

# HOSPITALITY

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Permit No. 1264

Address Service Requested

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

vol. 18, no. 7

910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

July 1999

## Health Care for the Poor: Small Victories, Continuing Struggle



BJ



MURPHY DAVIS

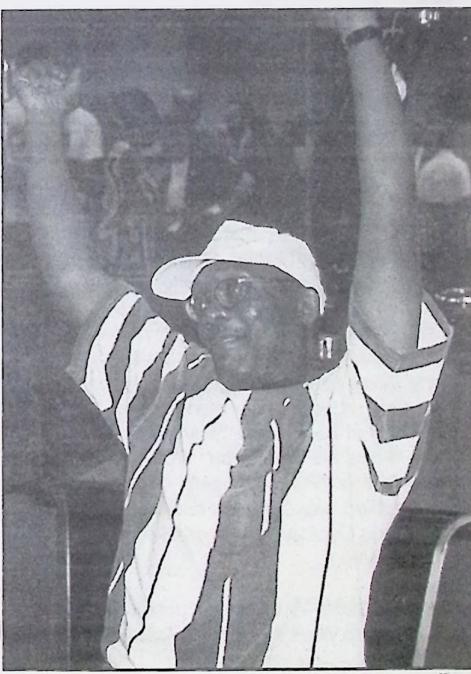
Since March 1st, when we began to picket in front of Grady Hospital a group of senior citizens from the Fulton-Atlanta Community Action Authority has been an important part of our large, diverse, and growing coalition. Together we are organizing, articulating, and agitating for medication and access to good health care for the poorest of Grady Hospital's patients. In the photo on the left, the senior citizens picket at the hospital. On the right, the group gathers with (back row) Horace Tribble, Cynthia Truelove, and Open Door Partner Adolphus Victrum.



BJ



GLADYS RUSTAY



BJ

The longest struggle to date for the Grady Coalition has been with the DeKalb County Commission to respond to the hospital's request from them for an additional \$1.1 mil. for the Grady pharmacy. In the center photo Rev. Tim McDonald helps to keep the singing going as he is rolled away in the jail bus after the arrest of the "Grady 30" on May 11th. In the photo on the left, Ms. Edith May tells of the impossibility for her and other elderly folks of access to medications if a copayment is imposed. In the photo on the right, Open Door Partner Phillip Williams celebrates the June 8th 6-1 vote of the DeKalb County Commission to grant the \$1.1 mil. to the Grady pharmacy.

## Grady Hospital Update

by Joe Hinds

Grady Memorial Hospital was chartered in 1892 to provide health care for poor people of Fulton and DeKalb counties. Grady Hospital has a long history of quality medical care for the poor while serving as a teaching hospital for physicians, nurses, social workers, technicians, and other professionals.

On March 15, 1999, Grady Health Systems, facing a \$26.4 million deficit, implemented a policy requiring even the poorest of the poor to pay for clinic visits and to pay a \$10 co-payment for each prescription filled. This policy replaced free clinic visits and a charge of fifty cents for prescriptions and supplies.

A diverse coalition of concerned folk has gathered around this issue. Meeting with the Hospital Board convinced the Board to rescind the co-payment policy and to work with advocates to seek emergency funds for the pharmacy. Fulton County responded quickly with an allocation of \$3.5 million for the pharmacy. DeKalb County dealt with the issue for two months before responding. There were thirty-seven arrests in two non-violent direct actions.

On June 1 The Coalition gathered at the DeKalb County Commission Building for prayer, shouting, and singing. DeKalb County Commission members were lifted in prayers for softening of hearts and right action regarding health care for the poor.

On June 2 members of The Coalition gathered from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the Finance Committee meeting of the DeKalb County Commission. We were joined by many of our Senior friends and a formerly homeless man, folks who regularly spend time in the Grady Pharmacy line. We were pleased that the committee voted 3 to 0 in favor of \$1.1 million to the Grady Pharmacy.

### June 8, 1999: DeKalb County Commission Meeting

At 8 a.m. The Grady Coalition gathered on the sidewalk outside the Maloof Center for a prayer and shout session before entering the auditorium for the 9:00 meeting of the DeKalb County Commission.

The meeting began at 9 a.m. The vote for \$1.1 million for Grady Hospital was on the agenda for 10:00. We sat quietly until the vote on money for Grady.

By 10:30 we were into the Public Hearing segment of the meeting which is where the Grady vote would come. The Commission voted for \$1.1 million to the Grady Pharmacy. The only

"no" vote was cast by Republican commissioner Elaine Boyer of the 1st District. Commissioner Bill Brown announced that DeKalb County follows procedures and that the meetings are held with a sense of decorum. He assured the assembly that he "was not moved by the demonstrations" to cast a "yes" vote. Commissioner Jacqueline Scott stated that she was not moved by the demonstrations either, and that her "yes" vote was cast because they were able to find the \$1.1 million in some unexpected revenues.

Following the "yes" vote we held up signs bearing the slogans "Thank you for voting for Grady...for justice...for life...for the poor" and walked from the auditorium. We gathered on the sidewalk for a press conference where we stated our intent to move next to Emory University with a letter to President William Chace urging their compliance with the 1984 contract requiring Emory to provide support and full medical staffing to Grady Hospital. We also formally announced the March For Medicine on July 22 from Woodruff Park to the State Capitol by way of Grady Hospital.

We then marched to the park behind the old DeKalb County Courthouse where we celebrated with lemonade and cookies in the gazebo.

### Action Alert

#### July 7, 8:30 a.m.: Trial of the Praying Buddhist Monks and Nuns

DeKalb County Recorder's Court across the street from the DeKalb County Jail - 4425 Memorial Drive.

#### July 22: March For Medicine

Join us at 10 a.m. at Woodruff Park. Our march will take us to Grady Hospital and the Georgia State Capitol Building.

#### July 26, 3 p.m.: Grady Board Meeting

Gather at 3 p.m. for the 3:30 public meeting. The Board will decide on the future policy for prescription drugs.

#### August 2, 9 a.m.: The Arraignment of the Grady 30

State Court of DeKalb, 556 N. McDonough St. Decatur.

[Call for an update on the schedule of the trial of the Levetan 7.]

Please Write, Phone, or FAX

**Governor Roy Barnes**  
203 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
404-656-1776  
FAX 404-657-7332

*Ask the Governor to expedite money owed to Grady Hospital by the state and to find additional funds for the emergency before us. Ask him to acknowledge Grady's role as a state and regional hospital and to fund it accordingly.*

**Dr. William Chace, President**  
Emory University  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
404-727-6013

*Ask President Chace to step forward and use Emory's resources to fully staff the hospital and to help ensure the health of Grady Hospital.*

For continuing updates, please call:  
Ed Loring 404-874-9652

## Some Comparisons

If we figure the poorest of poor (zero pay Grady card holders) have a monthly SSI income (or other equivalent income) of no more than \$500, and Mr. Renford, CEO Grady Hospital, has an annual income (a conservative estimate) of \$100,000 (or \$8,300/month), then:

A \$50 copay from the zero pay card holders is a copay equivalent to Mr. Renford of \$8.30 per Rx  
A \$2 copay from the zero pay card holders is a copay equivalent to Mr. Renford of \$33.20 per Rx  
A \$5 copay from the zero pay card holders is a copay equivalent to Mr. Renford of \$83.00 per Rx  
A \$10 copay from the zero pay card holders is a copay equivalent to Mr. Renford of \$166.00 per Rx.

- Rev. Chip Carson

*(Editors note: Chip Carson is a pastor in the Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta and the Chaplain of AID Atlanta. He was arrested with the DeKalb 30—agitating for funding for the Grady pharmacy.)*

*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.*

**Brenda Smith—Volunteer Coordinator;**  
Group Work Project Coordinator  
**Ed Loring—Correspondence**  
**Elizabeth Dede—Resident Volunteer Coordinator; Guest Ministry;**  
**Hardwick Prison Trip**  
**Murphy Davis—Southern Prison Ministry**



Open Door Community

PHOTO BY GARY BECK

### Newspaper

**Editorial Staff—**Chuck Campbell, Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede, Joyce Hollyday, Ed Loring, Tamara Puffer, Gladys Rustay, Brenda Smith, and Stan Saunders

**Managing Editor—**Michael Galovic

**Layout—**Michael Galovic

**Copy Editing—**Alice Alexander,

Gabriella Boston, Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede, Julie Martin, Tamara Puffer, Gladys Rustay, and Heather Spahr

**Circulation—**Phillip Williams, Joe Miller, and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests

**Subscriptions or change of address—**

Anne Wheeler

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

Open Door Community  
(404) 874-9652; 874-7964 fax

# MARCH for MEDICINE and HEALTH CARE

Thursday July 22nd

*Join with the Coalition for Grady Hospital in a march to the State Capitol. We will present to Governor Roy Barnes an agenda for health care for the poor and emergency aid to Grady Hospital.*



9:30 a.m. - March  
from Woodruff Park to Grady Hospital

10:40 a.m. - Rally on  
Butler St. in front of Grady Hospital

12 noon - Rally with speakers and music inside the State Capitol

## Power, Privilege and Privatization

by Murphy Davis

Looking back over the years and the various political issues that have claimed my attention, it occurs to me that there are some social, political, and economic forces that simply will not go away. They might go underground for a while, but not to die, be buried, and forgotten. They just rest a while and mutate, and then they come up again in some other guise.

Twenty-three years ago, I went down to a small town in South Georgia for a trial. I had traveled with several other folks, including a bright and enthusiastic Yale law student. When we got out of the car and walked toward the courthouse, we came to a chain link fence surrounding a little kudzu-covered building and an open space. The law student who had

spent part of the previous week in this town helping with trial preparations said, "You'll never believe this! This used to be the town swimming pool, and..." I interrupted to finish the sentence for him, "...and somewhere between 1954 and 1960, the town council, fearing that the pool would have to be integrated, closed the pool, filled it in, boarded up the bath house, and abandoned it."

The young man looked at me in astonishment. He knew that I had never set foot in this little town. "How did you know that?" "Because," I said, "I grew up in a Southern town." When I was in the seventh grade, our junior high school band practiced in a little brick building that had previously been the bath house for the municipal swimming pool. The pool itself had been filled in, paved, and turned into a

parking lot. That was 1960, and the pool had been closed four or five years earlier.

The case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* decided by the Supreme Court in 1954, struck down the "separate but equal" basis of school segregation, and mandated the racial integration of public schools. Town and city leaders all over the country, but especially in the South, saw the writing on the wall. They knew that all segregated public institutions were now called into question. Wasting no time, local authorities decided to close facilities like swimming pools rather than waiting for a court order mandating their integration. If we have to swim with Black folks, figured the white folks, we just won't have a swimming pool at all.

Except that the decision-makers

did have a pool. The upper class white folks had the Greenville Golf and Country Club. The middle class folks had the Moose Club. Poor whites were, as usual, left out of the deliberations and the resolution; and, as programmed, many of them resented Black folks for the loss of all-white public amenities. And Black folks continued to be purposefully excluded from the decision making and the facilities.

In other words, when threatened with the prospect of having to share something they never intended to share, the people with the power privatized their resources and abandoned the public institutions in question. Through the late 1950's and 1960's, the same sort of thing happened all over the South around public

(continued on next page)

schools. In one town, city, and county after another, private schools and academies sprang up. Often they were called "Christian" schools. They were all-white. (Jesus, the dark-skinned Palestinian Jew, would certainly not have been welcomed.) In some towns and counties, the public schools became all-Black, and they were essentially abandoned in all but nominal support. It was a swell deal for wealthy whites because they maintained control of their own institutions and found ways to pay less to support the public institutions--especially the ones that no longer existed!

I cannot remember anybody using the word "privatization" back then. But that's what it must have been, because the same thing that is going on now is called privatization. Government services, parks, utilities, schools, and institutions are being contracted out to private for-profit agencies and corporations. Prisons and jails are being constructed and managed by corporations whose stocks are soaring. (The Corrections Corporation of America is currently building two prisons in South Georgia that nobody has even asked for. They appear confident that "if we build it they will come," as they said in the movie.) The various vendors who provide services for the public or formerly-public institutions are operated by private interests for private profit. And while Corporate America bites off larger and larger chunks of the public funds, the strident resistance to government "interference" by planning or regulation is a steady theme.

The mainline media, which ought to be helping us to think about and discuss these issues in the public arena, are owned and controlled by the corporate interests as well. So the real changes (public money increasingly moving into private pockets as public institutions are eviscerated) are not covered by the mainline media, and protest of and dissent from the prevailing trends and ideologies are simply treated as non-newsworthy.

There has been in recent years a programmatic assault on *all* public institutions. This assault is intended as an assertion of the intent of the privileged elite to protect and multiply their own resources. It is also an outright assault on the poor themselves. Private hospitals and schools, like all private institutions, serve those who can pay for their services. Public hospitals and schools are provided for every citizen: those who can pay and those who cannot. To attack these institutions with the intent to dismantle them is nothing less than a direct assault on the poor who are served and helped by the institutions.

Grady Hospital is, by charter and definition, a hospital for anybody and everybody in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Any resident of these two

counties is entitled to receive medical care there, regardless of ability to pay. Those who can get medical care nowhere else can turn to Grady. Those who could not otherwise see a doctor or receive medications or have surgery or undergo chemotherapy can generally find a welcome at Grady. At least that is the way it was intended to be. But things are changing.

Health care has not all of a sudden become an issue of privatization. Much to the detriment of the common good, health care has

system that increasingly funnels public resources into private pockets and depends upon silencing public debate, decreasing democratic process, and eliminating any kind of public accountability. Privatization is a system intended to build and protect privilege for the benefit of those who already control the power and wealth of our society. The word privilege means, literally, "private law," and the drive of the privileged is to become "a law unto themselves." Along the way, democratic process suffers and the structures and institutions of democ-

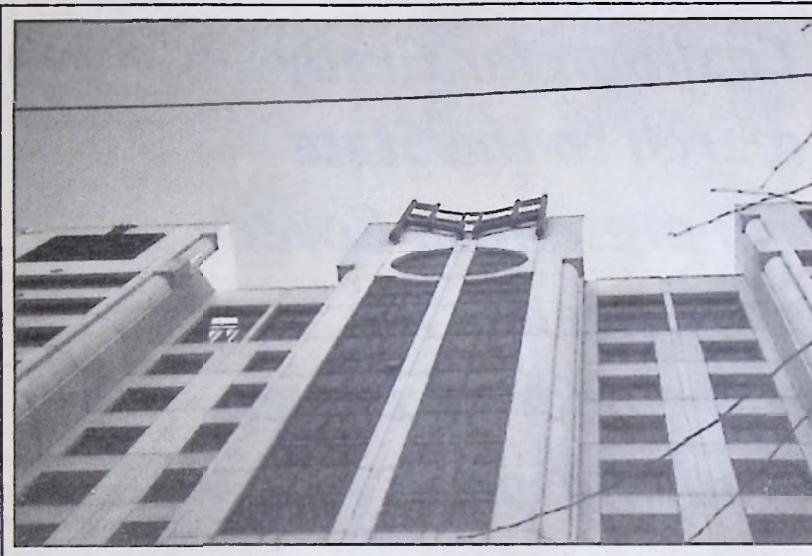
enormous government subsidies for the health care system that move public money into private coffers rather than toward the common good. We are paying through the nose to maintain the obscene wealth of the elite rather than the general health of the people.

How many people do you know who are anxious about their health care? This is not a problem that is coming down only on the poor. Many middle class and working people know that they are paying more and getting less every day. They also know that they live in danger of not being able to get care deemed necessary by their physicians or of losing insurance coverage altogether. The anxiety is growing right along with the corporate profit margin. And a sense of paralysis and futility seems to grip the body politic. The electoral process is so controlled by the same corporate interests that are reaping the benefits of this system that movement seems almost impossible.

The market-driven, for-profit system is intended to build the privilege of the few and increase a sense of powerlessness among the rest of us. But we do not have to accept the sense of powerlessness that we are intended to feel. We can move toward a healthier life together when we remember and practice this truth: a healthy life can only be lived when we live with a sense of community and mutual care. Without such a commitment we live pitted against each other and get sicker and sicker. When Dr. Martin Luther King spoke to the marchers who had walked from Selma to Montgomery in 1965, he said, "What we seek is a society at peace with itself." What medicine for our anxiety-ridden society! What a balm is this medicine with every step we take in the struggle toward the Beloved Community.

The drive toward privatization will not go away, because human greed is always a part of the human story. But it is never the whole story. The struggle for justice and human dignity is also part of the story, and the struggle for justice is healing. When we refuse to cooperate with the system that "takes necessities from the masses to give luxury to the classes," we begin to restore the health of our body politic. We can have health care--really *good* health care--for every girl and boy, every woman and man in the United States of America. We can live together and share the wealth and the good gifts of the land. And until that day comes, we can struggle together to live into the vision. We are experiencing the joy of this truth as we continue in the struggle for our beloved Grady Hospital. Please join us! We'll all get better together.

*Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*



Grady Hospital

BJ

long been understood as a commodity in the United States. It has more often than not been a problem for poor people to find adequate care. But we have had at least some sense of the obligation of government to care for the public health. It has, for several generations, for instance, seemed imperative that we sustain the agencies that monitor, test for, and treat infectious diseases. It has been an acceptable notion that all children, regardless of economic circumstances, should be immunized to protect from preventable illness. We have even supported programs like Medicaid and Medicare to insure at least minimal care for the very poor, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

But even this minimal level of care provided from public resources in the U.S. is now under fire. Medicaid and Medicare continue to be cut. All public programs are under assault while market-driven, for-profit managed care systems move to control an increasing portion of the health care "market". Of course the poor, the disabled, the elderly and prisoners have no place--no place at all--in the market. These are people who in the for-profit system simply do not exist because they are not "consumers." What horrible language and concepts to use for human beings! What are we doing to ourselves and each other?

Aside from dehumanizing the poor and each other, we are creating a

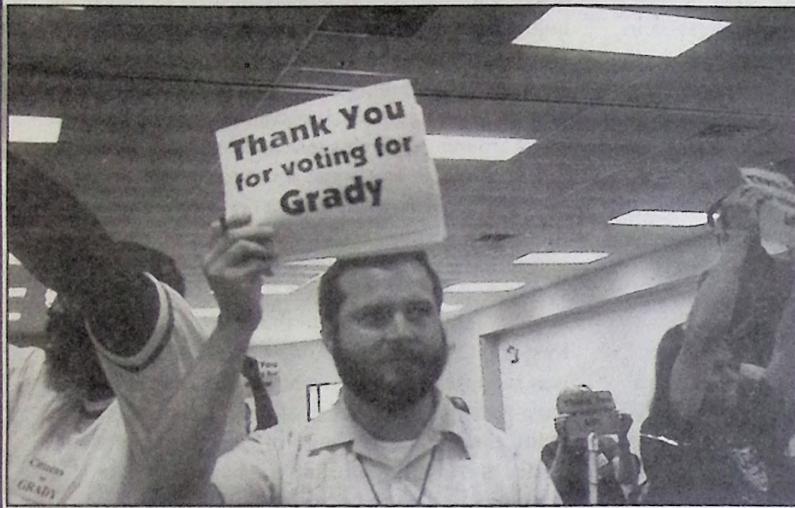
racy are damaged.

We in the United States spend some \$4,000 per person per year for health care, more than any other people in the world. This is a cost of nearly twice our nearest competitor and a much higher figure than our industrialized neighbors like Canada and Great Britain. And their expenditure pays for a health care system that provides access to care for everyone in the country. With this enormous amount of money we are spending on our health care system we have 44 million women, men and children who are uninsured--a number which is said to be increasing by approximately 125,000 people each month. (And if this goes on during an economic boom, what will happen when the downturn comes?) In the countries that provide for a national health system, the infant mortality rate is lower and life expectancy is longer than that of people in the United States. In such a system, you simply find healthier people.

How can this be? If we spend more government *and* private money on health care in the United States than does Canada, and Canada has healthier (and considerably less anxious) people, why wouldn't we move immediately toward a national health plan? The answer seems to have something to do with the fact that the lion's share of our health care dollars are pouring into enormous corporate profits. This includes

## Join us as a Resident Volunteer!

Spend 6 to 12 months as a Resident Volunteer



Open Door Resident Volunteer, Joe B. Hinds, marches out of the DeKalb County Commission meeting with the coalition, carefully not causing disruption of the meeting following the vote to approve temporary funding for the Grady Hospital pharmacy.

- 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.

Contact: Elizabeth Dede  
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE  
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212  
404/874-9652;  
874-7964 (fax)

## plan to Join Us for the Festival of Shelters

SEPTEMBER 26 & 27

The **Festival of Shelters** is a celebration from ancient Israel, which commemorates God's instruction to Moses and the Israelites. It is a joyful harvest festival and a time of remembrance. After the Exodus from Egypt, God commanded the people: "You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens of the land shall live in booths . . ." (Leviticus 23:42). The Festival is meant to remind all of God's people, especially those who celebrate a prosperous harvest, that we were once homeless wanderers. God provided for us in our thirst and hunger, and as we remember, we are led to share of our bounty with the poor and homeless of our day.

So the people got branches and built shelters on the flat roofs of their houses, in their yards, in the Temple courtyard, and in the public squares. . . All the people who had come back from captivity built shelters and lived in them. . . And everybody was excited and happy (Nehemiah 8).

## Thank You Mrs. McFarlane!

For 15 years or more, the envelopes crossed my desk. Almost always, there was a gift of \$100. Often the envelope had known an earlier life and function, so there would be paper pasted over a previous address and she would have carefully written in the Open Door address. In the corner of the envelope the return address read "Mrs. John A. McFarlane", or sometimes "Frances McFarlane"; and the handwriting spoke of an earlier age when people studied "penmanship," and formed their cursive carefully under the watchful eye of a schoolmarm.

Most often the check was the message, but at times she wrote a note of thanksgiving or encouragement. But over the years, we never met our friend and we knew relatively little about her. Then a year or more ago there was an article in the newspaper about our long-time donor. It pictured Frances McFarlane at her kitchen table surrounded by her artwork, and the article described how she had, at an advanced age, begun to paint, assemble paper collage, and work in ceramic sculpture. Over several years, she produced an enormous body of work. She attracted the interest of some who wanted to market her work, but she preferred to work and give her creations away. Her interest in selling her work was only to give away what she gained. We were delighted when she appeared at the community one after-

noon with an oil painting and a sculpture for us. The ceramic piece is a quirky assemblage of rather bizarre characters—large and small—all dressed in colorful and outlandish garb. It helped me to understand her attraction to the Open Door.

In what was probably her last gift to us, Frances wrote, "I am sending some extra money this month. Please use it to help those in prison—or to help stamp out the

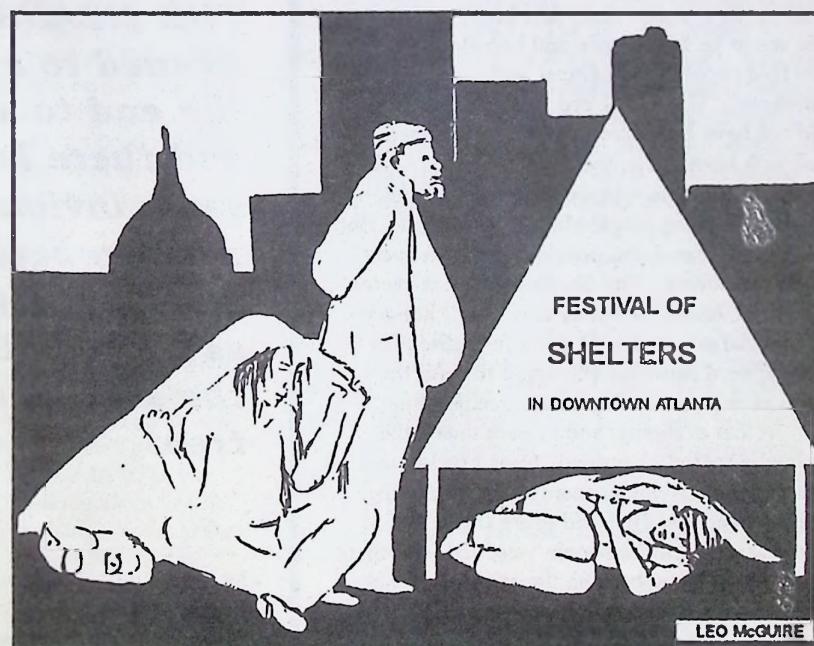


FRANCES McFARLANE

death penalty—whichever needs the most help." The letter was printed in last month's *Hospitality*. She died on May 14, at the age of 85. She specified that memorial gifts were to come to the Open Door.

We will remember Frances McFarlane with deep thanksgiving. Surely the poor have lost a friend.

- Murphy Davis



LEO McGUIRE

# Nonviolent Resistance in the Spirit of Jesus and the Open Door Breakfast

By Peter Gathje

(Editor's note: Pete Gathje is a professor of Christian Ethics and Peace Studies at the Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, and is a faithful friend of the Open Door Community. He is the author of the Open Door Community's history: Christ Comes in a Stranger's Guise.)

Gandhi said, "The first principle of nonviolent action is that of non-cooperation with everything humiliating." Nonviolence refuses to cooperate with, or to be complicit in, any actions or institutions that deny human dignity; that degrade human beings. In this refusal, nonviolent persons are committed to truth-telling. The first truth is that each person is a child of God, and from this truth we know that we are made for life together as brothers and sisters. We are, as children of God, made to delight in each other's presence and we are not made to dominate and destroy one another.

The life and teachings of Jesus reveal his commitment to nonviolent resistance. Jesus, in his words and actions refused to cooperate with, or to be complicit in, any activity or institutional structure that denied human dignity, that degraded human beings. In this nonviolent resistance, Jesus told the truth about God, and about how we need to live if we want to flourish as God's children. Thus Jesus could say, and we can believe, that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

Jesus broke laws that sought to enforce the superiority of one group of people over another; such laws declared certain people "clean" and others "unclean." Jesus healed those whom society said should be left alone, ignored, or excluded because they had been judged "unclean," beyond redemption, undeserving of help. Jesus fed the hungry without asking if they were worthy of being fed. These actions threatened a social order based upon the disorder of domination and death.

The Open Door Breakfast is in the Spirit of Jesus' nonviolent resistance. The breakfast refuses to cooperate with the economic and political order that says people are expendable; that worth as a human being is based upon income and skin color. In a social order in which "unworthy" people are to be left hungry and homeless, to simply feed people is a political and economic act of resistance. The social order says these people should not have food, should not be welcomed and treated with human dignity. Those who provide the space for eating, and who cook and serve the Breakfast say these people should have food. But more, they go ahead and provide that food to the best of their ability. The Breakfast makes present the action of Jesus. When he saw 5,000 hungry people, he did not, as his slow learning disciples suggested, send those people away to send for themselves in the economy of the surrounding towns. In that economy, and in ours today, the basic law is scarcity. Instead, Jesus proclaimed and practiced a Divine economy. Jesus had the disciples share what God had given them, and to their amazement all the people were fed, and there was more than enough. The threat to the social order is clear. In the absence of scarcity, those whose power is based upon the control of scarce

goods no longer have power. To proclaim and to enact the Divine economy, whether in Galilee or at 910, is to threaten the present social order.

Jesus' nonviolent resistance went beyond healing and feeding, however. He also engaged in direct action that went to the very heart of the established order. In Jesus' day, the heart of the established order was the Temple. The Temple was not simply a place of worship—it was the very symbol of national identity. Today, people go to Washington, D.C. and pay their respects to the great shrines of our national identity—the White House, Congress, and memorials to past leaders. So, too, in Jesus' day, people went to Jerusalem to pay their respects to the Temple.

The Temple was supposed to symbolize God's presence among the people of Israel. This massive building was supposed to symbolize the powerful presence of the liberating God of Exodus. Likewise, the great public buildings in Washington, D.C. are supposed to symbolize this country's commitment to freedom, equality, justice, democracy. In Jesus' day, the reality of the Temple was controlled by the Jewish ruling class, who in turn cooperated with the Romans who occupied Israel. Together, that ruling class and the Romans oppressed the people of Israel. To go to Temple then

must have elicited conflicted feelings—the desire to worship God and to celebrate God's covenant with the people of Israel but also sorrow and anger in response to the Temple's being ill used as part of an unjust system. In our day, our social and political reality likewise falls far short of our ideals. Despite what our great public documents and monuments proclaim, the United States continues to be structured around the three great interrelated evils Martin Luther King, Jr. saw some thirty years ago: racism, poverty, and militarism. Just as in Jesus' day, a ruling elite continues to use the powerful symbols of our national identity to enforce an oppressive social system.

Jesus responded to the reality of the Temple by going to it and disrupting business as usual. This was supposed to be God's home, Jesus said, but you have turned it into a place of lies, of economic and political deceit. The House of God was to promote justice and to bring life, but you have used it to promote injustice and to bring death. This was supposed to be sacred space where people could be renewed and strengthened to do God's will—to work for freedom and justice, but you have turned it into a place in which people are oppressed for the benefit of a few.

In being faithful to Jesus' nonviolent resistance action, we do not have to go to the shrines in Washington, D.C. to confront the present order. There are "temples" in every city, places where the potential for liberation has been turned into instruments of oppression. Wherever we live, we must ask, where is the "temple" of our town? In Atlanta there is City Hall, and there is Underground, among others. City Hall may seem obvious, but how is Underground a "temple"? It represents, albeit in corrupted form, a yearning for community, for a place in which people from throughout the city and beyond may gather, a truly public space. Yet, from its very inception, Underground fell short of that yearning. Built with the help of public funds, it failed to become a public space. Built on public land, including a park, it became a private preserve for the elite.

And so, as Jesus told the truth about the Temple, followers of Jesus today are called to tell the truth about places like Underground. The truth is that it has betrayed the community by dividing people. The truth is that some are welcome, those who pass a test of social worthiness, and the rest are excluded, even arrested for entering this public space. The truth is that the social order Underground Atlanta represents is a social disorder based upon the denial of human dignity and based upon a way of life that is in reality a way of degradation and death.

Jesus' work of healing and feeding inevitably drew him to direct confrontation with the powers his work resisted. Jesus' way of life, his truth telling, led him to the Temple in Jerusalem. So too, the Open Door Breakfast will inevitably lead to direct action at the temples of this city and this nation. For Jesus, as for his disciples, the refusal to cooperate with and be complicit in that which degrades human beings, inevitably leads to truth telling, to nonviolent resistance, directed toward those structures that endorse and enforce the humiliation of human beings, the denial of the dignity of God's children.



***THE MEANS may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.***

- GANDHI



RITA CORBIN

by Ed Loring

## Therefore

*"Sing with joy! Sing your songs of praise!  
God has saved the people and rescued all  
who are left!" (Jeremiah 31:7 TEV, 1992)*

The great Prophet Jeremiah does not mean to imply that God will not rescue those who are right, but there is a particular way that God reaches out to the left. It has to do with the message of this book, The Holy Bible. This sacred text is a book about subversion—the subversion of our domination system.

Let us look at the Open Door's paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer:

Our Beloved Friend,  
Who is outside the system,  
May your Holy Name be honored  
By the way we live our lives.  
Your Beloved Community come  
Your way be done  
Inside the system  
As it is outside the system  
Forgive us our wrongs  
As we forgive those who have wronged us.  
Do not bring us to hard testing,  
But keep us safe from the Evil One.  
For thine is the Beloved Community,  
The power and the glory forever and ever.  
Amen.

We pray, "Our Beloved Friend." We use that language as a way to address God because we are looking for nonpatriarchal language. So rather than saying, "Our Father" we begin with Yahweh as our Friend.

"Who is outside the system." This is the system of domination. It is this system that brings death and slavery to the human community and to our institutions. This is the fallen but redeemable powers and principalities which imprison our lives and spirits and souls to the reign of wealth in Imperial America.

Each time we come to read the scripture, or talk about the scripture, or try to put the scripture into practice in our own lives, we are asked by the Holy Spirit to subvert the domination system. What Good News to learn in Jeremiah that God has a particular way that she is going to rescue those who are left. Hallelujah! The Prophet gives us encouragement as we struggle, and struggle it is, to practice the subversive faith in Jesus Christ, that is, to be disciples of Jesus, the Prophet.

Here is a radical subversive story from the Bible: *Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon, a man who had suffered from a dreaded skin disease. While Jesus was eating, a woman*

*came in with an alabaster jar full of a very expensive perfume made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on Jesus' head. Some of the people there became angry and said to one another, "What was the use of wasting the perfume? It could have been sold for more than three hundred silver coins (just under a year's wages for a rural worker) and the money given to the poor!" And they criticized her harshly.*

*But Jesus said, "Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done a fine and beautiful thing for me. You will always have poor people with you, and any time you want to, you can help them. But you will not always have me. She did what she could; she poured perfume on my body to prepare it ahead of time for burial. Now, I assure you that wherever the gospel is preached all over the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." (Mark 14:3-9; TEV, 1992)*

The Word of God has not been used as a Word for subversion, but in fact has been used to legitimate the domination system. The verse, "The poor will always be with you," is one such verse. This call to engagement and the pursuit of justice is used to excuse people from the struggle to be human and righteous. What an anomaly! What a victory for the devil.

It's really hard to believe how many Bibles we have just floating around the house. There have been times, even recently in Nicaragua and Guatemala, when people have walked miles for a Bible study, not having a Bible available to them until they get to the Bible study. The thrill people have had being able to get close to this book. Back in the old days, before there were so many books and distractions, people memorized lots and lots of scripture. They read the same things over and over and they learned it. So when people heard a particular scripture, they knew its context. When Jesus quoted, "The poor you will always have with you," he figured that they could find their way back to the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy. A lot of people think that when Jesus said that, he had come up with a brand new sociological principle that is unalterable: There's really no need to try to work to eradicate poverty because God says the poor will always be with you. But that's not what the problem is. The problem that the Bible is trying to suggest is the rich people will always be with us. The problem with wealth was that it was sometimes slow in the ancient world, and in antiquity, always slow. Today it can move much more quickly. The problem with wealth is the centralization of power. So the way that the Hebrews dealt with this was to say that every seventh day has to be a day of rest, and it is against the law to work. If you work, and earn income, or produce, certainly in the book of Exodus, Deuteronomy and Leviticus, you're stoned to death—capital punishment. Because it so violated the possibility of justice and the integrity of the community.

The rich you will always have with you, therefore we've got to structure ways to redistribute accumulations of wealth and power. The problem is, there is such greed in the domination system that there will always be some oppression. So we're always going to have poor people because there are going to be some who are taking from them. "So every seventh year," Yahweh said to Moses, "You shall grant a remission of debts." Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. What it's talking about here is money, or items of economic exchange, accumulation of land, for instance. "And this is the manner of remission: every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbor, not exacting it against a neighbor who is a member of the community because

the Lord's remission has been proclaimed." "There will, however, be no one in need among you because the Lord is sure to bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession to occupy. If only you will obey the Lord your God, diligently observing the entire commandment that I command you today." There's no poverty in the community, in the neighborhood, and even in the whole land if we remit one another's debts. In the Catholic Worker tradition, Dorothy Day begins her work by saying that the cause of war and the fundamental problem in capitalism is interest. It says right here that if we remit one another's debts there are no poor in the land.

"When the Lord your God has blessed you as Yahweh has promised you, you will live to be a nation, but you will not borrow. You will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you. If there is any among you in need, (anybody, not the deserving, just anybody) as a member of your community and any of your towns in the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, the seventh year, the year for remission is near, and therefore view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing. Your neighbor might cry out against you to the Lord." God hears the cry of the poor. That's dangerous. That's subversive. To have a God who hears the cry of the poor, rather than to follow the agenda of the rich and the wealthy. What kind of God is this? A God of slaves. "Your neighbor might cry out to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake." Sounds good.

One of the problems that we have in our lives is that life is not lived out on the level of should and ought. We wish it were. If we spend too much time on should and ought we're going to get self-righteous and then we're going to get despairing and then we're going to quit. God knows there is not yet a time where we can eradicate in our own lives, to the extent that God wants, our greed and our hostility and our willingness to pay war taxes so that \$10 billion more over the next six years can be given to the Pentagon.

"Since there will never cease to be some in need on earth, therefore,"—that's the word people leave out who want to take away the subversive dimension and power of the Bible. "The poor will always be with you," so why not go to the golf course? Why not drink Coca-Cola in the morning? "Therefore," says this prophet Moses, teaching to his people, "I command you," says Yahweh, "open your hand to the poor and the needy neighbor in your land." Because the poor are always with us, and as we move through this year, we must recommit that even more faithfully and fully, we will open more widely the open door at the Open Door. Open the hands and hearts of each of us and all of us, that we may be more and more deeply formed as people who will stand with the poor and the prisoner and on death row, and sit at table with those who come into this room and this house because they don't get enough to eat, with homeless people who struggle even to find a place in the front yard, here.

"The poor will always be with you, therefore open your hands to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."

Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

## Dick Rustay at 70

by Elizabeth Dede

Back when I was growing up in a high liturgical church we counted the long season between Pentecost and Advent as Sundays in Trinity. Then somewhere along the way, we started measuring by Sundays in Pentecost, but this was confusing, because you didn't count the Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, as part of Pentecost, or something like that. Now on the liturgical calendar it seems to be the popular thing to just call this time Ordinary Time, even though it's obvious to members of the Open Door Community that there is no such thing as ordinary time.

This year Trinity Sunday, May 30, was not at all ordinary since Open Door Community Partner, Richard Miles Rustay, turned 70 on that day. Observances here included a huge Happy Birthday Banner that hung from the front balcony, breakfast for our homeless friends, and worship with a sermon preached by the Rev. Emmett Jarrett about icons, the Holy Trinity, and hospitality as God's Divine Welcome. We concluded the whole of Dick's 70th year, which began way back when he turned 69, as Murphy periodically reminded him throughout 1998 and 1999, with dinner and a time for stories and gifts.

I first met Dick when he hadn't even turned 60! Of course, he first met me when I hadn't even turned 30! Now he's 70, and I'm on the way to 40. But I still remember one of my earliest experiences with him. We were serving together at the

Butler St. Breakfast, which was a wild, chaotic place in my early days at the Open Door. We still had a lot to learn about order and limits and their relationship to hospitality. Hungry, cold, wet, hot, miserable, tired people would push, yell, and crowd into the room that wasn't built to hold them all, while we tried to make sure that everyone got one egg, one cup of coffee, one bowl of grits, and a place to sit down. Inevitably, somebody's foot would get stepped on, sometimes

electric feel you get just before a huge bolt of lightning flashes over your head. You could hear an undertone, a hum of anger and frustration, way down inside, ready to burst out in a scream.

And into this tension danced Dick Rustay. On this morning that I'm particularly remembering, he was serving the hard-boiled eggs, and with each egg he put on a tray, Dick looked up into the eyes of the homeless one and said, "Peace be with you!" Recall

Ronald Reagan's presidency. After a few years, we learned how to offer hospitality, the breakfast serving calmed down a good bit, Dick and Gladys became Resident Volunteers at the Open Door Community, and George Bush was elected president. You may be wondering what Reagan and Bush have to do with all of this, and it's not that Dick became one of the Thousand Points of Light, although he certainly is a big, bright, cheerful sun for all of us. Instead, with the calm and peace at the Butler St. Breakfast, a sense of humor began to grow among our homeless friends, and they shared their laughter and happiness with us. Dick began to be known among our homeless friends as George Bush and Mr. President. He does bear a resemblance, I think. So instead of offering the Peace of the Lord, he was now giving Presidential handshakes, and promising good legislation for the poor and needy. Recently I read that the real George Bush parachuted out of an airplane to celebrate his 75th birthday. I'm glad that Dick Rustay was here with his Community and with his homeless friends to celebrate his 70th birthday. And I trust that he will keep his feet firmly rooted in this ground, just like a tree that's planted by water, when he celebrates his 75th birthday among us.

I'm thankful that in addition to the real Dick Rustay, we also have this wonderful accompanying photograph taken by Calvin Kimbrough in 1997. It is an Open Door Community icon that helps us to meditate on the love of God and the peace of the Holy Spirit, and the grace of Jesus. In his Trinity Sunday sermon, the Rev. Emmett Jarrett taught us some about the Eastern Orthodox icons, which were made by these early worshippers because they knew that the image of God is human, and therefore can be painted and looked at. God became human in Jesus, and we remember that we are created in God's image. The promise is that God loves each of us, and Love is the very nature of this God we worship. The Trinity of God shows us that God is always in a loving relationship, and bids us always to be in loving relationships one with another. And so Dick Rustay in his 70 years on this earth is the very embodiment of God's hospitality, God's Divine Welcome. Dick stands, smiling, his arms open, offering peace and joy. The dining room is open and ready for the honored guest. Happy 70th Birthday, Dick!

CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Dick Rustay

resulting in an argument, or some shoving, or on the very worst days, tables being turned over, and metal folding chairs flying. Often in the atmosphere there was that tight

that I was only about 6 months into my 13 1/2 years at the Open Door, and prior to this time my experience of the Christian faith had been in a church body that was very uncomfortable with public expressions of the faith outside of Sunday morning, and inside the church on Sunday morning, those expressions were carefully orchestrated. It went like this: the Pastor said, "The peace of the Lord be with you always!" and we responded, "And also with you." So I didn't quite know what to do with this man who was saying, "Peace be with you," in a basement while we were serving breakfast to a lot of homeless people. Come to think of it, Dick is a pastor, and that was the basement of a church, so I guess the greeting wasn't so far out of the way after all.

Later in the morning, when we were safely home at 910 Ponce de Leon, another young Resident Volunteer came to talk with me. He said, "I don't know how to take Dick. You know, I think he's sincere when he says, 'Peace be with you,' but, man, I think one of those guys is going to hit him over the head with a chair one of these days."

Well, those early, violent mornings were in the dark days of

We've lost a couple of cars recently to old age and an accident (they hit us!).

**Do you have a vehicle to donate?**

Please call us at 404-876-6977.



Elizabeth Dede is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

# Hospitality as Divine Welcome

By Emmett Jarrett

(Editor's note: Fr. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF, is a poet, an Episcopal priest, and a Third Order Franciscan. He has just resigned as Rector of St. Michael and All Angels Church in Stone Mountain, GA, to move to New London, CT. There, Fr. Emmett and his wife, Anne Scheibner, and their children Nathaniel, 13, and Sarah, 8, are beginning a ministry of hospitality, spirituality, and justice called St. Francis House. Fr. Emmett has been a part of the Open Door worshipping community and he preached this meditation with us on Trinity Sunday, his last Sunday with us. It was transcribed and edited by Elizabeth Dede.)

Genesis 18: The story of the three angels' visit to Abraham and the announcement that Sarah will have a child.

The culture that we're a part of, which brings us the killings in Littleton, Colorado, and the bombing of Kosovo, is a culture that does not know how to understand the mysteries of the Christian faith, the Trinity, and the mysteries of our redemption as they are revealed in our history, our tradition, and in the icons.

Ours is a very abstract culture—one that dephysicalizes—so that it's possible to just sit at a video game and kill thousands and thousands of images. And when teenagers don't know the difference between images and people, it should not be surprising to us. I think that is deeply related to the failure of our society to be aware of, to celebrate, and to know the truth of the Gospels as it has come to us.

The Trinity as a doctrine is not just a fun and games matter; it's not just a matter of 3 in 1 oil; it's not just a matter of a shamrock. That's not what the Trinity is about, but the way we trivialize it says something about how we have taken the heart of God in the life of a people and a land, and then rid ourselves of the heart of God to make it easier for us to build prisons

for profit, to shoot each other, and to drop bombs in Kosovo and Iraq. Our inability to understand the mystery of the Trinity has something to do with the violence and injustice around us.

Icons are part of the Eastern tradition. In the West we have a real hard time with the icons because of the abstractness of the way we think. The way to start is to recognize that all of us are icons, because what it

around and sees everyone walking about. And it suddenly dawns on him after all these years of praying and solitude that these are images of God and that God is there. And he said, "The only problem with our recognizing this, and part of the reason we don't recognize the divine image in other human beings, is that we would probably fall down and worship each other." That might not be such a bad idea. It's a lot better than shooting each other.

The Eastern Orthodox tradition makes icons because God, who is the creator of humans, has become human, because Jesus has come in the flesh—not some abstraction, not some transaction, not something to market—but human. We're not

interexchangeable

one with another because the God who made you, made me, and every other individual. This same God loves each of us. Love is the nature of this God, and that's what the Trinity tells us, to be in loving relationship, to be welcoming.

In the year 1425, an icon of the Trinity was painted based on the story of Abraham and Sarah and the three angels. It was not the intention of the writer of this story for it to be interpreted as a story about the Trinity, but for many centuries the church has looked at this as a type of the Trinity. The three angels come, they sit down, and they feast with Abraham.

In the icon, there are three figures around a table, and people argue about who is who. Probably the central character is God the Creator.

The character on the right of the Creator is the Spirit, and on the left is the Word of God, Jesus. They are very peaceful; they are not agitated at all. There is peace and a relationship—clearly they love each other.

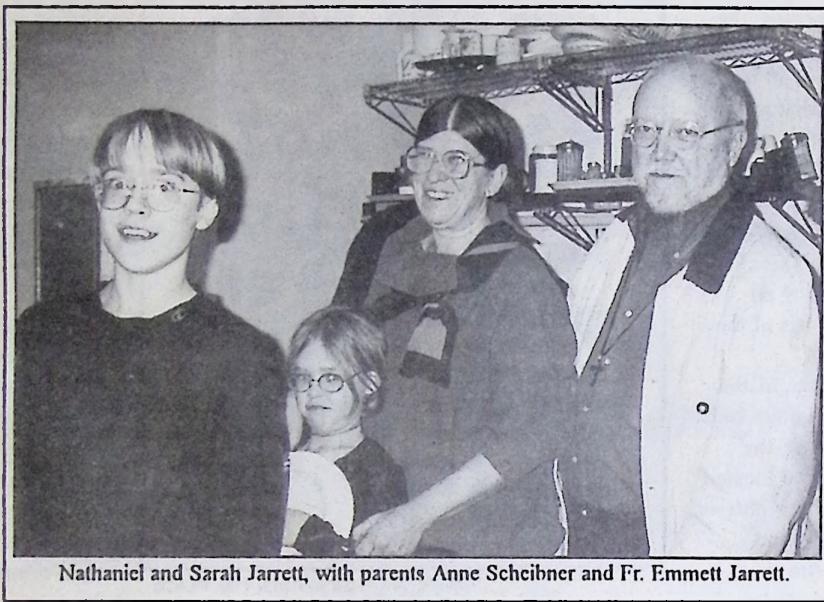
They are sitting around a table. They each have a rod, a symbol of authority. On the table there is a bowl with a bunch of grapes—the wine of Eucharist. In fact, when the over-paintings of all the centuries were taken off, a lamb was actually originally painted in the bowl—the Lamb whom God has offered; the lamb Abraham sacrificed to God; the Lamb of God, who offered himself for us, Jesus.

Behind the figure of Jesus is a house. On one level this is the tent where Abraham welcomed the angels near the oak at Mamre. The tree over the figure of the Creator is the oak at Mamre and this place where the angels came. Near the figure of the Spirit is a mountain, the place where the Spirit comes to reveal herself to us—Mount Sinai, or the mountain where Elijah goes and hears the still, small voice. At another level, the house is the Temple in Jerusalem, this tree represents the tree of life and creation, and the mountain is Mount Sinai where the Torah is given. At yet another level of seeing, we understand that the three are having a conversation, which may be about the phrase in John's Gospel: "God so loved the world that God gave the only Son that all might believe and be saved." They are talking about God's love; there is community among them. So the house becomes the church—the house where Christians are called together. The oak of Mamre now becomes the tree of the cross on which the Atonement takes place. The mountain becomes the Mount of Transfiguration, or the mountain where Jesus commissions the disciples to go out into the world.

As you get drawn into the icon, you pray, and are drawn into the center, to the circular light—the light of the Trinity. It means for me that God is the being who fulfills the deep longing we feel for what we lack. God is not a lonely, old man with a long, white beard. God is with the Spirit and the Word from the very beginning of time, and they love each other. God does not create us because God

wants company. God has company. God creates us out of the overflowing of the love of that companionship of the Blessed Trinity. We can get into a whole debate about whether there

(continued on next page)



Nathaniel and Sarah Jarrett, with parents Anne Scheibner and Fr. Emmett Jarrett.



The icon of the Trinity.

(...Divine Welcome," continued from previous page)

would have been an incarnation if there hadn't been a Fall. I'll be the first to tell you: "Yes, there would have been." Because God always wants to share the divine presence with us, and the fulfillment of the presence comes in the Trinity.

But what does this image of the Trinity have to do with our lives today? In January of this year, I was praying in front of the icon, asking what am I really supposed to be doing? Should our family really be going to Connecticut? I knew I should be having more time with our children. And I was tired of the "cruise director" aspect of the parish ministry. During this prayer, it occurred to me that God didn't really need me to keep telling people to do right. God really would like me to do right.

The Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia*—the love of the stranger. As you begin to know the love of each person of the Holy Trinity for the other, and feel drawn into that love and welcomed into that light, then you will know the hospitality you feel in the heart of God. Hospitality and the love of God are what we need. And all we're called to do if we have received the love of God, is simply to enjoy it and to share it with our sisters and brothers.

There is a wonderful story about Alan Ecclestone, a priest for many years in an inner-city parish—the Parish of the Holy Trinity—in Sheffield, England. He ran five times for County Council on the Communist Party ticket and never got close to making it into a run-off. But he had a ministry that was Sunday Eucharist and Friday night conversation. And the Friday night conversation was very much like Peter Maurin's idea of the Clarification of Thought discussions. Everybody comes and everybody is invited to talk. In front of his church he put up a sign that quoted the Athanasian Creed. One of the things the Creed says is, "In this Holy Trinity, none is before or after another, none is greater or less than another. The three persons are co-equal." So Ecclestone put out in front of his church a sign that said, "In this church, as in the Holy Trinity, none is before or after another, none is greater or less than another." He spent a lifetime trying to live that out.

The God who is Trinity, not as some kind of magic number game, but as a loving Trinity of relationship, from before all eternity and to all eternity, desires and yearns to include you and me in that relationship, in that hospitality. This is the God whom we worship, who cares for us, who cares for all God's children.

Thank you for being a house of hospitality. Thank you for being a Trinitarian witness in the world.

## Bombs, Belgrade and the Hope for Peace

by Peter R. Gathje

*(Editor's note: Pete Gathje is a professor of Christian Ethics and Peace Studies at the Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, and is a faithful friend of the Open Door Community. He is the author of the Open Door Community's history: *Christ Comes in a Stranger's Guise*.)*

When war begins, the first casualty on the homefront is truth. In this war, as in all wars, it is difficult to know what to believe about the causes of the war, the purposes of the war, and the conduct of the war. And since there is such difficulty in knowing these things, there is also difficulty in making an informed moral analysis of the war.

Are the causes of the war centuries-old religious and ethnic differences? Are the causes of the war to be located in the absence of strong powers to stop the break-up of old communist states? Are the causes of the war located in the sheer drive to obtain and preserve political and economic power?

Is this war about preventing genocide and stopping the next Hitler? Or, is this war about preserving the credibility of NATO and expanding NATO's sphere of influence? Is this war about both?

In terms of the conduct of the war, is the Yugoslavian army engaged in ethnic cleansing in Kosovo? Or, is the Yugoslavian army rooting out the KLA and its bases of support? Is the conduct of the war by NATO carefully avoiding civilian casualties, or has the bombing campaign targeted factories, hospitals, electrical plants and other sites which has led to civilians being killed, and will cause more civilian suffering?

All of these sorts of questions are worth investigating and debating. All of these sorts of questions need to be answered. I would guess that if we began such a discussion we'd find we have some differences in how we'd answer these questions. We'd likely have some different scenarios of what we'd like the final result of the war to be, and how that result would be attained.

But to stand and protest this war we do not have to have all the answers to all the questions. Nor do we have to agree on every detail with each other in our analysis of the war and a desired outcome.

Let me suggest two judgments about this war which many of us have shared from its beginning. First, there is a clear obligation to resist and to say "NO!" to genocide and ethnic cleansing. Milosevic's policies have been genocidal. His efforts to attain and maintain power have stirred ethnic conflict, and have led to horrible atrocities. Troops under his control committed great evil in the Bosnian

specter of civilian death and suffering similar to what we have seen in the past ten years in Iraq—deaths that have also come through an air campaign and sanctions. The ecological disasters will likewise lead to human death. The use of uranium depleted shells spells a future of radioactive contaminated ground, water and air. The destruction of chemical and fertilizer plants has already led to widespread air and water pollution which threatens human, animal, and vegetative life.

Given these judgments, this war is rightly opposed on at least these two grounds: first, it failed to prevent and only worsened genocide and ethnic cleansing; and second, it is leading to more and more human suffering and death.

As citizens of this nation we have the moral obligation to speak out when we judge that our government is engaged in wrongdoing.

As human beings we have the moral obligation to stand against whatever actions, by whatever nation or peoples, destroy human life.

And when we take such a stand, we say "NO!" to the wrongdoing and the destruction of human life in Serbia and Kosovo—by Milosevic's troops and by NATO.

Let me end by saying how this "NO" may well emerge from a larger "YES." The first casualty in war is, the truth which is hard to hear and even harder to practice. The falsehood of war is that war can create a better future—a more just and human future. The "NO" I say against the Kosovo war emerges from a "yes" to working now to create and practice nonviolent methods which resolve conflict in ways which respect human life and dignity. War and violence, as this war makes clear, always worsen conflict and make it even more difficult to build life together. We have to work to shed the illusion that war and violence are redemptive; the illusion that we can create a better future that respects human dignity through a present that destroys human life. The truth is, evil means cannot lead to a good result. So, in our "NO" may we also say "YES" to a commitment for human good which respects the dignity of human beings, which remembers this hard truth—we must struggle to be nonviolent, to respect others, and to never submit to the lie that war or any violence can bring us to a better future.



GRAPHIC: ANOTHER MOTHER FOR PEACE

Dear Open Door Community:

Praise God for your ministry! I think of you often and give thanks. May the Lord continue to be with you in strength and courage, faith and love.

Sincerely,

Anne Sawyers  
Charleston, SC

Dear Open Door,

An open door can mean many things. It has two meanings for me, both of which have changed my life.

On August 31<sup>st</sup> 1987, the Lord opened up God's door and let me come in. That is the day I gave up drinking, and gave my life to the Lord and committed to do God's work. I have not looked back. I also have not taken a drink since then, Praise the Lord!

More recently the Open Door came into my life in September of 1998. I spent a week at the Open Door in Atlanta. It is a caring, loving community who welcomed me with open arms. They live a simple lifestyle, a lifestyle that would influence me and allow me to make changes in my life. I had a week's vacation so I spent it there, getting to know the community better. I also got to know some of the homeless of Atlanta better as well. And of course, I got to know myself better. Some of my friends thought that I was crazy. Here I was working in an intense (but fun) prison ministry in Americus, Georgia. And I wanted to go to the big city of Atlanta during my vacation and work. That is exactly what I did, and as I tell people, "It was one of the best vacations I ever had."

For the past three years, I have led a fairly simple life style. I am happy to have a place to live, food to eat and clothes to wear, the basics. I need a job that gives me just enough money to do that. I love to read and walk and do free things. So I do not want to clutter my life with a lot of material things. One of the "material things" that I was clinging to however was my television. After work days, I was finding myself coming home and "vegetating" in front of the television. I soon stopped doing things that I loved to do. I stopped going out, instantly "gravitated" to the television.

Well, the week that I spent at the Open Door back in September, I did not watch television and I did not miss it. In fact it was quite nice, and when I got back from Atlanta, I found it to be a nuisance. I tried to keep it off, but it was hard. So I was easily sucked back into the television culture.

But recently, I made a conscious decision to get rid of all distractions in my life. So I made a list and of course, my television was on that list. So I just gave it away. It has been a month now, and it has been wonderful. I am doing much more reading, getting out more and feel that my life is more productive and I am energized to do more.

So I want to thank the Open Door Community in Atlanta for allowing me to be a welcome guest in your community, for allowing me to fellowship with you all and get to know you all better. And to allow me to examine my life better, get a better understanding of homelessness, and finally getting closer to the Lord so I can serve the Lord better. I would encourage everybody to go and

## Grace and Peaces of Mail

spend time at the Open Door. It will change your life. It did mine.

Tim Mellen  
Americus, GA

Dear Ed and Murphy,

I just read your February, 1999 issue of *Hospitality*. (Can you tell I'm behind ... just a little bit?) It saddened me so to hear about the death of C.M. Sherman.

I'll always remember several years ago when our children were young and we came to visit. C.M. took our son Chad (now 19) under his wing. Chad latched on to him and from that day forward, C.M. was someone special to him. Over the years, we kept up with him through *Hospitality* and always rejoiced at the great strides he made.

In our work, the power of addictions is the point that we feel the most helplessness. It makes me sad to know that someone we cared so much about died such a cruel, lonely death. It is with much happiness, a celebration, though, that when I think of C.M., I think of a man that was willing to take a child under his wing. He was a man that in his own way, was able to demonstrate a powerful love.

Gary joins me in sending our love. You both continue to be a source of great inspiration and understanding.

Peace,

Patti Holcombe-West  
Fifth Street Ministries  
Statesville, NC

Dear Friends at the Open Door,

I hope this letter finds everyone there well. I have been keeping you in my thoughts and prayers as you deal with the critical conditions at Grady. I have not yet heard how things went with Fulton County this past Wednesday. My only hope is that everything is or will soon be situated, that funding will be restored for the poor and uninsured.

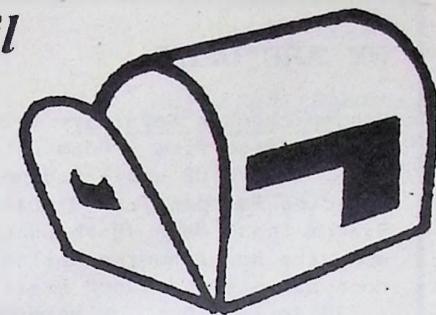
I want to thank you for your hospitality during my stay and especially for allowing me to stay longer than I had planned. My time at the Open Door really opened my eyes to things. I have come back to Columbia convicted by my experience of 24 hours of solidarity with the homeless. And I come back having gained friends from the streets and within the community. I also come back with the knowledge that I have been blessed with this experience and hope to have many more as I continue working for justice.

My prayers are with you all, the members and friends of the Community. I hope to be back with you soon. Until then...

May God bless you,

Pressley Neal  
Columbia, SC

(Editor's note: Pressley Neal is a recent graduate of Presbyterian College, and now serves on the staff of Eastminster Presbyterian Church in



Columbia, SC. She will enter the Masters of Divinity program at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA, next year.)

Dear Murphy and Ed,

Thanks for your good work. I agreed wholeheartedly, Murphy, with the piece on Grady (*Hospitality*, June 1999). I think it has helped to move mountains. Walter Baldwin and his wife, Claire, are friends of mine. I admire him.

Regards,

Elizabeth Stevenson  
Decatur, GA

(Editor's note: Seventy-nine-year-old retired Presbyterian missionary Walter Baldwin was arrested in DeKalb County with the "Grady 30.")

Dear Open Door,

I'm living on social security disability, feeling the effects of Medicaid cuts and wondering what country I'm living in anymore.

This ain't Franklin Roosevelt's America. I have a profound sympathy for the homeless people you serve—I could easily be one soon—and I greatly admire your perspective(s) on this society and its treatment of the poor.

Thank you, for your intelligence, strength and spirit.

Sincerely,

John Hector  
Lilburn, GA

P.S. I wish I had more money to give.

Dear Ed:

Great seeing you last evening! Thanks for updating me on your progress at Grady. I forgot to tell you how much we enjoyed your piece in *Hospitality* [May 1999] on hiding the Georgia state flag. Judy and I got a great kick out of imagining you sneaking up on the stage like that. As always, you are a true advocate for the inclusion of all citizens at the table, but just maybe there is also a little of "Chaplin" in you. Your premise about that darn flag is so correct. I gotta believe that the Confederate Battle Flag has no place in the modern state of Georgia. Perhaps after the final victory for Grady is won, then you can test your relationship with our new governor and get him behind the flag issue!

Peace,

Dave Higgins  
Atlanta, GA

**WE ARE OPEN. . .**

Monday through Saturday: telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 2:00 until 6:00pm. The building is open from 9:00am until 8:30pm those days (Both phone and door are not answered 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 are open from 7:30am until noon.** Sunday afternoon our door is answered until 5:00pm.

\* \* \*

**OUR MINISTRY. . .**

**SOUP KITCHEN:** Wednesday-Saturday, 11 am - 12 noon  
**SUNDAY BREAKFAST:** Sunday morning 7:30 am  
**WEEKDAY BREAKFAST:** Monday-Friday, 6:45 am  
**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  
**CLARIFICATION MEETINGS:** Selected Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm.  
**WEEKEND RETREATS:** Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), next retreat is our Fall Planning Retreat, August 27 - 29.

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

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 \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Open Door Community Worship**

*We gather for worship and Eucharist on Sunday evenings followed by supper together.*

*Please join us!*

July 4 5 p.m. Worship at 910; Celebration of the Partnership of Tonnie King Murphy Davis, preaching

July 9-11 Retreat at Dayspring Farm (No Worship at 910)

July 18 5 p.m. Worship at 910; Rev. Fred Taylor, preaching Celebration of Fred Taylor's 30 years in the struggle for human rights on the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the awarding of the first Frederick Douglas Taylor Human Rights Award.

July 25 5 p.m. Worship at 910; Ed Loring, preaching

**Are You 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!*

**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.

**Volunteer Needs**

Soup Kitchen on Fridays  
 Showers on Wednesday - Friday  
 Hardwick Trip  
 Sunday Morning Breakfast

*If you would like more information about volunteering, contact Brenda Smith at 404-874-9652.*

**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 and Floor Lamps  
 Vacuum Cleaners  
 an Acoustic Guitar to be available for visitors to play at our Sunday Worship

Disposable Razors  
 Women's Underwear  
 Toothbrushes  
 Deodorant  
 Vaseline  
 Towels  
 Socks  
 Shampoo  
 Men's Belts  
 Washcloths

*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!*