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vol. 20, no. 7

910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212; 404-874-9652 (voice); 404-874-7964 (fax)

July-August 2001

Labor Pains and Labor Gains

By Barry Burnside

I have often wondered why we commemorate Labor Day on the first Monday in September, while most of the world remembers its working people on the first day of May. Perhaps it is because a machinist and a carpenter, Matthew Maguire and Peter J. McGuire, organized the first Labor Day parade in New York City in September of 1882. But there may be a less savory reason for the change of date.

When President Grover Cleveland signed the bill in 1894 that made Labor Day a national holiday, he also might have been eager to distance the celebration from any memory of the May Day strike which had occurred during his first administration eight years before. That was the day half a million laborers in this country stopped work in an effort to win the eight hour day. The strike tragically ended with the Haymarket Riot in Chicago, which led to the wrongful execution of eight people on false charges of conspiracy.

President Cleveland further expressed his high regard for working people in 1894 by calling out federal troops to break up the Pullman strike, a labor action led by five-time presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs of the American Railway Union. The A.R.U. was the first union to include all workers in the rail industry, and the country was paralyzed by the strike. Ultimately, the government stamped out the strike, destroyed the union, and jailed Debs along with seven hundred others. Debs was defended in court by the renowned Clarence Darrow.

The same year Labor Day became a national holiday, former Confederate Major Samuel James died on the veranda of the house situated on his plantation, "Angola," named after the original home of its first African slaves. In his lifetime,

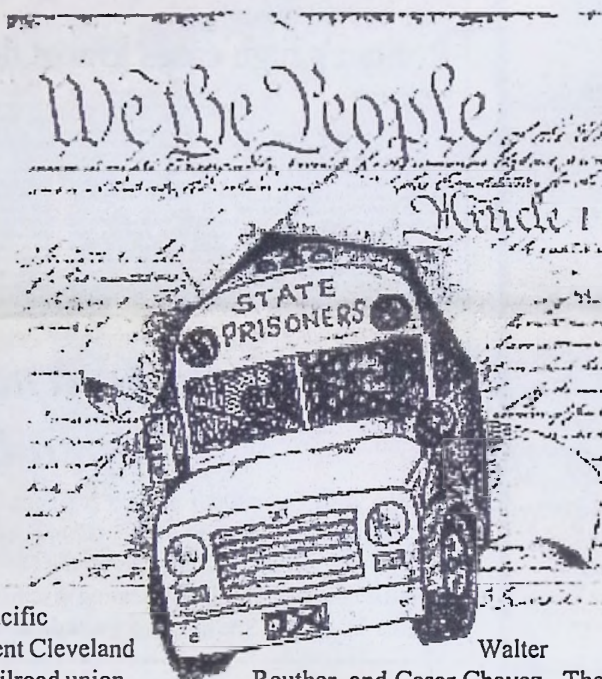
Louisiana's convict population had gone from being over sixty percent white before 1860, to being eighty percent Black when he breathed his last. After the war, Major James leased men as convicts that he could no longer own as slaves and made a fortune. His plantation continues to thrive today as the Louisiana State Prison. (Daniel Bergner, *God of the Rodeo*, 1998, 59-61).

While Major James was using his new found slaves to build the New Orleans and Pacific Railroad, and President Cleveland was destroying the railroad union, working men and women across the world were singing a song called *The International*: "Arise you prisoners of starvation. . . . Arise you slaves, no more in thrall! The earth shall rise on new foundations. We have been naught, we shall be all." This was not the Soviet anthem back then. It was just a labor song for millions who were sick and tired of being sick and tired.

One hundred five years ago, on the cusp of a new century and in the midst of a national crisis (there was a depression at the time), working people shared a lot of optimism. They also had a lot of insight and courage. They were not afraid to call the lot of working people at the time by its rightful name—slavery. Nor were they afraid of being enslaved themselves in prison, and would risk their lives at the end of a noose to change their world.

Today, wherever American

workers enjoy a living wage, safe conditions, and paid leave, they can thank labor pioneers like A. Philip Randolph, Mary "Mother" Jones,



Walter Reuther, and Cesar Chavez. They were Americans who traced their origins to Africa, Ireland, Germany, and Mexico, whose untiring toil on behalf of ordinary working people brought benefits to all.

They often had little support, least of all from the church. Labor historian Philip S. Foner notes that in 1902, while street car workers were on strike in Terre Haute, Indiana, a paper called *The Toiler* proclaimed, "When a rich and soulless corporation assaults its weary, worn, half-homed, half-fed working men, the pulpit is as dumb as death, and no echo of the voice of Christ is heard in the temple that profanes his name." (Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 3, 1964, 113n.)

That long silence may rest on the assumption in the church that Paul's teaching on the obedience of first century slaves was to be

translated into submission to modern employers. "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything," the Apostle writes in Colossians 3:22. While this verse has been used to silence workers eager to challenge management on labor issues, the church has seemed less eager to challenge corporate America with the "Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly," which follows in 4:1.

Thank God there have been notable exceptions in many Christian denominations. We remember leaders of this century like Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker movement, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who laid down his life while taking a stand for striking garbage workers in Memphis, Tennessee.

Novelist Denise Giardina, who has written about the struggles of labor in the coal country of West Virginia, insists the church can still play a valuable role in gaining justice for working people. "A lot of social justice movements can get extreme," Giardina told an interviewer. "Even though they have a just cause, they become violent and cause suffering to others. The church tends to make you think about how you can make things better for yourself rather than pushing you towards taking away from others. I think that's true of the civil rights movement in the South." (Jordan Green, "Writing with Class," *Southern Exposure*, Fall/Winter 1997).

Sometimes the church suffers from just not knowing what to do. The problems seem so huge on the one hand, while on the other we all participate in a culture that is subjected to an ongoing message designed to manipulate our tensions and fears. We are convinced by daily stock market reports that things have never been better. But as we travel to the mega

Labor, cont'd on page 8

He's a Runner: Ira Terrell

By Lynn Thogersen

(Editor's note: Lynn Thogersen is a friend of the Open Door Community who has been volunteering at the Wednesday breakfast for over five years. Lynn and Ira Terrell are training to run the Atlanta Half Marathon on Thanksgiving day.)

If you are in need of some inspiration, look no further than the Open Door Community and Ira Terrell. Ira, a resident of the Open Door since 1991, is an inspiration to me and to everyone who knows him. He gets up at 3:00 a.m. five days a week to make gallons and gallons of his delicious coffee for the residents and guests of the community. When the coffee has been made, Ira changes into his running clothes and runs from the Open Door on Ponce de Leon Avenue to the East Lake Marta station and back again. He then showers and continues his day overseeing the Open

Door's clothes closet.

Along with his important work at the Open Door, Ira's running has become a vital part of his life. In addition to his daily runs, Ira, who is fifty-four years old, also runs competitively. Since 1999 he has run the Atlanta Half Marathon twice, the Peachtree Road Race three times, and too many five and ten kilometer races to name.

Ira joined the Open Door Community on April 24, 1991. He had gotten tired of drinking and wanted to better his life. In the summer of 1999, Ira stopped smoking and realized he needed something to do with his newfound energy. He began walking half a mile every day. While walking, he couldn't help noticing people who were running, and he couldn't help noticing their faces. "Why are they frowning up?" he wondered. He decided to try running himself. His first run was for fifteen minutes. He could feel his heart pumping and thought, "This is too much for me." But then he reconsidered: "No, you've got to keep trying." And

the next day it went a little better. By the end of the week he had made up his mind: "I'm going to take it for a ride, and I lit out and it felt good!" Ira says he likes the feeling he gets from running. "You get this feeling like you could run forever, and that makes your whole body feel wonderful." Ira says running motivates and relaxes him.

Ira has another reason to feel happy and motivated these days. He has just reunited with his daughter and met his seven month old grandson, Jeremiah. Ira has also set a new goal for himself. He wants to try to come in either first or second in his next 10K race. "I've got to try, and I'm going to try!" he exclaims.

I say Ira's words to myself every time I set out on my long runs. You see, Ira has inspired me. I am now training for my first half marathon. "I've got to try, and I'm going to try!"

Ira and Lynn are currently training for the Thanksgiving half-marathon in Atlanta.

Volunteer Needs

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

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

LIFE TURNAROUND

Runner's high eases low of desperate times

By Michelle Hiskey
mhiskey@ajc.com

Not so long ago in his 54 years, Ira Terrell wasn't in the newspaper; he was sleeping under one. He wasn't running the streets of Atlanta; he was roaming them.

For him, the Peachtree Road Race is part of a new life he never imagined when he was homeless.

Terrell was an alcoholic when he lost his job as a maintenance man in 1983. He returned home and quarreled with the mother of his two daughters, and police ordered him to leave. When he returned, drunk,

police locked him up. When he got out, he decided to live on the streets.

For two years, he slept under bridges, in abandoned houses and cars, and scrounged meals from food lines. He lost all touch with his family. "I was embarrassed," he said. "I didn't want my folks to know where I was. I looked bad and smelled bad."

Looking for a meal and shower, he showed up at the Open Door Community, a big building on Ponce de Leon Avenue that serves about 1,000 people each week. He desperately wanted to stop drinking and find a place to live.

In 1992, Terrell became a partner at the Open Door, committing to live there, sober, and serve others. He rose at 3 a.m. for his first task of the day: brewing 30 gallons of coffee for breakfast.

Afterward, he started taking long walks. Inspired by runners blowing by him, he tried to pick up his pace. That was in 1999, as he also attempted to quit a 30-year smoking habit. After two downhill blocks, he was winded.

"But you can't give up," he told himself. Each day he went a bit farther. One day, he experienced a spirit filling him with divine energy and

telling him, "Take off." So he did.

That summer he ran his first Peachtree. He's also completed the past two Atlanta Half-Marathons, and runs about 7 miles every other morning.

This Peachtree marks a special year. Recently, he tracked down a daughter through the Internet, and found out he has a baby grandson, Jeremiah, in College Park. "I'd like Jeremiah to know I'm out there with 55,000 people," Terrell said.

Running "really has changed me," he said. "I see myself from where I used to be. . . I'd never think I'd do the things I'm doing now."



Ira Terrell could barely run two blocks when he first started, now he's completed two half-marathons.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution spotlights Open Door's Ira Terrell

This year, Open Door partner Ira Terrell ran his fourth Peachtree Road Race. A few days before the race, Michelle Hiskey of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* documented Ira's story: surviving two years on the streets of Atlanta, joining the Open Door as a partner in 1992, and taking up running in 1999 as a spiritually and physically healing discipline. Ira ran his fastest ten-kilometer race ever, finishing with a time of 50:33. See the above article in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 1, 2001, page P4.

HOSPITALITY

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

Phil Leonard--Volunteer Coordinator, and Hardwick Prison Trip
Tonnie King--Guest Ministry, Food Coordinator, and Hardwick Prison Trip
Gladys Rustay--Treasurer, Jackson Prison Trip, and Food Coordinator
Ed Loring--Correspondence; Resident Volunteer Coordinator
Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry, Worship and Music Coordinator
Dick Rustay--Dayspring Farm Coordinator



Open Door Community

Newspaper
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Copy Editing--Alice Alexander, Julie Martin, Heather Moye, Tamara Puffer, and Gladys Rustay
Circulation--Tonnie King, 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.)

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Inch by Inch

a column by Murphy Davis

Tabletalk: Grits and Grace

Though it's sometimes hard to see how the particulars of day-to-day life in community among the poor are fitting together to make a whole, some days it just all falls into place and makes sense. It was that way one morning in June when we sat down to breakfast after 180 hungry sisters and brothers had been fed a big breakfast of eggs, turkey sausage, grits, oranges, bread and jelly, coffee, juice, and vitamins.

Ira had started the coffee at 3:30 AM. Scott arrived from his apartment at Columbia Seminary around 4:30 to cook the huge pots of grits, eggs and sausage. Several community members gathered before 6:00 with the volunteers from outside the house: four human rights layers and investigators, two campus ministers, a Georgia Tech student, a friend from the yard, and a radio disk jockey. The scripture was read: "And God created light out of darkness..." Ed noted that this light which God created, the light by which we are led, *precedes* the creation of the sun. The servers were invited to discover the light that does not depend upon the sun: the light which is a lamp unto our feet. Assignments were made, and hands gathered in a circle of prayer.

The steaming bowls of food were set out on the table, and 180 women and men came in to eat. Mike Casey took his seat at the piano and played for two hours: jazz, blues, and special requests (a few Christmas carols somehow got into the mix!) Some of our guests checked their mail after breakfast; some got dry socks and a t-shirt; some made a phone call; some checked the bulletin board for messages or took a moment to talk with a friend; almost everybody made use of the public bathroom.

When the last of our friends had finished, the tables were wiped down, the floor swept, and we sat down to eat breakfast and reflect together on the morning. It's a process built into our life together, called by liberation theologians the action-reflection method. We begin with reflection on scripture and prayer; we work together; we reflect. We hope to build a praxis of liberation: our thinking, our action, and our worship are clarified and deepened as we consciously bring them into interaction. Reflection informs action; action makes reflection concrete. It all becomes an expression of our worship. We hope that all of this will help us to move toward mature faith and integrity. Often, it all seems very ordinary. Some days, we are moved beyond words by the depth and power.

On this morning, there was a particular poignancy. We knew that while our friends were welcomed to eat breakfast, the U. S. government had executed Juan Garza. It had been noted earlier

in hearing the Word: "and God created light out of darkness..." We look forward to the fulfillment of that creative act: when God's light floods out the darkness of government execution. No federal executions had taken place since 1963, and now there had been two in eight days. The connection between a government that would spend millions of dollars' worth of resources to punish and kill one of its own citizens and a government that accepts, as the Generals and their imitators say, the "collateral damage" of hundreds of thousands of hungry and homeless citizens was in our face that day.

The sharing began. Josh had just gotten out of jail. He is retarded and childlike, and he told us of the new police detective on Ponce who has

said, her eyes brimming with tears, "I saw God this morning in the face of our friends in the yard."

Sye, not long off the mean streets, said to her, "When you feel the pain in the front yard, you've got one foot in the struggle. But, my sister, something in you had to leave for that pain to come in."

Lisa reported that she would leave the table to drive to Alabama. "I'll spend the week knocking on the jailhouse doors of Alabama. A suit has been filed to try to unclog the filthy overcrowded county jails, and we have to make sure the voices of the prisoners are heard in court."



photographed and learned the names of many homeless folks. He tries to encourage them to give damaging information about each other so that he can "put them away," sweeping them off the street to make way for the fancy people who will inhabit the hundreds of units of very expensive housing that are going up all over the neighborhood.

Mike reported that he would spend his afternoon eating lunch at Captain D's fish house and watching Kung Fu movies. He had asked Theodore ("gift of God") what he most wanted to do after his release from sixteen years in prison: Captain D's and Kung Fu it was. So that was the day's plan for Mike.

Bobby reflected that he had started volunteering several months earlier after some volunteer experience with another group that served food to the homeless, but did not connect the serving to the faith. He needed to make the connection between his worship and the work of his hands. He was astounded to find a long-term depression starting to lift.

Deborah, a young college student, said she had come here unable to believe in God. "But," she

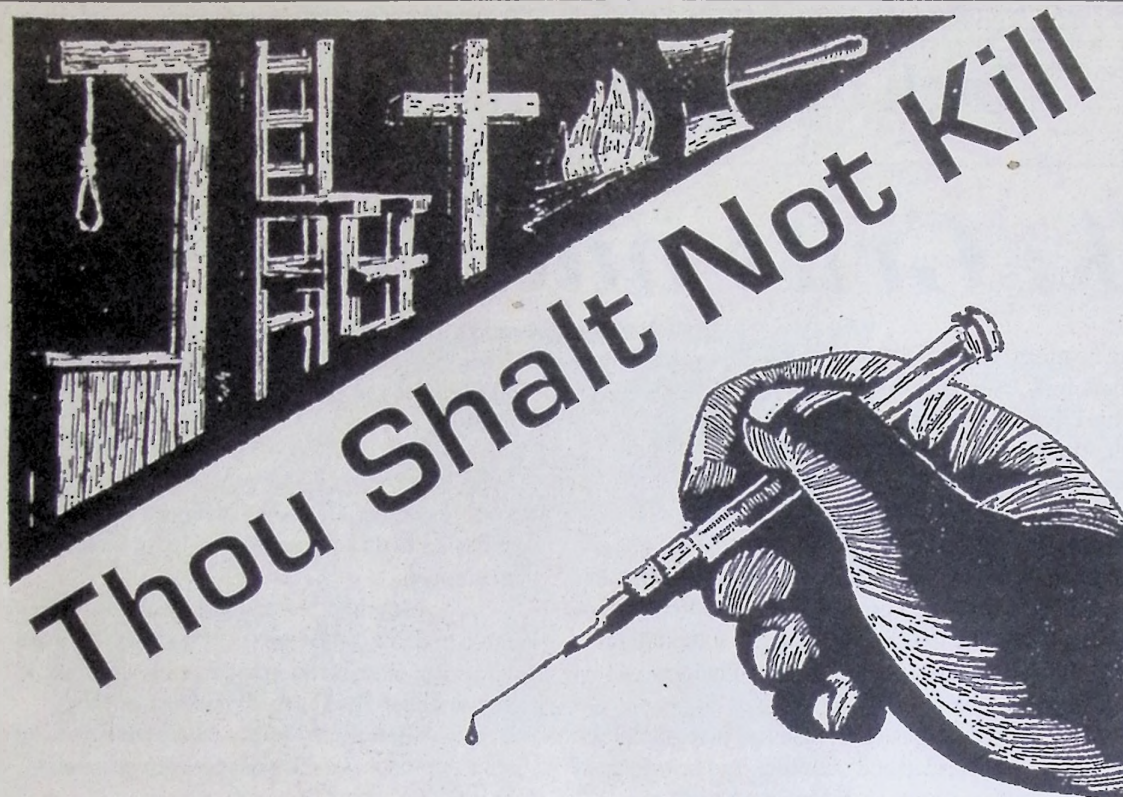
Throughout the reflection, Lynn sat between Angie and me eating hungrily. She was so tiny and thin, and it was hard to see how she was holding all those mounds of hot food. She had already eaten breakfast once, then she and her husband went into the living room to await a turn in the clothing room. Kimberly noticed that she had begun to weep and tremble, and she went to find Ed. Ed came in and asked Lynn if we could help. She whispered furtively that her husband had been beating her all night. "Do you want to get away from him?" She nodded her head. Since there was so much going on in the living room, they were able to slip out and up the stairs without the notice of Lynn's partner. Angie and I were summoned to sit with her while she wept and told her story. "We can find a safe space," we assured her.

So she came to table with us. She was welcomed, and we spoke of her journey toward health, sobriety, and sanctuary. She opened her mouth and the words flowed. She was tired, so tired. "Ain't nobody should be treated how he treated me," she said over and over. There was not a dry eye as words of comfort and encouragement were offered. Those who had also been victims of abuse spoke of the journey out, offering hope as Lynn set her foot on the path.

The breakfast reflection was over late that morning, and we all went about our other tasks. Lynn slept for nearly twenty-four hours straight. Then Emily took her to get her medicine for manic-depression, and eventually they found a shelter far enough away to seem safe. We hugged her and sent her on her way with hope and prayers.

Sitting down to breakfast together is such an ordinary event. But sometimes, when the grits are shared and blessed, we look up to find that we are in the presence of the living God. Didn't our hearts burn within us on the road? Ah, you were with us all the time.

Murphy Davis is a partner at the Open Door.



By Bill Quigley

(Editor's Note: Bill Quigley teaches at Loyola Law School in New Orleans. You can reach him at quigley@loyno.edu)

In early June 2001, I twice saw the sun rise on the grounds of the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute Indiana. Twice I prayed and protested with death penalty opponents while our government prepared to murder. And twice the sun set after our government injected fatal doses of poison into two men's veins. What does "Thou shalt not kill" mean if it does not apply to our government?

McVeigh Execution Protest Vigil

Sunrise, Monday, June 11, 2001, found me sitting in a field of newly mown grass on the grounds of the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana.

This was the morning that the United States of America had decided would be the last day of life for Timothy McVeigh.

Inside a part of the penitentiary fenced off with razor wire, I sat with one hundred fifty others in a "Circle of Silent Witness" that had begun in the dark at 4:12 a.m., 168 minutes before the execution. Each minute was a remembrance of one of the victims of the violence of Timothy McVeigh. The 168 minutes were also in protest against the violence of the re-institution of the federal death penalty by the United States of America.

I held a hand-lettered sign that read, "Thou Shalt Not Kill (even him!)" I chose those words because, while polls show decreasing support for the death penalty, there was widespread support for the execution of McVeigh, even among many who otherwise oppose the death penalty. Other signs read, "Not In My Name," "An Eye for an Eye Makes the Whole World Blind," "Why Do We Kill People to Show Killing People is Wrong?" and "Kill No One For Me."

The field we sat in was surrounded by federal, state, and local law enforcement officials. Our circle of protestors was further surrounded by television cameras, still photographers, and radio and print journalists from around the world. Truthfully, there were more journalists and police officers watching the protestors than there were protestors themselves. It was some comfort to know that

protests were being held in thirty cities across the nation and in numerous other cities across the world.

As I sat there reflecting on the imminent injection, the video transmission of the execution to Oklahoma City, and the rows of satellite trucks that lined the gateway to the prison, I sensed our nation was witnessing an antiquated legal barbarism carried out with twenty-first-century technology. Those sitting in witness remained silent as the sun continued to rise slowly and the time of execution approached. Some were veterans of the effort to end the death penalty. Some were themselves surviving victims of murdered family members. One man spoke movingly the evening before of his murdered son. Other victims spoke of their murdered sister or father. None wanted further executions. Each wanted to break the cycle of violence. Others in the circle, like a middle-aged special education teacher from Evansville, Indiana, belonged to no group and had never participated in any protest of any kind in their adult lives, but felt called to drive to Terre Haute to participate. There were Catholic sisters, college students, atheists, teenagers, people old enough for social security, whole families, ministers, priests, people of all colors and shapes.

As the announcement was made that the execution had been carried out, people held hands in silence. Many heads were hanging. Some cried. We ended by singing "We Shall Overcome," but at that moment many were not so sure.

As a citizen of Louisiana, I have attended many execution vigils. As a lawyer for people on death row, I have witnessed the electrocution of a man that I had grown to know.

But Terre Haute seemed graver to me than previous executions. Now it was not just one of fifty states that was engaged in the ancient rite of execution. Now it was our entire nation beginning to execute people again, for the first time since we hung a man in Iowa in 1963. While the nations of the world are stepping away from the death penalty, our country has chosen to reinstate it.

As the sun set that night, I was still driving home from Terre Haute. There was just a streak of pink left to the day, seeming to hover over the marshy lake I was passing. The long drive had

given me time to sort out my thoughts. The day was definitely humbling; trying to stand with others for life and justice but, today at least, powerless to stop the continuing chugging ahead of the cycle of violence. The day was also definitely sad. Another life gone, added to the 168 already lost. But like the sliver of light left in the sky, there was still some reason for hope. Hope because the circle of silent witness, like all the other protests and prayers across the world, showed that people will not give up on the pursuit of justice and life. These actions affirmed that people would continue to work for justice and life because "thou shalt not kill, even him."

Juan Raul Garza Execution Protest Vigil

The day after Timothy McVeigh died, a columnist in the *New York Times* asked, "Do we all feel better now? Is there closure now?" No. She then went on to despair that the media circus surrounding the execution of Timothy McVeigh would decamp and move to other events, and ended by asking "Will there be anyone there when Juan Raul Garza is executed next week?"

Yes, eight days later, our government was scheduled to execute again.

I had not planned to return to Terre Haute, but the question posed by the *New York Times* reporter kept echoing. Who would be there? With support from my family, I returned to Terre Haute to join their community of witness.

This day, June 19, 2001, the sun shown first on the top of the main prison tower, then moved down, flashed on the razor wire, crossed the field and shone on a new circle of witness.

This time, the penitentiary field was not flanked by satellite trucks. This time there were not dozens of reporters from all over the world.

The question posed by *The New York Times* was answered. Many who showed up eight days before to silently protest our government's killing of Timothy McVeigh did return to protest the execution of Juan Raul Garza. The media may have abandoned the scene, but the resisters did not.

More than one hundred people gathered on the grounds to sit in a silent circle of witness before the sun rose. The Terre Haute community and the Indiana Citizens to Abolish Capital Punishment showed their remarkable dedication by once again organizing a march the night before and once again turning out to demonstrate that the execution was "not in our names."

People attended from Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, Amnesty International, local universities, and local churches; many others came alone. I held another hand-lettered sign that read, "Thou Shalt Not Kill." There were candles and signs and puppets of Jesus and Uncle Sam. One big banner read, "What part of Thou Shalt Not Kill don't you understand?"

As the sun rose, our government killed again. Despite our prayers, despite vigils across the country, despite international pleas for clemency, despite studies showing the death penalty is applied in a discriminatory manner, Raul Garza, after apologizing to his victims, was murdered by lethal injection.

Those in silent witness rose off the ground, held hands, cried, and sang "We Shall Overcome." It was not inspiring; it was mournful. Despite the grief, the protestors dedicated themselves to working with their legislators to stop the government killing.

As the protestors started to leave, a reporter with a notebook asked one middle-aged protestor if

continued from p. 4

she thought the vigil and the prayers and the witness made any difference. The woman took a deep breath and answered, in a statement that I have not seen printed in any paper, "This makes the same difference as the actions of those who protested slavery in the years while it was still legal. This makes the same difference as the actions of those who resisted Hitler while he was still in power. This makes the same difference as the actions of those who fought against segregation while it was still the law of the land. The death penalty will be abolished. This will help speed that day." That was inspiring!

In the prison bus with barred windows that took us off the grounds, a mother of three from Terre Haute sat on the seat next to me. I asked her why she was there. She told me she came for her children, to show them that this was wrong. Her oldest daughter supported her wholeheartedly. Two younger ones seemed embarrassed. She hopes they will understand as they grow older. She told me that living in Terre Haute now has a different feel. "When I used to order books from out of state, people would ask me to spell Terre Haute and ask me where it was because they had never heard of it. Now everyone knows where it is, how to spell it, and what we are famous for. What a shame."

Later that evening, as I returned to New Orleans, I was disgusted that our government had killed again. We were powerless against evil again. But I was moved by the determination of the people I saw in Terre Haute, and the others around the nation and the globe, who remain faithful in their opposition to more killing. They understand that the death penalty will be abolished and that their efforts do indeed help speed the day. They understand what "Thou shall not kill" means. And they will not rest until we as a nation take that commandment seriously.

For More Information...

...On participating in the witness against the federal death penalty in Terre Haute, see the website of Indiana Citizens to Abolish Capital Punishment www.icacp.org.

...About efforts calling for a moratorium on the death penalty, see The Moratorium Campaign, www.campaign.org.

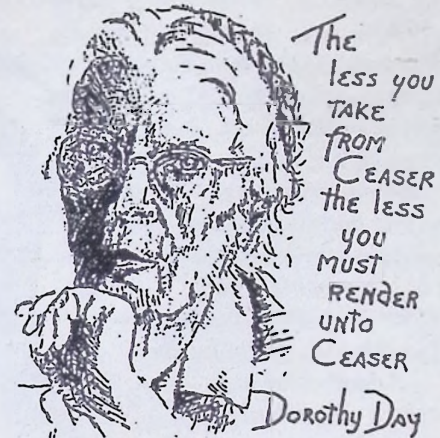
...About abolishing the death penalty in the United States, see www.amnesty-usa.org.

Distorting the Message of Dorothy Day

At his speech at the Notre Dame commencement in May, President Bush invoked the words and memory of Dorothy Day. Day's daughter and grand-daughter wrote to the *Rutland Herald* (Vermont) responding to the President's remarks.

As the daughter and granddaughter of Dorothy Day, we feel compelled to speak about the use of her name and work in George Bush's commencement speech at Notre Dame.

Dorothy was an ardent believer in social justice, the rights of workers, and care of the disenfranchised. Her life's work was dedicated to picking up the pieces of human wreckage, the result of policies that continue to be perpetuated by the Bush administration. It is shameful to have her efforts associated with an administration that gives priority to corporate profiteering over human needs. Dorothy understood that a just system was as equally important as her ideal of personalism, where each takes individual responsibility for the well-being of all. The speech writers for George Bush have distorted her message regarding the works of mercy by using her words in their arsenal of deceit.



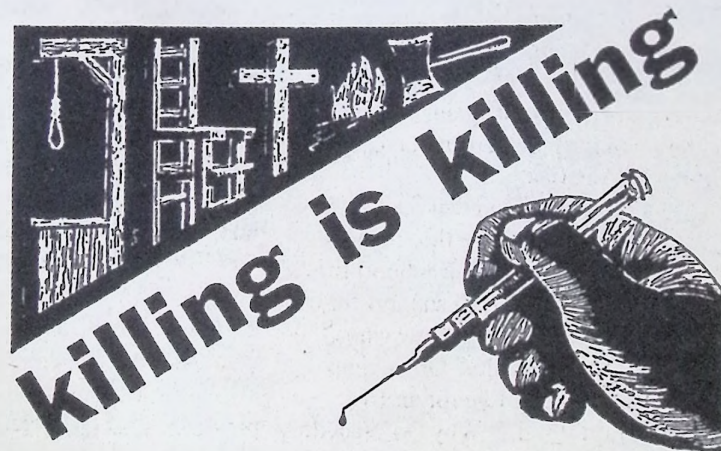
Tamar and Martha Hennessy
Rutland Herald (Vermont),
May 24, 2001

ELECTRIC CHAIR CHALLENGED

On Monday July 9, the Georgia Supreme Court heard arguments challenging the continued use of Georgia's electric chair as cruel and unusual punishment. Evidence was presented about several prisoners who lived for more than twenty minutes after the first jolt of electricity. If, within the coming months, the court rules to strike down the use of the chair, recent Georgia law provides the back up use of lethal injection.

Georgia's state legislature was slower than some to pass a bill to replace the chair with lethal injection, because so many legislators felt that it was best to inflict as much suffering as possible on our condemned brothers and sisters. The recent bill was passed with the threat of the courts finding death by electrocution unconstitutional.

We are hopeful that the court will indeed rule against this grotesque method of punishment. But we also look forward to the day that we will, as former Supreme Court Justice Blackmun wrote, "no longer tinker with the machinery of death." No technology will make executions right or just, and there is mounting pressure within this country and from the international community for the United States to join the "civilized world." The time for abolition of the death penalty is now.



John the Baptist: Our First Step in Discipleship (Part II)

By Ed Loring

The Preaching of John the Baptist

¹It was the fifteenth year of the rule of the Emperor Tiberius; Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod Antipas was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip was ruler of the territory of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias was ruler of Abilene, ²and Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. At that time the word of God came to John son of Elizabeth and Zechariah in the desert. ³So John went throughout the whole territory of the River Jordan, preaching, "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins." ⁴As it is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

"Someone is shouting in the desert:

'Get the road ready for the
Yahweh-Elohim;
make a straight path for
God to travel!

⁵Every valley must be
filled up,
every hill and mountain
leveled off.

The winding roads must be
made straight,
and the rough
paths made
smooth.

⁶The whole human race will see God's
salvation!"

⁷Crowds of people came out to John to be baptized by him. "You snakes!" he said to them. "Who told you that you could escape from the punishment God is about to send? ⁸Do those things that will show that you have turned from your sins. And don't start saying among yourselves that Abraham and Sarah are your ancestors. I tell you that God can take these stones and make descendants for Sarah and Abraham! ⁹The axe is ready to cut down the trees at the roots; every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown in the fire."

¹⁰The people asked him, "What are we to do, then?"

"He answered, "Whoever has two shirts must give one to the person who has none, and whoever has bread must share it."

¹²Some tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what are we to do?"

¹³"Don't collect more than is legal," he told them.

¹⁴Some soldiers also asked him, "What about us? What are we to do?"

He said to them, "Don't take money from anyone by force or accuse anyone falsely. Be content with your pay."

¹⁵People's hopes began to rise, and they began to wonder whether John perhaps might be the Messiah. ¹⁶So John said to all of them, "I baptize you with water, but someone is coming who is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷This one has

his winnowing shovel with him, to thresh out all the grain and gather the wheat into his barn; but he will burn the chaff in a fire that never goes out."

¹⁸In many different ways John preached the Good News to the people and urged them to change their ways. ¹⁹But John reprimanded Herod, the governor, because he had married Herodias, his brother's wife, and had done many other evil things. ²⁰Then Herod did an even worse thing by putting John in prison. (Today's English Version, adapted)

As we must, we begin at the beginning. John calls for turning from the allegiances that have shaped the people into walking dead folk. The people have accepted citizenship in the domination systems of self, religion, and Empire. They belong to death's dominion, and they are proud of it. Unfortunately, the people think they are alive. Death's greatest power is its capacity to seem like life—so William Stringfellow teaches us from the hellholes of Mississippi and Harlem. John taught the Shema as had all the prophets of old:

¹Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. ²You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ³Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁴Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁵Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁶and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9; NRSV)

John also explained the First Commandment in great detail, regarding our human hearts, their longing for Egypt, and the security that comes from living among the walking dead. John taught how the Temple had replaced God's love and compassion for people with self-satisfied priests and stinky animal sacrifices. He demonstrated that the Roman Empire was the object of awe. The bony prophet feared that dead synagogue leaders would put a Roman flag in the meeting hall. Shouting as loudly as he could, John pierced the ears of his followers with radical truth: God spoke, and these were God's words: "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves. Worship no god but me." (Exodus 20:2-3; TEV)

John's Word came bursting forth. "Get Ready," he shouted from the river bank. "A New Exodus is a comin'. But this time we're not going anywhere. We gonna defeat ole Pharaoh from the inside out!" The poor and wounded who ate garbage in the road loved to hear John rant and rail about Yahweh-Elohim's compassion and justice. Many wanted more. They wanted to learn how to put the

forgiveness of sin and the new allegiance into practice.

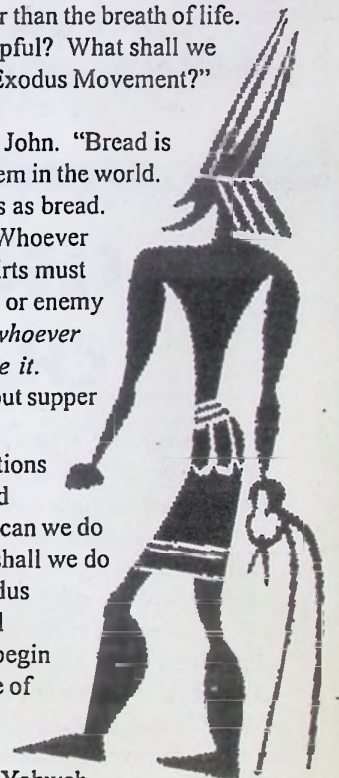
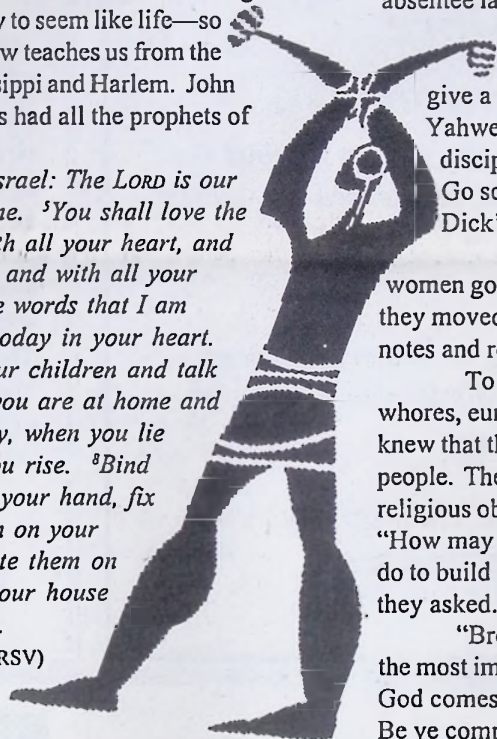
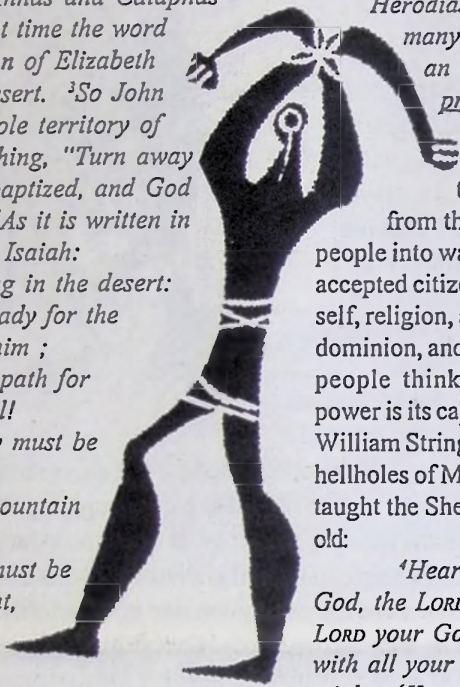
"What shall we do?" the crowds asked. John the Baptist had little patience for the professional Yahwist and religious elite, who had reserved parking places around the synagogues and Temple for their white donkeys. "Oh, ye vile vipers," he cried out, pointing his long, skinny finger at the well-heeled among the unhealed, while a locust leg wiggled under a fingernail. "Who told you to come out here to this Wilderness School? You may be buried underground, but you will never get into this underground seminary." Quickly the religious folk pulled out their certificates to show the beetle-browed prophet. Several were certified as having a spirituality. Some held D.Min. degrees on topics ranging from the pointless sermon to maximizing clergy tax breaks. Four had just been accepted by Rome for their faith-based initiatives: teaching peasants how to work for less than the absentee landlord wanted to pay. "Don't come up here telling me your family arrived on the Mayflower," John bellowed. "God don't give a damn who your great grandpappy was. Yahweh-Elohim will take these rocks and make disciples; the rocks have more life than you. Go scrub your sepulchers white as Moby Dick's belly and then go to hell!"

After the big boys and the patriarchal women got a taste of John's sourwood-honey talk, they moved to the back of the congregation to take notes and read the messages on their Palm Pilots.

To the front came the garbage eaters, the whores, eunuchs, landless peasants—those who knew that the loss of covenant vision had blinded the people. They knew the people had accepted God as a religious object rather than the breath of life. "How may we be helpful? What shall we do to build the New Exodus Movement?" they asked.

"Bread," said John. "Bread is the most important item in the world. God comes among us as bread. Be ye companions. Whoever has two [or more] shirts must give one to the friend or enemy who has none; and whoever has bread must share it. Justice is important, but supper is essential!"

The questions from the wounded and marginalized—What can we do to be helpful? What shall we do to build the New Exodus Movement?—are real questions only as we begin the long, hard struggle of changing our allegiances from self, Temple, and nation to Yahweh-Elohim. This is the risk: we are called to follow, and we do not know where we are going, or how the road will end. John tells us that the first step in response to new allegiances is to live differently. As allegiances to the domination system shrink, we are



called to live non-cooperatively with it. Yea, we are called to a new covenant of discipleship and resistance to the war-making, interest-charging, and private-prison-building domination system. This system builds its putrid nests in three trees: in human hearts, religion, and nation. The first step of discipleship, which is, of necessity, a step in our dance with John the Baptist, is to give our shirts away and to share our bread. We then crack the hold of the domination system in our hearts, religion, and citizenship. We are no longer walking dead folk! The signs are: we wear the same shirt often (better than John's scratchy camel's hair), and we share our bread with friends and enemies (better than eating locusts). (In a couple of years, John the Baptist's disciple—Jesus from Nazareth—will say that, not only are we to share the bread, but we are to sit at the table with friends and enemies. But that is getting ahead of our story.)

John learned his Bible stories like every other Jewish child. Zechariah and Elizabeth told him stories four times a day—at each meal and at bedtime. Zechariah died when John was small, and Elizabeth passed just after John's bar mitzvah. By then, however, he knew the canon among those who wanted another way, a New Exodus and a covenantal new community.

John the Baptist's bread teaching came from several sources. First, given John's angry and tempestuous ways, he learned about bread as the power to break domination by Empire. Elizabeth loved to bake bread and to tell little John the story of Gideon learning that Yahweh-Elohim destroys all empires who aspire to being Number One. "I dreamt," shared an enemy of Israel with a friend of another enemy of Israel, "that a loaf of barley bread rolled into our camp and hit a tent. The tent collapsed and lay flat on the ground" (Judges 7:13b). John knew in his heart that the sharing of bread with friend and enemy would make the empire collapse and lay flat on the ground. The power of bread, freed from the system of greed and control and given away, is the power of the powerless in reshaping history. John the Baptist calls his hearers to interpret the dream Gideon heard in 1150 B.C.E. Today this dream speaks of new life in the midst of death and fast food that kills the soul while cancer eats the colon. Sharing bread will end the avarice of Rome and of the big-steeple preachers who have two cars and who did not protest the increase in MARTA fares, which, while the wealthy plan tax cuts, makes the poor poorer and the poorest of the poor lose their jobs.

Bread is one of the primary concerns of John the Baptist, and sharing bread is basic to discipleship. Shared bread, as we learn from Gideon, will roll down and flatten the tents of the elite. Bread is also basic to one of the central hopes of Jubilee practice, which is the second source of John's bread teaching. When Zechariah would take little John to hoe in the barley fields, he would teach his slightly odd son the scriptures that reflect the motherly heart and womb of Yahweh-Elohim. Although John preferred, at this point, to catch bees, he memorized much of the Torah and Prophets. So John grew up often hearing and repeating this part of the Jubilee promise:

'The Sovereign LORD has filled me with God's Spirit.

*Yahweh-Elohim has chosen me and sent me
To bring good news to the poor,
To heal the broken-hearted,
To announce release to captives*

*And freedom to those in prison.
'She has sent me to proclaim
That the time has come
When the LORD will save the people
And defeat their enemies.
Our Leader has sent me to comfort all who
mourn,
'To give to those who mourn in Zion
Joy and gladness instead of grief,
A song of praise instead of sorrow.
They will be like trees
That the LORD Godself has planted.
They will all do what is right,
And God will be praised for what she has
done.
'They will rebuild cities that have long been
in ruins.*

(Isaiah 61:1-4; Today's English Version)

The Jesus story begins with John the Baptist in prison. And John's call to repentance and forgiveness—to abandon the domination systems of our hearts, Temple and Empire—is for us, as for Jesus the Jew, the first step in discipleship. Now we hear that another primary concern of Jubilee and the New Exodus is "liberty to captives." Years later, when Jesus the Messiah said to visit the prisoner, he meant: (1) to break bread with the prisoner; and (2) to work like Mother Jones to get them out of prison.

John, like many a poor peasant in first-century Palestine, living and dying under Roman occupation and the yoke of wealthy religion, turned to Second Isaiah for a vision of the New Exodus. John the Baptist's preaching and sharing of bread was good news to those in prison. Shared bread brings "liberty to captives." Often John would cite Isaiah when people wanted to know why he was hanging out at dungeons and holding cells before the inmates were nailed to a cross. "Come on, John. Nine holes won't hurt this afternoon. Maybe you could get Caiaphas to talk to Herod Antipas to let your three disciples out. That's more effective than visiting and sharing that stale bread." The ears of John's heart would then hear Isaiah of old preaching the good news of the New Exodus: "Those who are in prison will soon be set free; they will live a long life, and have all the bread they need" (Isaiah 51:14).

Shared bread is a feature, of course, of the First Exodus as well. The matzo of affliction becomes liberation's sustenance away from the domination system of Pharaoh. The purpose of the New Exodus is to form a New Covenant rooted in Jubilee promises. Shared bread is the way we live together. Shared bread sets prisoners free and collapses the tents of those who plan and execute the bombing of our sisters and brothers in Iraq. Shared bread, not depleted uranium, is the first step of discipleship.

The central theme of shared bread in John's preaching—"whoever has bread must share it"—formed part of his ethic of non-cooperation with the domination systems of the constricted human heart, of the Temple (rich religion) and of Rome (the political and economic order). In the New Covenant, sharing lives and possessions is the mark of life rather than death. Sharing, not

acquisition, is the vision of Jubilee promises. The one who wore camel's hair said, on behalf of Yahweh-Elohim, "Got more than two shirts? Give away all that you do not regularly wear." Very simple. Too simple, really.

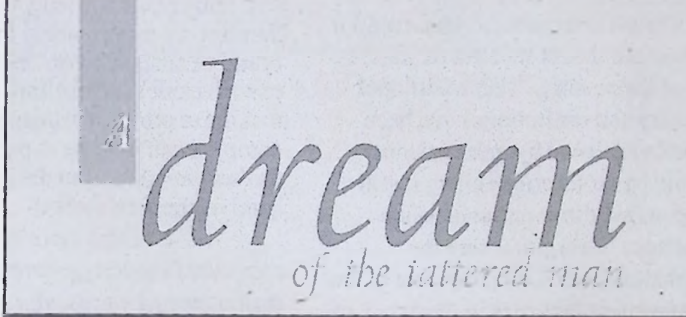
So John the Baptist wanders with his small following. They were known as the Solid Rock Discipleship Band, and they sang in concert with the blood-washed band. John reaches out to readers of *Hospitality* with an invitation to step toward the New Exodus and the New Covenant—the beginning is near!—here in the American Empire. He reaches out amid churches so wealthy that Gyms for Jesus are the latest rage in getting rid of the surplus. John is not the Messiah. But his call is the first step in discipleship. Remember: (1) Our hearts cooperate with the domination system. We must get Egypt out of us and get ourselves out of Egypt. (2) We must end our allegiance to churches and theology that teach religion. Discipleship is life and the only form of faith. (3) We must renounce our allegiance to the American Empire and all forms of domination. Forgiveness and new life are possible for us all!

Then the crowds ask John, "What are we to do, then?" "Oh," said the bee charmer and locust lover, "give most of your clothes away, and please, please, please, share bread."

There is a caveat, however. It goes: "In many different ways John preached the Good News to the people and urged them to change their ways. But John reprimanded Herod, the governor, because he had married Herodias, his brother's wife, and had done many other evil things. Then Herod did an even worse thing by putting John in prison."

Let us begin the journey.

Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door.



dream
of the battered man

Stories from Georgia's Death Row
RANDOLPH LONEY

Foreword by Will D. Campbell

"This book has to do with Randy Loney's journey. You will read of the impact made on him by the condemned, who come fully into our view. And you will learn of their often terrifying childhood odysseys that had such disastrous consequences. Beyond that, you will catch a glimpse of the fallen condition that enslaves us all. . . . An important book."
— WILL D. CAMPBELL
from the foreword

"In calm, straightforward prose Randy Loney tells of the rich gift of friendship that he brings to the battered, abused, and yet strangely strong men who wait on death row for the end that society will inflict on them. A stronger case for the demise of the death penalty has not been written."
— WILLIAM S. MCFEELY
Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer
and author of *Proximity to Death*

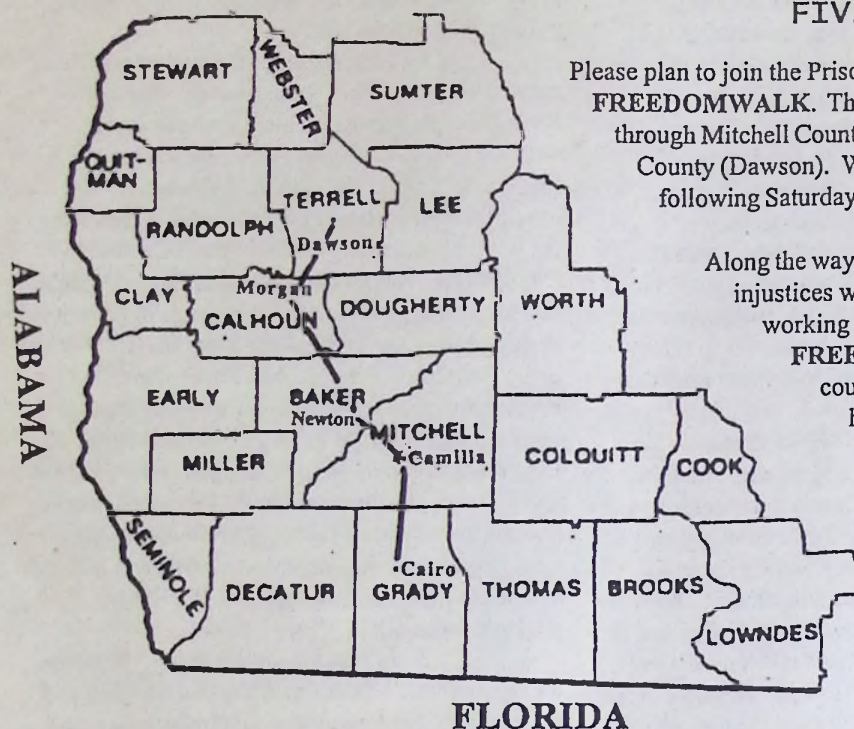
ISBN 0-8028-4280-1 • 251 pages • hardcover • \$22.00

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WALK FOR FREEDOM IN SOUTH GEORGIA

A WEEK-LONG, 83-MILE "JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE" ACROSS FIVE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA COUNTIES



Please plan to join the Prison & Jail Project this coming September as we embark upon our 6th annual **FREEDOMWALK**. This year we will walk 83 miles beginning in Grady County (Cairo) and traveling through Mitchell County (Camilla), Baker County (Newton), Calhoun County (Morgan), and into Terrell County (Dawson). We will begin the walk Sunday afternoon, September 9 in Cairo and conclude that following Saturday, September 15, in Dawson.

Along the way we will call attention to jailhouse conditions, courthouse oppression, and other injustices we witness in this part of southwest Georgia. The Prison & Jail Project has been working with folks caught up in the criminal justice web in each of this year's five **FREEDOMWALK** counties. The seven-day walk will acknowledge these courageous individuals and organizations along the way, and we will lift up important historical events in each of the communities we walk through.

We will walk 12-16 miles each day. Meals and evening lodging are provided to participants.

PLAN TO JOIN US IN SEPTEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE P&JP, P.O. BOX 6749, AMERICUS, GA, 31709; 229-928-2080.

Labor, cont'd from page 1
malls in our SUV mini tanks, we forget that the "better half" comprises an ever shrinking fraction of the American pie.

The tide of plant closings that arose at the end of the post-war boom, and found its high water mark in the 1980's, is no longer big news. But the tragedy is still being played out. It is not a crisis to most Americans until it is their job that is sent out of state, or out of the country. That traditional industry and institutions have been steadily replaced by more prisons should be no surprise either. It still happens in little communities like Americus, Georgia, where the Manhattan Shirt Company, one of the first garment factories in the South to be unionized back in the 1940's, quietly closed its doors in 1996.

Workers reported that prior to shutting down the Manhattan plant, it had become standard practice to bag partially completed shirts for shipment to Guatemala, where someone else would attach the collars and cuffs for re-shipment to the U.S. They had hardly dismantled the last sewing machine, when the public was informed that new jobs were coming to Sumter County in the form of a youth detention center to be constructed in the prison industrial park that already included the county prison and a new jail.

The ghost of old Major James is indeed with us still, and for good reason. Advocates for prisoners and alternatives to prisons often point to the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution as having abolished slavery in all instances except one—prison—thus leaving a hole in human rights big enough to drive a state

prison bus through. Despite state law to the contrary, recent incidents here in Georgia have shown that prisoners have still been used to expand the profit margins of floundering private enterprises.

But prisoners are not the only ones to be enslaved for profit as part of the criminal justice system. The ones who lock the doors and snap the cuffs on convicts young and old are themselves experiencing their own brand of enslavement. In the drive to privatize our state institutions and maximize profits, the prison industrial complex can only be expected to take further direction from the invisible hand of the free market.

That hand can even be expected to touch government employees who presently work with our burgeoning population of youthful offenders. Juvenile caseworkers and probation officers employed by the state of Maine recently discovered that they are no longer eligible, after a good day's work, to get a good day's pay.

In June the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in *Alden v. Maine*, No. 98-436, that in addition to preventing individuals from suing states in federal court, the Constitution also keeps them from suing their states in their own state courts, even when those same states violate federal law.

In this case, law enforcement workers were seeking overtime pay rightfully theirs under a fundamental labor law called the Fair Labor Standards Act, which set up minimum wages and hours during the Depression, and was expanded in 1974 to include state employees. Now 4.7 million state workers are without recourse to the courts, unless the federal government decides to bring

suit in state court, which is something officials say they are not in a position to do. ("States Are Given Legal Shield by Supreme Court," *New York Times*, 24 June 1999).

An assistant district attorney reported recently during a discussion of this decision that he agreed with the court in principle, but felt this was the wrong case to prove it. When I asked him why he was opposed to using this particular case he replied, "They weren't compensated for their labor. That's a violation of the Thirteenth Amendment. That's slavery!"

We may look for a day, in the not-too-distant future when some prison entrepreneur or private corrections multinational will try to increase their profit margin by doing the same thing with our prisons that we have done with everything else we don't want, from our garbage barges to major manufacturing: lobby the government for the creation of a couple of more trade agreements, and then move them all to poor developing countries. Then the rest of us can get in line for jobs as temporary

employees at Microsoft, and join a union. As we cross the border into the much ballyhooed new millennium, I wonder what it will take for the church to care.

Barry Burnside is the Founder and Director of Victim Offender Services, a Ministry of the Americus, Georgia Mennonite Fellowship. Gatherings, Barry's newsletter in which this article first appeared, is available by writing Victim Offender Services, P.O. Box 1785, Americus, GA 31709.

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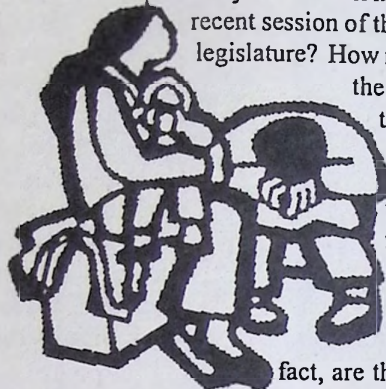
JUST A FEW QUESTIONS FOR ATLANTA

By Murphy Davis

1. Why is there hunger and malnutrition in Atlanta? Is there not enough food to go around?
2. Why must some mothers and fathers struggle to feed their children while others can afford sumptuous and plentiful meals *and* membership in a gym or health spa to deal with the consequences of overeating?
3. How much food is thrown away in the city every day?
4. Why can some of us not get control of our excessive consumption while others of us cannot get enough food for a healthy life?
5. What is the relationship between the increasing coverage of restaurants and fine dining in the Atlanta press and the growth of hunger and homelessness?
6. What is the relationship between systemic homelessness and the enormous growth in the average floor space in the "American home?"
7. Why is it that the Atlanta Housing Authority is nationally acclaimed for its systematic destruction of public housing in the city? Why are the residents of public housing always lured into cooperation with the promise of improved housing when only a small percentage of them are re-admitted to the "mixed income" communities? Why are the residents not told that most of them will never return when their communities are destroyed?
8. Where have the former residents of Techwood Homes gone? One-thousand, two-hundred families were displaced, and only 200 of those families were allowed to return. Where are the rest? Where are the former residents of East Lake Meadows? Of John Hope Homes?
9. Why was it okay five years ago for elderly widows in many of Atlanta's in-town neighborhoods to own their own homes and live there, while today they are getting in the way of a "hot" real estate market? What are they to do when the taxes on their homes multiply because white folks have moved into the neighborhood? Why is there such an eerie silence as they are steadily driven from their homes by vicious, predatory financial institutions and banking interests that re-sell these properties at enormous profits?
10. How many of these former homeowners are becoming homeless? Where are they going when they lose their homes?
11. What is the relationship between the explosion of in-town real estate values and the growing frustration with traffic among white suburbanites?
12. What are the relationships between the lending institutions and mortgage companies regularly foreclosing on intown properties and the real estate companies that re-sell these homes?

13. What are the names of the big banks that own the smaller finance companies involved in predatory lending practices? Where do the bank presidents and other officers and board members attend church?

14. Why did the legislation proposed to limit predatory lenders fail in the most recent session of the Georgia legislature? How much money did the banks put into the lobbying effort to defeat Senator Vincent Fort's bill?



15. What, in fact, are the causes of homelessness? Mental illness? Character flaws? Addiction? Laziness? The limitless appetite of the rich?

16. Why were there 1,500 homeless people in Atlanta in 1980 and more than 15,000 by 1989? Did poor people change that much? Or did our system change that much?
17. How do middle and upper class Atlantans benefit from the existence of homelessness?
18. Why have we settled for systemic homelessness as a part of the political landscape? Can you remember the time when everyone was horrified that homelessness could exist in the United States of America? Why is homelessness not a major issue in the Atlanta mayor's race?

19. Why do we always need more laws to criminalize the poor? Why are we so afraid of Black men?
20. Why are we so invested in white women being afraid of Black men when the leading causes of injury to women are traffic accidents and violence at the hands of husbands and lovers?
21. What is the relationship between the growth of minimum-wage jobs, temporary labor, and homelessness?
22. Why are there more mentally ill people in the Atlanta City, Fulton County, and DeKalb County Jails than in Georgia Regional Hospital?
23. Why did we close the Georgia Mental Health Institute? How was that decision made, and by whom? Why does the land (a very valuable piece of real estate) on which GMHI once stood now belong to Emory University?
24. What is the relationship between the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent in the metropolitan area on jails and police and the growth of gated communities?
25. Why do we not have more questions of each other? Why do we not ask more questions about our systems? Why do we not wonder—in the public forum—why so much human misery exists in the midst of such abundance?
26. Why does the press in Atlanta not ask more questions? Why are we so reluctant to discuss hunger and homelessness in the public arena?

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

America the Beautiful for Billionaires

To the tune of "America the Beautiful":
Words by Rob R. Baron, a/k/a/ Bo Chagnon

Oh, beautiful voracious laws,
For all that you have brought,
For tax cuts and for subsidies
From candidates we bought.
America, America, God sheds his grace on
greed,
And billionaires
Increase our share
In any way we please.

Oh, beautiful, for gracious lies
From networks that we own
For praising our huge mansions while
So many have no home.
America, America, God sheds his grace on
greed,
We justify
Our greatness by
Ignoring those in need.

Oh, beautiful for images
For advertising, too;
For blaming of the victims and
For envying the few!
America, America, God sheds his grace on
greed,
Scapegoat the poor
And then take more:
That is our common creed.

Oh, beautiful, for corporations,
News we love to hear,
Of power that is concentrated
More and more each year.
America, America, God sheds his grace on
greed,
Where soon there'll be
Monopoly
From sea to shining sea!

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Welcome to the Spotlight

By Tonnie King



Hello, everyone!

With pleasure, I introduce friends of the Open Door Community from the First Presbyterian Church of Covington, Georgia. Since 1999, Chris Hartbarger has been a faithful driver for our Hardwick Trip, our monthly prison visitation ministry. In January 2000, Legare Hartbarger brought her Sunday school class along on the trip. The entire group enjoyed themselves so much that the church session approved the use of the church van for each monthly trip to Hardwick. We are happy to have this very supportive and fun group as a part of our prison ministry: Dan Walden, Legare Hartbarger, Lelia Raines, Fred Wise, Cliff Frierson, Chris Hartbarger, and Dennis Raines. Thank you very much, First Presbyterian Church of Covington.



I Hear BANGING AT MY BACK DOOR



Writings from *Hospitality*

ED LORING
The Open Door Community, Atlanta

WITH A FOREWORD BY
REV. TIMOTHY McDONALD III

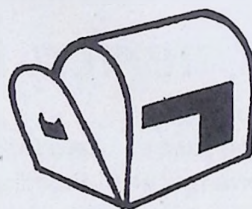
Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Murphy, Ed, and everyone in and all around the Open door.

What a terrific article you wrote Murphy in the May Hospitality. Now how can we get it into textbooks and on every church bulletin board? All the rest of this issue is excellent. Thanks to all of you. In my writing thank you's for Tucson Catholic Worker your paper inspires me more than any other – making these notes much better. A homeless friend who gets my back issues says it's the best publication he's read and he reads a lot of stuff. Proves that you people are speaking real truth to power – practicing what you preach, and so forth.

Take care and stay well and hang around – Man do we ever need you!! Lots of love and thanks.

In Solidarity,
Jerry Robinett
Casa Maria Catholic
Worker,
Tucson AZ



Murphy,

Your lead article in the May issue of Hospitality entitled "Turning Down the Big Cheese" says so much and says it so eloquently and clearly that I would like to reproduce it (with your permission, of course) in our church newsletter for June. We can of course retype it, but since it is rather lengthy, I thought I would ask if it happens to be available in Word format via e-mail?

Also, I am most interested in making personal contact in the future, particularly because I am a Guilford College alum, and my daughter (a rising HS senior) has made Guilford and Agnes Scott her first two college choices. I know that she will be interested in volunteering if she finally opts for Atlanta.

Thanks again for fine, well-informed, and thought-provoking reading!

Shalom,
Rev. Bobbi Neason
First Presbyterian Church
Quitman, GA

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POSTAGE STAMPS

Dear Hospitality Readers,

Used Postage stamps, ordinarily thrown away, can be sold to raise money to feed the hungry in the U.S. and abroad. Large commemoratives (like Olympics, Black Heritage, Lighthouse, etc.) and all foreign stamps are wanted, along with unused U.S. and any collections (no standard issues such as Flags, Love, etc.) They are sorted and sold to dealers. All proceeds go to ministries like the Open Door, Bread for the World, Heifer Project, and Church World Service, where they are used in the name of Christ to feed the hungry or help the hungry feed themselves. Approximately \$500 a month is now being raised this way.

Send stamps to:
Arthur M. Field
2124 Highway 280 West
Plains, GA 31780

Hey, Murphy,

Thank for the note and prayers.

Today I led worship and read from "Hospitality" - Ed Weir's story about Henry Willis. (Dianne Roe complained that I made her cry). I don't think it hurts anyone to cry a little, do you?

Have had some good visits with Palestinian families the last few days. Today is Independence Day for Israel - al Naqba (the disaster) for Palestinians. For the past two days Palestinians have been under curfew so things are quiet for now. I hear Mubarak Awad will be back soon...a peace camp is in the works among other things.

Much love to all...

Shalom/Salaam,
JoAnne Lingle
Hebron, Israel

Dear Murphy,

Thank you for your compelling, transparently reasoned, on-the-mark article rebuking the suspicious, clumsy, and gossamer veiled attempt at control of an initiative from the government: to fund charity to help the poor, no less. This ill conceived scheme, the so called Faith Based proposal, disguised as compassionate distributing of public monies for those in need, jumped at me with a visceral dislike. Outright I rejected it, but could not articulate in my own mind my fearful reaction, except that, as someone who lived under a totalitarian system, state run operations spell disaster of assorted varieties.

In your writing, you clarified everything. Could you not publish this excellent piece in the big press so it could reach a wider audience? At least, please send it to the Georgia Bulletin of the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta. Even though I don't know whether they would publish it (and they should), at least they will have to read it.

With great admiration
always,
Tere Pages
Athens, GA

Dear Open Door,

This comes with love and gratitude for all the wondrous works you do. Don't give up. You all just keep on keeping on. I cannot understand why the "City

Fathers" are so blind, dumb, and callous—even some of the "good guys!" The execution rate in Texas is HORRIFYING. I am 100% against the death penalty.

My beloved husband, Gene Johnson, died last October. I'm 86 and not all that steady on my feet, or I'd join you! There's a lot of love in my heart for each one in your community.

Love,
Barbara Davis Johnson
Kerrville, Texas

Dear Ed,

...I'll be seeing Ched Myers in LA in a couple of weeks and will speak at Bartemeus community as well as at the monastery in the desert. "I Hear Hope Banging..." is great Pentecost reading. I'll pick up more copies when I'm there, if I may. Tell Murphy I'm spreading her words on George W's faith based gov't charity from Hospitality far and wide. Best comment I've seen. I don't know of any CW community where so many community members are doing such deep thinking and good writing. I feel a little daunted coming out to speak to you, but confident in your hospitality.

I'll bring some homemade goat cheese!

Peace,
Brian Terrell
Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm
Maloy, Iowa

...Along with your very good work, you have a very liberal political agenda which is not consistent with my own convictions and beliefs. For instance, the shots taken at George Bush in the article by Dr. Joseph Lowery is just one example. We want to have nothing to do with your organization as long as you pursue these political ends. So, please, take us off your mailing list. It's a terrible waste of your money and offensive to us.

Harry Vamer
Via phone
Alpharetta, GA

Dear Ed,

We read with emotion and gratitude your issues of Hospitality. They nurture our inner beings and inspire. The death penalty issue has concerned us most of our adult lives—as you probably guessed. This semester I've included it in my introductory philosophy class. I'm glad to report that in a debate on it in class today, 17 out of 20 argued against the death penalty. Most sided with Justice Marshall and Hugo Bedo against Kant's shameful position. So, maybe we are moving—and our students can teach their parents if they (the parents) are Bush inclined.

The enclosed represents our wish to share some of it with a group that genuinely does the work of the gospel. Thank you, thank you for seeing God in the homeless and ministering to them, as they do to us.

Love and peace to you and Murphy and the whole Open Door Community. In haste but with appreciation,
Ron and Margo Santoni
Granville, OH

(Editor's note: Ron Santoni is an internationally known Jean Paul Sartre scholar, Professor of Philosophy at Denison University and a disciple of Jesus the Jew.)

Dear Mr. Loring and Ms. Davis,

May I respectfully echo the sentiments of letter-writer Vicky Kelly in

the "Letters" section of your May issue.

Your splendid work is, in my opinion, being undermined by a subtext of political class warfare. Few Americans with whom I talk share Ms. Davis' belief that homelessness and hunger are the direct result of public policy.

Are there, in your perception, no decent government employees? Are all conservatives scoundrels? Does the President warrant nothing but contempt?

I am content to see Timothy McVeigh executed. Does this mean I don't care about the poor?

What's needed, I think, is an olive branch to those of us who don't share your politics but would, nevertheless, be your allies.

Your admirer
Allan Gibson
Jasper, GA

Murphy,

I've not read any commentary more cogent, tightly researched, or biblically grounded than your compelling article - "Turning Down the Big Cheese..."

My continuing gratitude to you and your community for your faithfulness and witness -
Rev. A. Kempton Haynes, Jr.
Grace United Methodist Church
Atlanta, GA

Dear Ed,

I've just read your book "I Hear Hope Banging At My Back Door." Thank you for writing it! It's good to be reminded again of the depth of injustice and lack of equality that exists especially in the USA, as even here in prison it is easy to fall into the traps of believing that things aren't so bad. Well, I am now passing the book on to an interested cellmate of mine, spread the word a bit more. I hope to meet you at the Euro CW gathering this year and hear more about the Open Door.

Pax et Bonum,
Susan van der Hijden
HM Prison Highpoint
Suffolk, England

Dear Murphy and Ed;

Just a short note! I am so grateful for "Hospitality"! Each issue is so inspiring!

Murphy, your article on the death penalty was magnificent! I am enclosing a recent piece of mine, which cannot compare with yours!!!

May our gracious Lord continue to bless your moving and important ministries!

Pray for mine, among our dear Spanish-speaking, as I attempt to serve three communities in Newnan, Cumming, and Canton, traveling 230 miles each weekend! With deep affection and admiration,
Joseph A. Fahy, C.P.
Atlanta, GA

Dear Murphy,

I just wanted to write a quick note to let you know as of 1/24/01 they started charging us for over the counter medication. In the past we would put down the O.C.M. (over the counter medication) and check "I do not wish to be seen at sick call however." Now they are calling us out even if we just want t cold pack (7 tablets) and charging us \$5.00.

What this means is if we have a cold it will cost us \$5.00 to get a cold pack because now we have to be seen [by a doctor].

I've been reading in the paper about Grady and medication. We would all be better off in the ole days, when we could trade a pig, a mess of fish, a pie etc for doctor visits and medicine. Now it's Do you have money to pay for this? If the answer is no, forget it!

If y'all ever took a tour of this place you could see how money is wasted. Wax on tile floors is ok. But (wax) on concrete that's worse than sidewalks, please!
A friend in prison

Dear Ed,

As I get to know more women I'm continually saddened by their stories. Yesterday a woman sat down with me who has a 30 month sentence for helping 3 "illegal" people come into the states from Mexico. Her children and family all live in San Diego, yet she will be deported when her sentence is over. When she comes back to take care of her family, she faces 5-7 years for re-entry. Her story is not unusual.

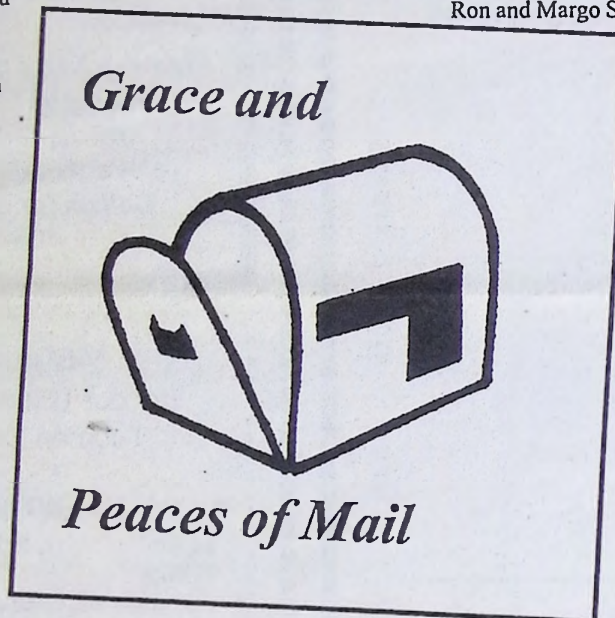
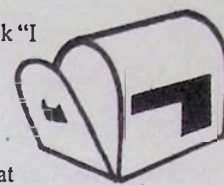
Your story about Thony Green struck me - I guess because I'm here with people like him... and who could easily contribute their goodness and service if given a chance to live in a community where they are valued and affirmed, and their basic needs are met.

Here in this prison, no one is homeless, no one cold, no one hungry. Everyone is employed... So many of the women wouldn't be here if they had been able to gain all that on the outside.

But there are also many here on conspiracy charges (without evidence) where a husband, family member, or casual acquaintance was involved in a drug deal, and to get time off, incriminated the woman, or the woman just couldn't prove she didn't know.

Thanks for sharing your books and struggle to practice Gospel values.

Peace, Susan Crane
Federal Correctional Institution Dublin
Dublin, CA



Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Wednesday and Thursday, 11 a.m.-Noon

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

Use of Phone: Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.,
Wednesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon

Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and Soul Foot Care Clinic: Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

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

Weekend Retreats: Four times each year (for our household, volunteers and supporters); next retreat is our Fall Retreat, August 24-26.

Table Talk: most Wednesdays 3:45-5:45

We are open...

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

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

Come Worship With Us!

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

August 5	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Ed Loring preaching
August 12	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Dick Rustay leading worship in remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
August 19	5 p.m. Worship at 910
August 24-26	No Worship at 910; Annual Planning Retreat at Dayspring Farm

Please join us!

Bible Study on the margins at "Learning Posts and Seeing Sites" in the city. Most Wednesdays 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Also, front yard Worship every Monday morning at 8:30 at the Open Door. Led by Chuck Campbell, the Homeless, and the Breakfast servers.

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

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

Medical Supplies

(for our Thursday Evening Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic)

Can you help with the medicine cabinet?

- aspirin
- Tylenol
- bandages and band-aids
- antibiotic cream or ointment
- ibuprofen
- antifungal cream
- cold medicine (alcohol free)

Open Door Community Needs

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

Meat for the soup in our Soup Kitchen
Sandwiches
Table Lamps
Floor Lamps
Chest of Drawers
Vacuum Cleaners
Twin Beds
Alarm Clocks
Blankets
Eye Glasses

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

From 11 am '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!