tyler, Texas, "doing, being, giving" to HIV infected persons and others. Janet Ray is in Detroit, Michigan, "doing, being, giving" to indigent refugees from all over the world. People are seeing NEED and not walking around it, but are taking personal responsibility for supplying help. They become magnets, and, before you know it, hundreds of other people are involved with them in the work, and darkness recedes a little more as light begins to cast a warm glow.

I believe we are seeing God moving through this one and that one, and, very slowly—painfully slowly—the people of God are reclaiming this troubled world of ours.

God bless you all,

Marcia Kowske
Hamburg, Germany

Dear Ed Loring,

I have just finished reading your article in the April issue of Hospitality, ["Labor Pools: Holy Places In The Belly Of The Beast"]. I am an old lady, eighty years old. I want to try to explain to you why you are not yet speaking with understanding, and I want to try to help you, and perhaps your readers, to re-think this proposition that you try to present to your readers.

First, let me explain where I am coming from. I grew up in a family that believed in and lived the American dream. My father grew up in a small town. He ran away from home with \$5 in his pocket because of a severe beating from his father, who thought he was lying because he was late coming home from school, having stopped at the public library to browse a bit and take out some library books. From that self-righteous father's actions evolved a long chain of events that muddied the waters in many lives—and still hold quite a few people captive. Far, far too many of the wealthy, privileged people are held captive in their minds. Minds which have truly been short-circuited in their normal development.

You are correct—we all somehow know and believe that Christ did understand these things and he did die on the cross to try to wake us up to what is really going on in this age-old struggle of humanity, trying to learn to live together and share in the struggle for survival that is correctly called the school of life. Unfortunately, we have not really studied and tried to understand what we do know of Christ's message to us. Until we do figure it out—correctly—all our efforts at charity and the dole system, and the welfare state—will not solve our problem, and will bankrupt us and wear us out.

So what are some of the teachings that we need to focus our minds on? Our Lord told us, "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That should be good for a lot of serious soul searching. As you begin to follow-through on that thought, maybe you will get an inkling of what our Lord was really talking about.

"One of the great gifts Yahweh is giving to modern America is the 34th chapter of Ezekiel. This chapter has had a special relevance since World War II but has been a burning light since April 4, 1968. Listen to a little bit and then go read all 31 verses.

Says the Sovereign LORD:

'You are doomed, you shepherds of Israel! You take care of yourselves, but never tend the sheep. You drink the milk, wear clothes made from wool, and kill and eat the finest sheep. But you never tend the sheep. You have not taken care of the weak ones, healed the ones that are sick, bandaged the ones that are hurt, brought back the ones that wandered off, or looked for the ones that were lost. Instead, you treated them cruelly....so listen to me, you shepherds, I, the sovereign LORD, declare that I am your enemy.'

Ezekiel not only saw wheels over his head; he also saw the future Food Banks of developed nations:

'Some of you are not satisfied with eating the best grass; you even trample down what you don't eat. You drink the clear water and muddy what you don't drink! My other sheep have to eat the grass you trample down and drink the water you muddy.'

.... I will rescue my sheep and not let them be mistreated anymore.'

It isn't the laborers, the blacks or others, it is the children who are deprived, and it is not enough to just feed and clothe them!

Susanna Peirce Buic
Tallahassee, FL

WE ARE OPEN...

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 2:00 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 2:00.). 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, 2:00pm-5pm

BIBLE STUDY—Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm.

WEEKEND RETREATS—Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), July 7-9.

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 Needs

JEANS
T-Shirts
Men's Work Shirts
Men's Underwear
Quick Grits
Cheese
Coffee
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Postage Stamps
Women's Underwear
Men's Large Shoes (12-14)
Disposable Razors
Toothbrushes
Vaseline
Socks
Shampoo
Men's Belts
Washcloths
Sandwiches
Wednesday Soup Kitchen Volunteers*
Butler St. Breakfast Volunteers*

* please contact Jeannie Lukkar, Volunteer Coordinator, at 874-2120. 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 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. THANK YOU!

Open Door Community Worship

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

Please join us!

July 2	Worship at 910; Death Penalty Abolition Sunday
July 8	Summer Retreat at Dayspring Farm No Worship at 910
July 16	Worship at 910; Don Shriver, preaching
July 23	Worship at 910; Stan Saunders, preaching
July 30	Worship at 910; Al Winn, preaching



If you have found Hospitality helpful and would like to know more about the Open Door Community, please fill out, clip and send this coupon to The Open Door Community * 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE * Atlanta, GA 30306-4212.

Please ADD to the Hospitality mailing list.

Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.

I'm interested in volunteering. Please give me more information.

I would like to explore a six to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please send more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____ + _____

Phone _____

Moving?

Bulk rate mail is not forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service. Send Hospitality, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA, 30306-4212, your new mailing address as soon as you know it. Please enclose the mailing label from your most recent issue. Thank you!