

# HOSPITALITY

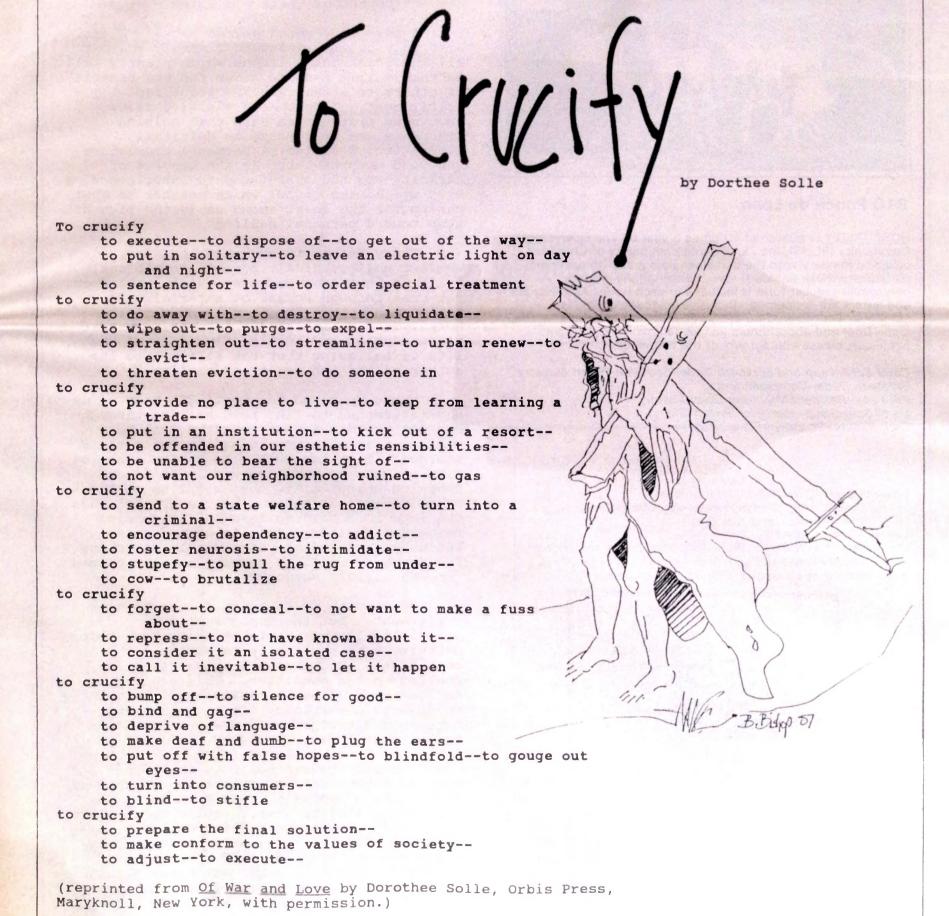
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# HOSPITALITY



#### 910 Ponce de Leon

HOSPITALITY is published 10 times a year by The Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta community of Christians called to ministry with the homeless poor and with prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard. For more information about the life and work of The Open Door and about others involved in ministry to Atlanta's homeless, please contact any of the following:

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Circulation--Tim Nafziger, Phillip Williams, and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests
Subscriptions or change of address--Willie London



## Liberation Through Serving The Poor

by C.M. Sherman

Many folk feel that serving the poor is work for the weird; others believe that sacrificing themselves for the less fortunate is not necessarily a part of Christian life; still others think that taking care of the least among us has no positive meaning toward the enrichment of their own lives.

A few years ago I shared those beliefs. Like many others, I fought fiercely against all the irrefutable truths which clearly tell us that a life must be given for the benefit of others to attain genuine peace and fulfillment. I denounced the Alcoholics Anonymous truth which says that helping others is the only route to spiritual liberation; I denied my personal counselors who told me that labor in the benefit of humanity was the surest way to inner peace; I even defied the gospel which teaches us that caring for the least among us is the biggest step toward personal healing.

Every authority on human behavior, whether philosophical, social, or biblical tells us that true personal fulfillment does not come through social or materialistic achievements, but from humbly sacrificing ourselves for others. Perhaps the greatest misconception and most costly error of human life is believing that the self can be the author of its own peace and healing.

Where do we go for healing? Many of us have attempted to find that healing through our own worldly agenda. But we fail to realize that nothing can be its own healing source. It is impossible to use an unhealed mind to cure an unhealed mind. It is our unhealed spirituality that keeps us on the wrong paths. It takes a source greater than the imperfect self to lead one to genuine peace and healing. This is common sense. Yet many of us spend years vainly searching for personal peace by mapping our own course through worldly networks.

Of course, it is human nature to seek betterment. But the demands of our materialistic culture force us to seek that betterment by physically improving our conditions. But personal peace is a feeling—not a condition. This feeling is derived from our spirituality and has nothing to do with conditions. It is gained only through dedicating our souls and bodies to the work of Christ.

The old proverb tells us that "The highest reward for human work is not what we physically or socially gain from doing it, but the feeling of gratification we attain by doing it." Gaining a million dollars, a doctorate degree, or global recognition may produce a momentary delight. But this trivial feeling can never match the genuine inner feeling of peace and gratification we achieve from helping others through Christ.

Yet we tend to exert all of our energy chasing that momentary delight while avoiding the work which brings everlasting peace and fulfillment. Many of us are willing to believe in Christ, but unwilling to physically sacrifice ourselves for others through His discipleship. And it is little wonder that we fall short of the genuine personal peace and healing we seek.



C.M. on the front porch where he does a lot of his writing.

We materially-minded people have a problem accepting the fact that helping others helps to heal our individual selves because we are trained to believe that the more we can achieve for ourselves the better off we are. This worldly mindset forces us to be selfish creatures. Therefore, putting others ahead of ourselves and totally surrendering ourselves to discipleship in Christ is contrary to our culture. We are enslaved to a materialistic cycle, where no peace and liberation can be found.

Because we are blinded by our materialistic mindset, life in the bosom of Christ seems very unattractive to us, and consequently, we are often not willing to commit our lives to His work. We feel that surrendering ourselves to His discipleship means becoming a prisoner of a dull and dutiful life, a servant for others with no reward, a slave to Christian convictions with no recompense.

This was my own self-defeating mindset when I came to live at the Open Door Community. I could envision no joy in serving the poor-only hard work, pain and frustration. I could see no personal liberation living in a structured Christian community-only painful restrictions and a hectic struggle with the Cross of Christ. At first it seemed that I was being held captive to a dead and toilsome way of life which offered no freedom or consolation. I could not commit myself to that kind of lifestyle.

What I did not realize was that I was already being held captive by the devouring material world which would not permit my freedom. I could not realize that giving myself to discipleship in Christ would

deliver me from being a slave to my materialistic mentality and grant me the inner peace I had unsuccessfully sought for a lifetime. But I would later learn that a life of serving the poor through Christ at the Open Door would bring the wonderful spiritual transformation I had vainly sought through worldly agenda.

However, this transformation does not come without pain, hardship and suffering. The struggle of bearing the Cross for Christ is mighty difficult. But then nothing worth having comes without sacrifice. Nobody ever says that discipleship in Christ is easy. Also, this transformation is never complete. It requires a continuous service in the name of Jesus. We call this transformation a spiritual journey of cultivation and reconciliation in the body of Christ.

The journey tends to get easier and easier with each milestone of development. The hardest part is getting started. Since a spiritual reformation is seldom visible, it usually takes a long while before one can recognize its presence through the feeling of peace and liberation. Impatience is the greatest obstacle. Thus so many people give up the quest for healing before allowing enough time to feel the joy of the transformation. This had been my pattern before I came to live at the Open Door Community. I simply could not continue the pursuit of spiritual growth long enough to feel the change before I had abandoned the quest.

But the Open Door is very different, very unique. It has a gentle and loving way of encouraging its members to settle until some spiritual change can be felt. The community tries in every way to instill within each new member a sense of belonging through the spirit of family unity. This makes members feel at home, with a sense of peace and comfort while they practice discipleship in Christ.

I had previously but unsuccessfully sought personal healing and liberation through only listening to preachers of the gospel, and doing no work in the name of Christ. The difference between my past quests for healing and my experience at the Open Door is the difference between the effects of preaching the gospel and practicing it. From those experiences I have learned that preaching alone can keep folk blindly and miserably in bondage to the devouring materialistic world. But in practice, one can see the light of the gospel and feel the liberation of the spirit. And the moment people become residents or come to volunteer at the Open Door, they begin to practice the gospel through serving the poor.

Through a life of serving the poor and liberating the oppressed, residents, volunteers, and supporters of the Open Door gain freedom from the materialistic world and from the self. During the spiritual transition, we move from self-centeredness to a dutiful concern for humanity, from indifference to love for our brothers and sisters. It is a journey from egoism to humility, from self-righteousness to a community spirit, from self-will to submission into discipleship, and from prejudice to openness. It is a triumphant passing from being slaves to having inner peace and freedom.

# Missing Mitch

by Ed Loring

Editor's note: Mitch Snyder, who died July 4, 1990, was one of the persons most responsible for getting us to begin the Clifton Night Hospitality Ministry on November 1, 1979. All across this land people continue to grieve. Two recent assessments of Mitch and our loss that are worthy of note are John Dear's "The Lessons of Mitch Snyder" in The Other Side, May-June, 1991, and Marcia A. Timmel's "Remembering Mitch Snyder" in The Catholic Worker, December 1990.

Though God slay me yet will I trust the LORD. -- Job 13:15

(don't bitch, bitch, bitch, Mitch) Hanging there from an electric cord without energy flowing through that beautiful and passionate flesh.

Let me tell you my angry brother (who loved the homeless ones like a wounded mother)

I miss your ass

> heart and voice and

anger and

I wish you were here with me and all our houseless homeless friends (and

But

you are not here you are there

Keeping Saint Peter busy rearranging heaven's housing patterns upgrading the stock and teaching Lee Atwater how to live next door to Mr. Horton's ancestors.

I wish vou were here with me and all our houseless homeless friends (and enemies)

But

you are not here you are there

I trust you have met Goatman and walked his dog for him. How is Gypsy? Tell him Shirley Franklin and wobbly Marvin Arrington did to the Al Smith Park just what he said they would do.



Give Roosevelt Green and Alpha Stevens and Tim McCorquodale my love. miss them, too. Ain't the streets hell? Prisons piss poor? and please tell. . . . (Oh, God! How many of you have died. I hadn't realized.)

I wish you were here with me and all our houseless homeless friends (and enemies)

you are not here you are there

The long electric cord uncoiled Neck stretched but never cracked The lithe lively loveful body limp rigid rose livid the final stygian hue flesh feeding flowers bones grizzled gray spirit at ease in Zion Yahweh's faithful promised REST in motion. The covenant fulfilled

your voice, (goddamn your voice!) echoes behind the Equity Building bounces off First Atlanta Trust whispers on Butler Street shouts in City Hall says "Thank you" at Saint Luke's soup kitchen snores on the floor at Clifton Church growls at the Labor Pool gasps at Grady Hospital is silent before the

majestic awful suffering of God's homeless poor.

# Litany For Lost SRO's

(from Psalm 22:18)

#### by Dick Rustay

Editor's note: This litany was used in Atlanta's observance of the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.

Leader: The Imperial Hotel lies boarded up and deserted. For ten years it has thus stood.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Leader: The vacant lot on Mitchell Street is a reminder of an SRO that used to be.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Leader: The St. Francis Hotel is but a memory lost in the gigantic superstructure of John Portman's One Peachtree Center.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Leader: The Biltmore has never been replaced and people walk the streets.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Leader: The Glen Iris Apartments are now being closed and no plans for those living there have been made.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

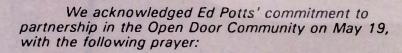
Leader: The Bethlehem Inn still has no room for those in need of housing.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Leader: Welcome House is still a dream, but the Dome Stadium continues to rise from the ruins of the Rising Star shelter.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

All: In this darkest of all days, O Lord, we wait, we mourn, we despair. Why are you so far from helping us--so far from the groans of those who wait without hope? And yet we know you were there when Jesus cried out in pain. We know that you bring into existence that which does not exist. So we rest in the hope that out of vacant lots, crushed rubble and boarded up buildings will come new SRO's bringing life out of death and hope out of despair. Amen.

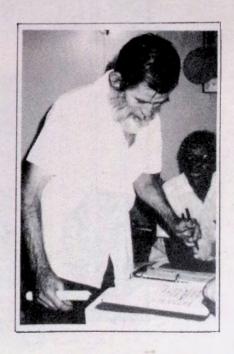


We lift up our hearts in thanksgiving for Ed Potts, for his deeper commitment to our family as we share a common life.

Child of God,
Born in Ohio,
Driver of trucks,
Walking atlas of roads of the U.S.,
Lover of children,
Fixer of faucets, toilets, broken windows, dryers,
--you name it!
He who has an opinion about everything!
Who tries to have the last word!

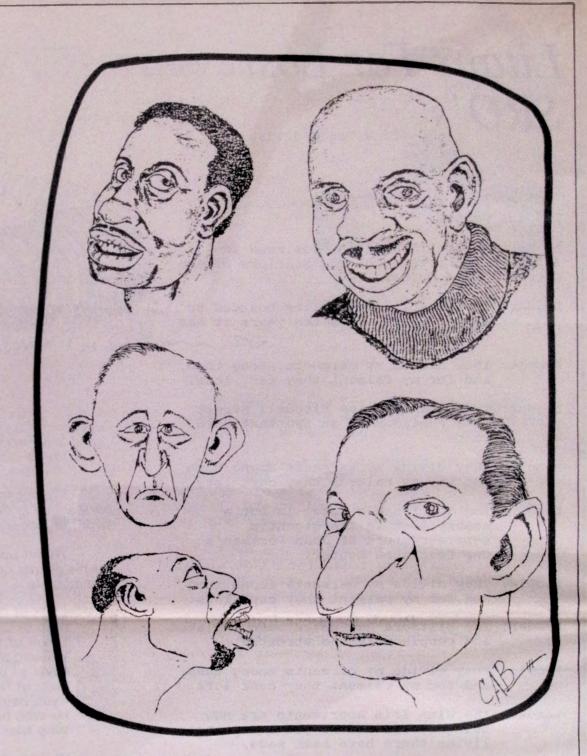
We give thanks for Ed's life among us, for his choice to follow Jesus, for his choice to be part of our family, learning to love and forgive.

So may all of us gathered here reaffirm our vows to live as a family as we follow Christ. Amen.

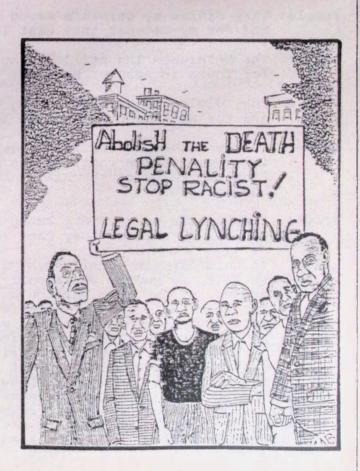


# A Carl Barker Perspective

Carl has lived at the Open Door for over 5 years. For several years he was a political cartoonist for the Chicago Daily Defender. The following cartoons were drawn by Carl during this past year as he has been in and out of the hospital. Dr. Alarcon and the staff at St. Joseph's Hospital have been working hard to save Carl's right leg which is ulcerated from vascular disease. We give thanks for St. Joseph's Hospital and for Carl's gifts. Most of the cartoons speak for themselves.







# Party!

# Party!



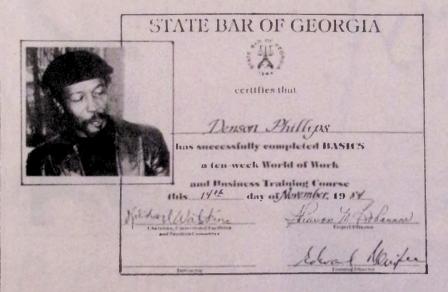


People for Urban Justice is one year old!! We celebrated with friends, fun and food. Stories were told as we remembered the occupation of the Imperial Hotel. Songs were sung about justice and liberation. We give thanks for the chance to speak out and to step out for justice. We vow to continue to be light and salt to the world.





## New Resident Volunteers



I was born in Roanoke, Alabama. I left Alabama when I was about 10 and came to live with my mother in Atlanta. I attended East Point Elementary and then went to South Fulton High. Before I finished school I was sent to a correctional institution. While I was in prison I worked on my education. Being in the institution helped me accumulate trades—plumbing, general maintenance as a carpenter's helper, and welding.

I'm 41 years old and have two boys, one 16 and the other 21. I came to the Open Door through the Imperial Hotel take-over. With the chance to be a part of the family of the Open Door Community, I'm dealing with some of my own needs. One of them is structure. Because the Open Door provides me with the opportunity to see my needs, I'm able to help others. Now I'm a resident volunteer at the Open Door Community.



Butch (a.k.a. Edward Vaughn Lovell)

I came to the Open Door out of need because I was only days short of losing my apartment and becoming homeless.

I've found the structure of community family life good for me. It has allowed me to help, in a small way, women and men like myself, except that they were caught short and are now in fact homeless.

I am now approximately through half of my six month volunteer commitment. It's very rewarding work. I lead a soup kitchen, an occasional Sunday breakfast, and I am food co-ordinator.

I appreciate the opportunity the Open Door has given me to serve.



Bruce Bishop

I grew up in Goshen, Indiana (Yes, I knew Tim Nafziger and Tim Wyse.). My interest has always been Art--drawing, painting, and ceramics. But after graduating from Goshen College in Art Education in 1980, I started 10 years of traveling and working in social work type jobs. I also went on Peace Walks--the Great Peace March and one march in Russia.

My interest and concern about the nuclear situation drove me to make the connection between big bombs and small housing budgets, hence my interest in the Open Door.

My first stay here at the house was in 1987 for 9 months, between peace walks. Then I moved to Washington, D.C. for 3 years. My work there was with Mennonite Volunteers and the mentally ill, along with taking drawing classes.

I've enjoyed all my travels, but the Open Door is an anchor in its analysis of what's important. I arrived in March for a six-month stay. Life in the house has changed in 3 years, and at times it's hard to get used to the changes, yet the work and life together is meaningful. It's good to be back.

## Phoebe's Here, So It Must Be Friday

by Dick Rustay

It is Friday morning. At the Open Door we are finishing breakfast. Suddenly, we hear a cheery, "Good morning." Phoebe Smith is here to lead the Friday Soup Kitchen. We've heard this same greeting since 1988 when Phoebe began to volunteer.

Phoebe and her husband Bob Smith first heard of the Open Door when they lived in Florida and read about Murphy Davis' and Ed Loring's work against the death penalty in Florida. Their radical prophetic ministry interested her, and when she and Bob moved to Atlanta they began worshipping at the Open Door.

Soon after she started volunteering in the soup kitchen she says, "I was on the frontline, working with marginalized people and involved in justice and mercy issues as well as continuing life in a faith community at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church."

For Phoebe, the biblical mandate to work for the kingdom of God, through specific actions, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, housing the homeless, and visiting the prisoner, is least open to interpretation. "God commands it, therefore do it."

Phoebe also feels God's call for her to use her gifts of teaching and is going to graduate school. So she tithes her time. "I spend one day a week at the Open Door which is time beyond that spent at Oakhurst Presbyterian. I tithe my 'secular time' as well as my 'sacred time.'"

Phoebe continues coming to the Open Door because she feels she gains more than she contributes.

"I gain the value of diversity--getting to know so many different kinds of people, different races and different backgrounds."

She continues, "Being where God's work is going on in the trenches gives me personal satisfaction and I have built up valued friendships with the volunteers who work with me on Friday. There is fun--laughs and lots of diverse conversation. Being obedient to God's call means much to me, more than my actual contribution to the Open Door."

Through working at the Open Door, Phoebe has developed a theological principle that should operate in all churches that have many advantages in finances and material wealth:

"I believe that culturally advantaged churches not located near the homeless should tithe their time to look beyond membership needs. Ten percent of church members' time should be involved in direct and specific ministry to those who are in need. Members should spend so many hours each week in being advocates for those in need. They should develop a



Phoebe set to go!

volunteer system that is an integral part of the congregations' life. These volunteers should be encouraged and urged by the church to share with the congregation the importance and need of helping other churches that are on the front line by virtue of their locations in the midst of homelessness. This should be a structural part of the church's life and a priority ministry."

We salute Phoebe for her faithfulness and commitment to the homeless as she continues to greet us with her, "Good morning."



## It's time to celebrate CHRISTMAS IN JULY!

Please bring donations of turkeys and hams to the Open Door. We will be able to use them to make soup and sandwiches throughout the summer.

Thank You!



## A Letter From Florida

Dear brothers and sisters at the Open Door:

There was a classified ad in a recent edition of a bimonthly Christian magazine entitled "Director: Committee on Social Witness Policy," followed by the name of the church denomination. It is not necessary to state which part of the body of Christ that is because the sickness exists in all parts. The ad gives the purpose for this Director as providing staff leadership to the Committee, to "administer the work of the Committee," to focus on such tasks as "provision of advice and counsel to the [national governing body] and its entities" and then lists some quite impressive requirements for anyone seeking such a position. These include "Christian commitment. . . competence in theological, ethical and social analysis with advanced degree desirable. . . skill in group process." And last but not least the salary range: \$40,200 - \$64,300.

I would claim that the irony of this ad, and deep sadness for the world that we are trying to be Christ for, is that the job position, the work that will be done, the time that will be spent talking, meeting, planning, advising and organizing, will not create, or act out, or set in motion any new or modified social policy, or even affirm any old policy. The policy has already been witnessed to. \$40,200 - \$64,300 is the social witness policy.

"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and angels. . . understand all mysteries and all knowledge. . . give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body to be burned, I am nothing; I gain nothing." Isn't motivation what is behind this revelation of Paul in 1st Corinthians? If I can live my life such that martyrdom is the result and not be motivated by love in the process, then I have spent my time, mind, and money acting out a morally worthless ordeal. And certainly where I spend my time, mind, and money shows to others what my motivator is. It shows what God I worship, no matter what my mouth says. As profound a revelation as this idea of Paul's was, I don't think most Christians disagree with it, at least intellectually. But Jesus has some revelation on this idea that is generally unaccepted by us: "You cannot serve both God It is not a finger-pointing and mammon." statement. It just states a fact.

In working with those at the bottom of society in Tallhassee, the poorest of our poor, the only witness that we have for them that may make us valid in their eyes and that opens their hearts to us, is that we come to them not because we are getting paid. The only truth that we have to tell them that they may begin to trust and believe, and they would know in their hearts without a word ever being said by us, is that we are not giving of ourselves to them because we get back material security. We are there to try

to love them and no money is getting in the way. If I want to help a dirt poor, uneducated, angry black man or woman then I need to show them with my life that money is not only not the answer to their suffering but it is a big part of the problem. But for me it takes a long time, if ever, to succeed in convincing my neighbors in poverty that someone from "the other side of the tracks" has stepped into their lives and really is spending time, mind and money in their neighborhood, giving things away, taking time to listen and to care.

It really is a crazy idea to many of my poor brothers and sisters. But why is it so crazy, even though we have a "churchy" title like "Good News Ministries" and are recognized by the community as religious folk? Why do the employers of this position of Director feel that they have to offer such a high salary to get someone with such credentials as an advanced degree and interpersonal skills and all the rest?

I am considering the unavoidable effect that money has on us, whether we call it "doing God's work" or not. The long hours and the drain of dealing with the pain of society make us feel things like "this job isn't worth it. I'm not getting paid enough," or "I'm not getting paid enough to do that!" Learning to live a way of life becomes having a job, or being a "volunteer" vs. an "employee." Or the reverse impact is equally damaging to our motivation and creates an obligation to do this or that because we're getting paid for it and feel guilty if we seem to not be busy all the time or didn't quite put all the hours in this week. The freedom to love goes.

To make love our motivator, nothing less than a "pureness of heart" and a "singleness of eye that enlightens the whole body" are needed as goals on a moment to moment basis because it is just so hard for us to choose and keep after this unselfish road in life. When money comes into the picture it inevitably changes my motivation and dilutes any pureness I am obtaining.

Is this really so hard to see? Everyone can understand what I am saying who has ever cooked a meal for a sick friend, or hammered nails for Habitat, or given a listening ear, or done any simple act of kindness for someone who could not return the favor.

So where does the connection get lost between doing a favor as an act of love and being in charge of social witness policy? Perhaps it is an example of the structural evil, the systemic evil we are all a part of, that is greater than the sum of its parts. When Jesus cast out the legion of demons from a demoniac and into a herd of swine that drowned in the sea, he threatend to destroy

the town's economy. And the only guy who wanted to follow him was the healed demoniac, who had nothing and no one in his corner except Jesus. I know that Jesus is destroying the economy of folks at places like the Open Door, and he is destroying ours at Good News, too. And if this is grasping at a bit of truth, then how to witness to this radical life? Why not, if you can't find someone who doesn't need a large salary before they will give of themselves, just drop the position? It is ironic that anyone with the credentials to fit that job could easily support themselves elsewhere if they had to. They know how to use the system to achieve enough stability and independence to turn attention to addressing the needs of others.

I guess if the folks who were going to hire the Director thought in this way then they would probably have to radically change

their own salaried position. I know the picture is bigger than I have painted it here. Certainly peoples' financial needs must be met somehow. I have at least as much fear and selfishness in my heart as anyone, rich or poor. I also know that we can change if we just make a decision to do it.

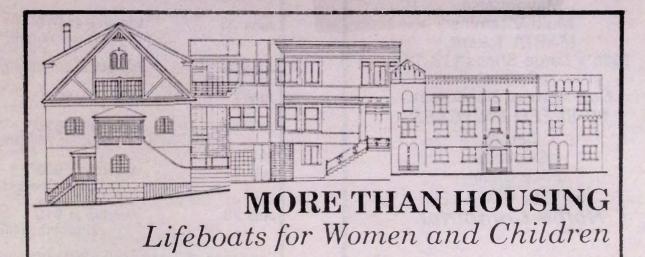
Peace to you all,

David Headly Good News Ministries Tallahassee, FL

Editor's note: David Headly is a friend of the Open Door. He spends his time, but does not live at Good News Ministries. They try to be with and give aid to folks in one of Tallahassee's poverty areas, addressing needs of homelessness, drug addiction, hunger, child abuse and our own needs of how to love as Jesus loves.

Coming Soon. . . The Open Door will be ten years old in December!

Keep your calendars clear December 5-8, 1991, for celebrations!



MORE THAN HOUSING: Lifeboats for Women and Children by Joan Forrester Sprague, architect and planner, is the first book devoted to the design and development details of new dwelling types for single mothers and their children. Over 50 cases from 18 states, ranging in size from five to hundreds of households, are described in text and 80 line drawings-- plans and elevations-- and with photographs of residents and sponsors. The book's objective is to encourage informed action to allow single mothers and children to move out of poverty, dependence, abuse, and homelessness.

By special arrangement, a limited number of copies are available to nonprofit organizations and members of church groups at a reduced prepaid price of \$20.00 plus \$3.00 per copy for postage and handling from Sprague, 1 Devonshire Place #3015, Boston, MA 02109-3510. Include the organization's tax-exempt number. Without a tax-exempt number Massachusetts purchasers must add \$1.00 sales tax per copy.

WE ARE OPEN. . .

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

OUR MINISTRY. . .

SOUP KITCHEN--Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon

SUNDAY BREAKFAST -- Sunday morning at 910, 7:15am

BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST -- Monday-Friday, 6:15am

SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES--Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-11am (Be sure to call; schedule varies)

USE OF PHONE--Monday-Saturday, 9am-noon, 1:30pm-5pm.

SHELTER REQUESTS -- Monday - Saturday, 9am - noon.

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

WEEKEND RETREATS--Four times each year (for our household & volunteers/supporters), June 28-30.

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.

#### **NEEDS**

#### Gas Kitchen Stove Refrigerator JEANS

Men's Work Shirts
Men's Underwear
Quick Grits
Cheese
Mayonnaise
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Men's Large Shoes (12-14)
Coffee
Non-Aerosol Deodorant
10-SPEED BICYCLES
Carpet

Couches
Easy Chairs
Laundry Detergent
Home Computer

#### MOVING?

When you change your address, please let us know as soon as possible. Print your complete old and new addresses on a card and attach a copy of your mailing label. It takes longer to make the correct change without this information. Please send to Willie London at the Open Door.

### Open Door Community Worship

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

Join us!

June 23 Worship at 910

Leroy Wright, Preaching

June 30 Retreat at Dayspring Farm

July 7 Music Night

July 14 Worship at 910

Nellie Williams, Preaching

July 21 Worship at 910

Carol Schlicksup, Preaching

July 28 Worship at 910

Elizabeth Dede, Preaching

Four times each year the Community has a weekend retreat outside the city. This replaces our evening worship at 910 Ponce de Leon Ave.

