

HOSPITALITY

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Nonviolence As A Way Of Life

by Robert McGlasson

Most of us are familiar with the idea of nonviolence. It has been a powerful method for bringing about political and social change in movements led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in this country, and by Gandhi in India.

In this article I would like to discuss another, more inclusive view of nonviolence, which treats nonviolence not only as a political method, but as a way of life. Under this broader view, nonviolence is an active belief in the force of Love and Truth which is God's Spirit in each of us. It requires a prayerful disarming of and noncooperation with all forms and manifestations of humiliation, violence and hatred.

Such a view of nonviolence immediately shifts our focus from the political arena, where we are most accustomed to thinking in terms of nonviolence, to our daily lives and relationships with our family, our closest friends, our co-workers, as well as those whom we perceive to be our opponents.

And most importantly, at the outset we are faced with the violence within ourselves. The process of disarmament and noncooperation must begin with a laying down of the psychological weapons that we stockpile in our own hearts; otherwise, to act out of anger, jealousy, defensiveness, ill-will, hatred, or violence is to cooperate from the very start with those forces which we would seek to overcome and change in our political activities.

Nonviolence and self examination

A first principle of nonviolence as a way of life, therefore, is that we begin by examining, and seeking to change our own hearts and actions. The first step, and one that must be taken each day, is a turning inward, a perusal of the soul to discover and lay open both the seeds and the wounds of violence deep within our own hearts.

When we subject our hearts to careful and honest scrutiny, we begin to see the petty violence that is legion within us--our bitterness against our family and friends; our resentment toward persons who have wronged us; our defensiveness toward those with whom we feel threatened or unworthy; our judgmentalness toward people who are different from us or who have different points of view; and our hatred for the very persons whose hearts we hope to change in the name of "nonviolence."

We are faced at once with the recognition that we are connected to all of humanity; not just the part of humanity that is love and unity, but also the part that is hate and separation. We see that the lies told by the politician or the lawyer are rooted in the same dishonesty and deception that we practice in our own lives; that the racial prejudices harbored by our suspicious neighbors are our own prejudices; that the violence on the streets of our cities, or within our families, is our own hostility and violence; that the



(MARTIN) hatred, division, and death that is perpetrated by our churches and our governments is the same violence and hatred and ill-will that we plant, cultivate and harvest each day in our own hearts, oftentimes toward those whom we love and care for the most. In short, even a quick look inside helps us to appreciate our direct participation in and cooperation with the very forces we would hope to change.

As a lawyer defending prisoners who are subjected to cruel conditions of confinement, especially those on death row throughout the South, I can attest to my own participation in many types of violence. At times my hatred for those who would seek to execute my clients is at least as intense as the hatred and anger that motivates their support for the death penalty.

And all of us are familiar with the "us against them" mentality that is pervasive in the "nonviolent" peace and justice movement. Who among us has not ex-

cont. on page 2

perienced the petty squabbling, territorialism, and ego conflicts in their work with groups committed to nonviolence?

When we take this first step in a nonviolent way of life we are confronted with the unescapable reality of our own complicity in violence. It is just at this point, however, that the seeds of nonviolence are planted within us. It is precisely when we acknowledge publicly the painful reality of our own contempt and ill-will that nonviolence as a way of life begins.

For at this crucial level of self-awareness, we start to understand that we are connected to those whom we perceive to be the worst among us and toward whom we are most contemptuous. Our own hearts begin to change from hatred and misunderstanding to love and knowing compassion. The separateness starts to wither, and the sisterhood and brotherhood of humanity grows, right in our own hearts and bodies. This change is by definition the beginning of nonviolence as a way of life.

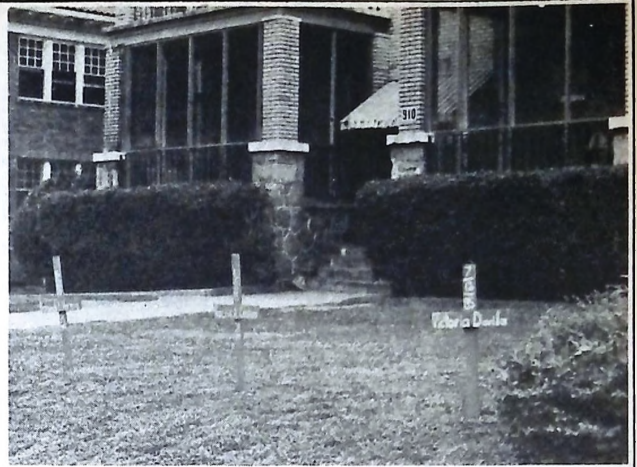
Recognizing our own violence is one thing, (and for most of us with monstrous egos this is no menial task), but getting rid of it is another. We in the advantaged world who have all the resources that we need for building up a life of luxury, have few if any resources for learning how to tear down the walls that separate us and the violence that consumes us.

Nonviolence and suffering

For those of us in the advantaged world, a second principle of nonviolence is the necessity of daily reducing the self, the ego, to nothing by means of voluntary suffering. Jesus taught that "[i]f anyone wants to come with me, they must forget themselves, take up their cross every day, and follow me." (Luke 9:23). A bed-rock principle of life for any follower of Christ is that we must lose our selves (in the sense of a separate self, distinct from the rest of humanity) every day by taking on suffering.

My experience as a Christian, however, has been that we usually fail to see the importance of suffering as anything more than a masochistic means of dealing with our own guilt. One of the most important truths about nonviolence as a way of life, is that the process of reducing oneself to nothing through suffering is not just a means of appeasing guilt. It is, more importantly, a positive act of cultivating in our own bodies and souls the spirit and force of love that Jesus possessed and promised in each of us. God calls us to deny our selves, to get rid of our egos and our sense of self-separateness, to make room for God and for one another. And it is through suffering that we create space for the Spirit of God within us. It is in this space that we develop the power of community and connectedness and love, a power that is real and active and unstoppable, and at the heart of nonviolence as a way of life.

cont. on page 4



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

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"If you preach the Gospel in all aspects with the exception of the issues which deal specifically with your time you are not preaching the Gospel at all."

-Martin Luther

Open Door Schedule

WE ARE OPEN...

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00 am until 6:00 pm and from 7:15 pm to 8:30 pm. The building is open from 9:00 am until 8:30 pm those days. (Both phone & door are not answered during our lunch break (12:15-1:00)). Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are closed until 1:00 pm. Then our phones and door are answered from 1:00 until 6:00 pm

OUR MINISTRY...

SOUP KITCHEN - Monday-Saturday, 11-12 noon; Sunday 3-4pm

BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST - Monday-Friday 7:30-8:30 am SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES - Monday, Wednesday,

Friday - 9:00 - 11:00 am (Be sure to call--summer schedule varies) USE OF PHONE - Monday-Saturday, 9am - 4pm.

SHELTER REQUESTS - Monday-Saturday 9am - noon. SUNDAY WORSHIP - 5:00 - 6:30 pm.

BIBLE STUDY - Alternate Wednesdays 7:30 - 9:30 (call for summer schedule)

ALL-DAY RETREATS - Every 6th Sunday (for our household & volunteers/supporters) - Sept. 6&7 (call for details)

Don't Soldiers Pray?



Rackwell Kent

The question was direct and short: "Don't soldiers pray?" The answer was "Of course they do but the difference is the action that happens afterwards."

by Ed Weir

This dialogue was part of a discussion with three refugees fleeing civilian violence in El Salvador. The soldiers in question were Salvadoran soldiers who pray for the success of a mission that most often is the massacre of an entire village of people.

God answers prayers in ways I sure don't know about. People conclude from reading the Old Testament that God uses wars to punish people. It's in the Bible so it must be true. The pictures of war I have seen often show a lot of people being tortured and killed who usually don't have a whole lot to do with any political ideas. I doubt God is interested in punishing these folks.

Ronald Reagan must have prayed to God before he bombed Libya. The results look biblical. Omar Kadafy's baby was killed. It's just like when David had Bathsheba's husband killed. The Bible says God punished David by killing his baby son.

These days athletes give God credit for winning or successful performances. What does God care about such

matters? Imagine God trying to pick a winner when two basketball teams are praying for victory.

The words may sound right but the action needs to reflect the building of God's movement through compassion, love, kindness, and forgiveness.

Prayer becomes a yearning for God to take over one's life. God's power becomes activated not so much through words and mystical magic but through prayer that reveals God through our actions.

In El Paso, Texas there is the Christ is the Answer Detention Center. Their job is to convert people to Christ. They also happen to hold people in a prison until U.S. Immigration gets ready to send them back to El Salvador or Guatemala. U.S. Immigration also gives the names of these people to the home governments just in case the government would like to throw them in another prison or better yet mutilate their bodies and leave them on the side of the road.

Action does seem to reflect what kind of praying goes on.

Resistance

by Ed Loring



The Open Door is a community of resistance. As James tells us (1:27) the life of discipleship is seen in two distinct although related ways. First, we are to work for justice among the oppressed; and secondly, we are to resist the powers and idols of the world which corrupt and eventually kill our spirits. Writes James, "What God the Holy Parent considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world."

To be a people called to put their bodies where their doctrines are and to be in the world but not conformed to or corrupted by the world is an exceedingly difficult road to travel. Perhaps the easiest way would be to withdraw from the world. Feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless of one's own community could then constitute the struggle for justice. The refusal to participate in the world of politics and economics and culture could be the form of resistance to the world that wills to corrupt, control and kill the human spirit which is formed by freedom in Jesus Christ. But this is not what I mean when I say that the Open Door is a community of resistance.

cont. on page 5

Fasting as an example

So how do we take on suffering in a way that does not leave us wallowing in self-disgust and guilt, but instead enables us to grow in our strength to love, and through our love, to change the hearts of those whose way is violent? Let's take a traditional Christian method, namely fasting, as an example, and explore how it can be an appropriate and effective, though by no means exclusive, method of cultivating this power.

The traditional view of fasting as an act of penance to relieve us of guilt is not inconsistent with nonviolence. However, when we seek nonviolence as a way of life, our penance becomes more than doing time for our personal guilts. In a life of nonviolence, to fast means to confess that we harbor within us the forces of violence and death and hatred that were mercilessly dropped upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and those that were unleashed upon millions of Jewish people during World War II. Thus at the outset, our penance, thus understood, produces a connection with our sisters and brothers, especially with those whom we view as the worst among us. In this way fasting becomes an active method of cultivating understanding, connectedness, and love, especially for our would-be opponents.

Another way to view fasting is to see it as an emptying not only of the body, but also of the soul, of all of these forces of evil, to make space for the forces of love and good will. In the act of doing penance by emptying ourselves, we are making room for God's Spirit to be and grow within us. This emptying process must be done regularly. For we all know how quickly we become filled again with the hatred and ill-will that is all around us.

So we fast and suffer to empty. We also fast to connect ourselves to the suffering millions in the world. We can only appreciate our unity with all people everywhere by ridding ourselves of our sense of an independent self separate in space and in spirit from our brothers and sisters. Thus to grow in nonviolence means to adopt habits and take on activities that connect us with each other rather than divide us.



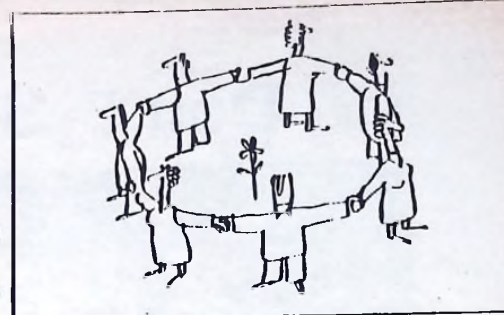
Nonviolence in response to violence

Although nonviolence deals as much with our relationship to our friends as it does to our relationship with our opponents, nonviolence meets its most demanding test in response to hatred and violence. Nevertheless, if nonviolence is God's will for us, then we must learn to accept suffering at the hands of those who do violence to us and to our brothers and sisters. This is a third principle of nonviolence: the necessity of gladly and humbly accepting the insults, arrests, and perhaps worse, inflicted on us by those whose hearts we want so badly to change.

Such a response is required under the first principle of nonviolence. If nonviolence means noncooperation with all forms of violence, then to meet violence with more violence would violate this first principle.

Also, a nonviolent response is the only one that will work a lasting change in our opponents' hearts. Voluntarily taking on the suffering inflicted upon us by our opponents is the means by which we can change the hatred in them to love. That is, the officials and persons who are putting us into jails, or hurling insults at our lifestyles and values, or depriving our brothers and sisters of necessary food, clothing, shelter, and even life, will lay down their ill-will and become recruits for justice, peace and sharing when they come to see the injustice of their ways through our joyful acceptance of the suffering they bring upon us.

I am not advocating passive submission to evil and oppression, but rather the opposite. Nonviolence does not mean, for example, that women should submit to the violence of men, or blacks to whites, or even children



Lan Munnik

to adults. In fact this would be passive cooperation with rather than active noncooperation with violence. The type of suffering to which we should gladly submit is that inflicted upon us because of our noncooperation. It is suffering inflicted upon us by our enemies because we refuse to cooperate with their violence that will ultimately cause them to see the evil in their ways and change.

The necessity of suffering

Some may differ with the view that nonviolence as a way of life necessarily requires us to take on and be subjected to suffering. I believe it is a necessity for several reasons. First, I think it is clear that we must empty our bodies and our hearts to make room for God's Spirit. For those of us in the advantaged world who live in a luxury of plenty, we carry much sin and guilt for our advantages and for the oppression we and our forebearers have perpetrated and relied upon to gain it. For most of us who have so much and who have obtained so much through dishonesty, robbery, slavery and mass slaughter, we have much to rid from our bodies and souls. Suffering, at least in my experience, helps me to empty myself of this baggage and to make room for the forgiving and compassionate Heart of God.

Second, because there are so many people in this world who themselves are born into a life of poverty, hunger and oppression, nonviolence requires that we take on some of this suffering to connect to these suffering millions. If the world were different perhaps we would not need to suffer in order to be in community with our sisters and brothers. But as it is, how can we hope to connect with all people in the world, to really see them as family, when we live with such great disparities in daily habits, consumptions, and agendas?

Finally, voluntary suffering brings strength and discipline, characteristics which are absolute requirements for any recruit for the nonviolent life who hopes to face his or her opponents with compassion. Without the fearless strength and discipline born of regular suffering, it would be impossible to face our opponents, who will want to cause us more pain and heartache, with the courage to care rather than the cowardliness of hostility. Just as a warring soldier recruit must be trained to become warlike through practice warmaking, so too a person who wishes to face life's struggles nonviolently, must become fearless of suffering through suffering.

Joy, fulfillment and nonviolence

With all this talk about suffering, many might ask whether there is any room for joy and fulfillment in a nonviolent way of life. In fact my experience and my belief are that such voluntary suffering has as its source the same communion with God and with God's Spirit as joy, peace and fulfillment. If by taking on suffering we are truly creating space within our hearts and our lives for God, and if it is true that God's Spirit grows within us in our suffering, then joy and fulfillment are inevitable.

One of the most profound experiences I have had of the joy in voluntary suffering comes from a death penalty trial in which I was involved over a year ago. The case was being tried in a small town in a rural part of the state of Georgia. Several lawyers in our office had spent literally months preparing to represent our client against the most notorious prosecutor/judge team in this part of the country. We knew from the outset that we were outsiders in this community, both in terms of where we lived and in our views about the right result for this trial.

During the trial we worked around the clock. We took one beating after another from the judge, who was at the beck and call of the prosecutor, and who at one point threatened to put us in jail and have us disbarred

cont. on page 5

for the rigorous way we were defending our client. Even writing about this time brings back the familiar pain in my stomach: the gnawing loneliness, the fear of failure, the confusion of hoping to be able to turn the tide in this case, while knowing that the task was too great.

I remember when the jury returned to the courtroom late Saturday night after its deliberations, and the prosecutor read the verdict, sentencing our client to death. For a while I blocked the pain, as we tried to comfort the mother and family, who had hours before sat weeping on the witness stand telling the jury why their brother, their friend, their son, should not be put to death for a crime he committed when he was just barely 17 years old.

The lawyers from my office then went to the jail to talk with our client about appeals, before heading back to Atlanta. While we stood in the waiting room of that tiny jail, mostly in silence, the pain rose up in me like an uncontrollable flood. As I wept I reached out to find the solid, warm, comforting bodies of my colleagues, my friends, holding me as I wrenched with grief, and then finally as I grew limp with relief.

In reflecting on this time, I can see how much suffering we took on in that trial. The reverberations of pain still echo deep in my heart. And yet the joy of that moment of eternity in that dirty old jail, the joy of suffering to the point where your body and soul completely collapse in the love and support and forgiveness of your community, can only be described as the love of God's Spirit.

God was with us in that jail. God was in us, and in between us, filling the emptiness we had created through many long hours and days of suffering. And God is still in that empty space.

Nonviolence and Truth

Nonviolence is also a commitment to Truth, just as God is the Truth. If Truth is our goal, then we are less likely to harbor violent attitudes toward those with whom we differ most strongly. First, we will be more open to hearing another's point of view, for we know we do not have a monopoly on the ultimate Truth. Second, when we have prayerfully searched our hearts and minds and come to a deeply held belief in some Truth which another would ridicule or even oppose with violence we will respond with love and compassion rather than heated passion. We will be able to respond non-violently only because, in our soulful searching, we have already encountered these forces of violence and hatred. We will be able to see that we are connected to our would-be enemy, even at times, in their delusion, and so we will understand, and act out of that understanding with persistence and patient strength.

Finally, because nonviolence means commitment to Truth, and because it requires connecting ourselves to the world, we should not be afraid to open our souls and our lives for public scrutiny. The more private our lives are, the more we are likely to continue to operate in the delusional vacuum of selfhood, cut off from those with whom we share deep in our hearts the closest bond and identity, which is God's Spirit. Openness to our human family means allowing others to challenge us, to correct us when we are wrong, to forgive us when we mess up, to support us in times of weakness, and to know our thoughts and views and motivations.

Nonviolence and prayer

Of course, throughout this discussion we can see that prayer and meditation are crucial. Prayer, or meditation on and communication with God, helps to fill the empty spaces, created by our suffering, with God's Spirit. This is another principle of nonviolence as a way of life. After all, to believe in nonviolence is to have faith that God's love, and therefore the love we kindle in our own hearts, is more powerful than any bomb or bullet or electric chair. With God's Spirit in us, our faith grows and so does our strength to move forward without fear, even in the face of violence and perhaps death.



Without prayer, without faith, our experiments in suffering quickly lead us to fear, resentment, self-righteousness, and self-pity, thereby cultivating the violence which we are trying to weed out. Turning back to the fasting example, if while we fast we fill our emptiness with lust, or envy, or self-aggrandizement, or competitiveness, instead of with God's Spirit, then we would be better off not fasting in the first place. In this connection we remember Jesus' admonition to the Pharisees, and thus to us, about fasting and praying in public.

This is why I would offer fasting as a possible example of a suffering that may cultivate nonviolence. But fasting may not be for everyone. The most important point is that all of our experiments in nonviolence and in suffering as a method of cultivating it, must be done through prayer and meditation on God and God's Spirit within us.

An invitation

My hope is that for some these reflections will lead to new personal and spiritual experiments and reflections. For others, I hope these thoughts will at least place the idea of a nonviolent political method in some broader frame of reference. These reflections are by necessity quite general and broad. Hopefully in the future, if the Spirit moves us, we can hone in on particular areas of concern or interest in the search for nonviolence as a way of life. Because Truth is the ultimate standard by which we test our lives and ideas on nonviolence, I welcome the reader to reflect further on these suggestions and ideas, to differ with them, and to test them in the crucible of daily life.

Robert McGlasson is a close friend to the Open Door Community and an attorney with the Southern Prisoners Defense Committee.



Resistance

cont. from page 3

Jesus Christ calls us to struggle for justice and to wage peace precisely in the arena of the world that is most fallen and most powerful in its ability to corrupt and control. He calls us to serve and to liberate the oppressed whosoever they may be and wherever they are found. Our Lord sends us into the world to resist its death producing ways for the purposes of liberation, reconciliation, and the formation of a new order rooted in love of neighbor and structured by justice and peace for all—most especially the poor.

Of course, we daily fail because we are beneficiaries of the oppression of the poor. Our life styles and national power are predicated upon the exploitation that produces orphans and widows in our world; therefore, we pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." The will to work for justice and peace is a gift from God who is liberating us from our false selves and remaking us in the image of the risen crucified Christ.

And we daily fail in our resistance to the corrupting power of the world because we love the comfort and security, the power and ego enhancement that the world so faithfully promises us. Therefore, we daily pray "lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." Each day we learn through failure and disappointment what Jesus means when he says that the road to life is hard and the door to freedom is narrow.

On a Sunday night not long ago in the midst of our liturgy I rested for a moment in joy as I recognized God's work of shaping us into a community of resistance. We were sitting in our living room passing the elements of Christ's body and blood to one another. Below the music that Murphy and David were playing we could hear, "Jane, this is the body of Jesus Christ broken for you," and across the room Ted whispered, "Alfred, this is the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of your sins."

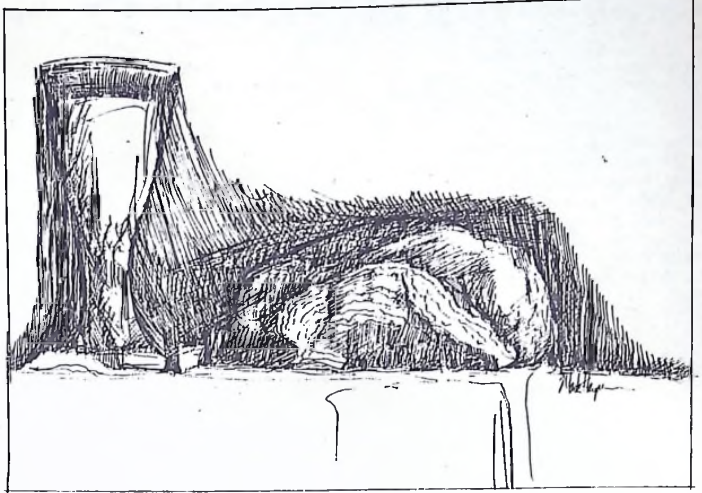
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There we were. The Open Door community shaped in a circle around our Lord's Table whispering truth to each other as cars roared by and ambulances screamed at us. There we were practicing the center of the life of discipleship which is to turn the world upside down by love and freedom.

In our little circle sat Juan, an El Salvadoran who had walked from Peachtree Street to become part of the circle. Blacks and whites were there holding hands and sharing prayers for the world. Old folk - Ted is 71 and a retired U.C.C. pastor from Vermont - and babies Adam and Gabriel, along with six year old Hannah joined together. A woman who fights mental illness sat by a man whose brother's murderer is a friend of mine and Murphy's whom we got to know on death row.

A single woman mother held the joy of her life to her breast while we were fed the manna from Heaven. A nineteen year old man from England confessed that his eyes were opened to poverty, suffering and the presence of God in dimensions he had not known. "I shan't be the same person ever again," he shared with us. John and Martina - former priest and nun - were waiting for God's Spirit to direct them toward the poor and a life of resistance at the submarine base at King's Bay.

There were others of us present as well. We were doing what can only be done by God's grace and power; we were struggling to bring justice to the oppressed and not to be corrupted by the world. Therefore, we were gathered around the Lord's Table remembering his death until he comes again.

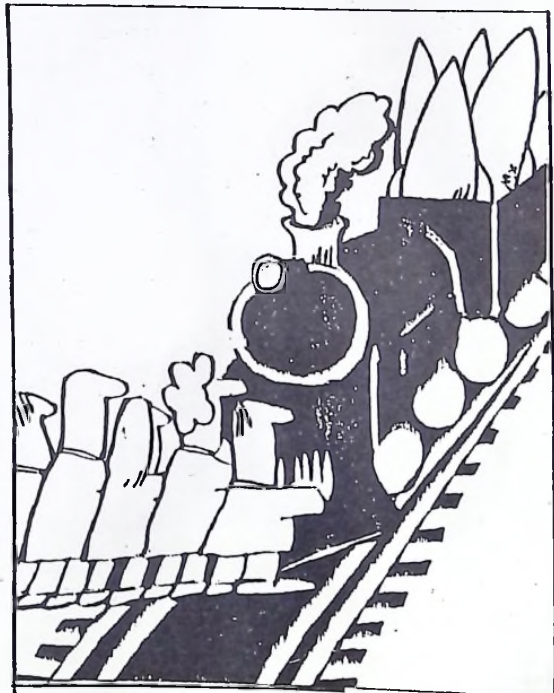


MONTEZUMA FIVE UPDATE



On July 22, our five friends who witnessed against the nuclear train by sitting on the tracks in Montezuma, Georgia, were released from prison. The superior court judge who sentenced them each to one year prison terms on May 24, said he was ordering their release "solely out of consideration of the defendants themselves."

The Open Door Community is thankful that Elizabeth Cheatham, Joe Cohen, Mark Reeve, A.B. Short and Joe White are no longer in prison. We give thanks to God for their lives and their nonviolent witness for peace.



Homily on Homelessness

Always and all ways the winter comes,
The fright of slowly freezing numbs
The soul. Though a scorching copper sun
Rolls low in the sky, always the winter comes.

Listen: fear falls on all the festivals
When fat cats claw at meat in their bestial
Ways and splatter with blood the dawn and the night
As we climb in and out their holes shackled by fright.

II

Have you ever wished for something so hard
The very thought of obtaining it scared you?
Have you ever fished for a rare wild card
In the game of life just because the odds dared you?
Then you'd know just what I mean.
I have a laughable lofty lust for the lean
Side of life: long lines, the "wrong" crowd,
I mean those poor folk who cry out loud,
"Ouch! Stop clawing me!" so very often,
Sons and daughters with no place to snore out aloud.
I wish there were something I could do to soften
The scars, but all I have to offer is prayer.
You, I know, wish to be a billionaire.
I, to love and be loved by everybody everywhere.

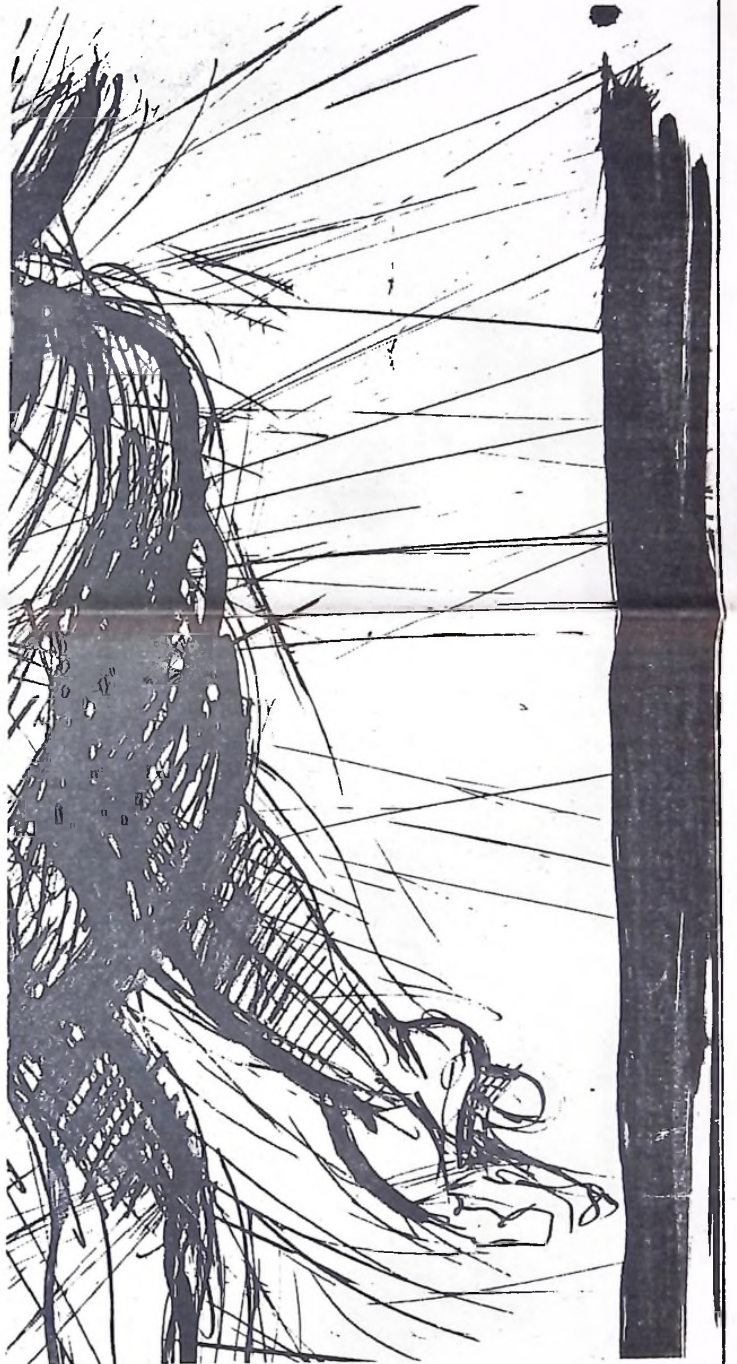
III

And so, my funky friends,
We barter on the brink of an abyss
So dark, dank and deep
A downward glance deflates the breath.
I demand you lick the gashes you inflicted
With those claws but you snarl reluctance to do so.
You lured me atop this frigid peak
With jazzy sounds and saccharin words:
"A fine and stately pleasure dome.
A den of hospitality..."
And then unleashed your litters on me.
You ripped off a big hunk of my heart
And greedily stuffed it into your mouths.
You ripped off my painful poem
And teasingly claimed it for your very own:
The hounds will howl and I'll cry foul forever...

IV

The truth is there are no such things as real homes
On this earth. The dens you call pleasure domes
Will blend with the sand and be placed in the shaker
Of time to be scattered across the universe.
We must meet and come to terms with the Maker.
Or else perpetually struggle with that which is the
reverse
Of love and life and all that God will bless; stark
homelessness.

Billy Hands Robinson



Sleeping at the Fulton County Health Department

by Ed Loring

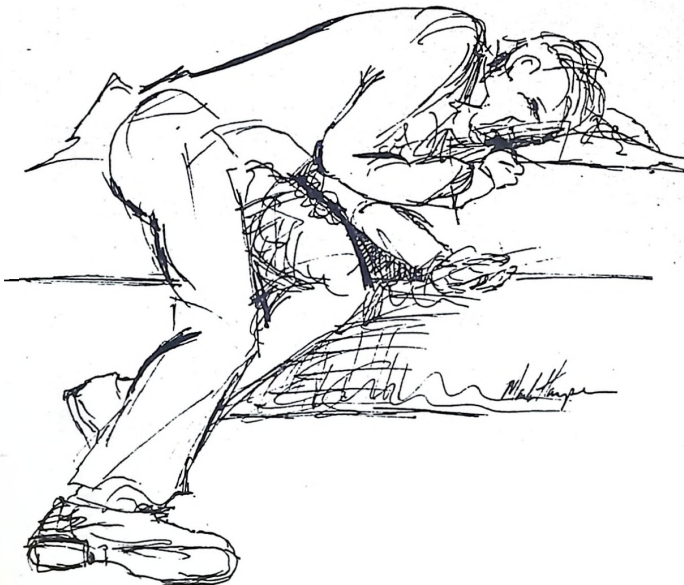
One Sunday night not long ago, Robert McGlasson and I departed from the Open Door shortly after worship. We still had the taste of bread and wine on our tongues as we stepped out into the neon lighted night of Ponce de Leon Avenue. Here we began our pilgrimage to the center of the city to be with our homeless friends who have nowhere to go.

After walking two and a half miles we arrived at Woodruff Park. A small park with green grassy spots surrounding large, concrete areas, it is located in the very center of downtown Atlanta. By 11:30 p.m. over thirty men were stretched out very uncomfortably on wooden-ribbed benches or huddled in the grass. Michael, a young roofer with bruises and scrapes all over his face, screamed and cursed the invisible police through his alcoholic haze. He wanted to go to Detox, he told us, but the police had refused to take him. After we offered to help him find another police person to take him, he staggered off behind the buildings surrounding the park, and into the dark night.

Robert wanted a drink of water, but nowhere can a drink be found along the city streets at night, now that the water fountain in Plaza Park has been drained dry. We decided to go to Grady Hospital and see if we could get past security, just long enough for a drink. We did! And we learned again how delicious and precious water is when it is so difficult to find in the concrete desert of downtown Atlanta.

Coming out of Grady we crossed Butler Street and stood before the Fulton County Health Department. On the partially enclosed bench for bus riders sat seven men. I knew most of them, for we often eat breakfast together at Butler Street CME Church. They were trying to sleep sitting up. Once in a while a person would lurch forward, getting control of his weary body just before falling.

In front of the Health Department slept another group of human beings. Seven men and one woman were lying on the concrete porch in front of the door. Robert and I joined them. How great it felt to finally get off my tired feet; however, I could not get comfortable. The concrete felt cold even on a beautiful Spring night when the low was 65 degrees.



Soon my back hurt. I turned to my side, but then my hip hurt. Struggling to rest and sleep, I finally gave up and began to wait for 5:00 a.m. when the first Labor Pool would open and I could sit in a chair in a warm space. Just over Grady's walk-in clinic area, the moon rested peacefully in the sky. Somewhere behind us a mockingbird sang in disbelief that we had no nests for our night.

Finally 4:45 a.m. arrived! Robert and I, along with several of our sleeping companions, headed off to the Labor Pool. How great was the old wooden chair when I finally sat down. Soon, sleepy men were being loaded into a van. Most had hard hats; all were heading for construction work somewhere beyond the bus line. I dozed with my chin hard pressed against my chest, knowing that in a very few hours I would be home in bed.

II

Robert and I spent this night on the street, as we have spent other nights on the streets, because we have been freed to do what we must do. To follow Jesus Christ into the city is to find streets which are so often shaped like a cross. Jesus lived among the poor and oppressed, and the incarnation of his love and his way in these days takes place in the streets as we disciples follow him there.

We also slept in the streets as an act of solidarity with the homeless. We simply slept with our friends in their space for this night. We stand together and we lie down together. We work together for the coming of God's reign when everyone shall have a home. The act was symbolic of our faith and hope that we are bound together by the very will of God.

A night of homelessness on the city streets is a small and weak attempt to get our lives and experience closer to the pain and suffering of our friends. Though we can only see darkly, nonetheless we can see and feel and touch the hardship and anguish of the daily lives of our homeless sisters and brothers as we wander the city streets beside them.

The life of discipleship is a life of constant conversion. God is telling us today that the place of conversion is among the poor and outcast. As we listen to the voices of the oppressed, we hear a call to the way of the Cross and our conversion to the Christ of the poor is deepened. Jesus Christ is a homeless wanderer in the downtown Atlanta streets; so we go there for healing and strength.

Conversely, we also spent the night in front of the Health Department so that we could witness to the homeless. By simple acts of presence we are saying that God loves the orphan, the widow and the stranger within our city limits. We are testifying that the church cares for the poor, as is demonstrated by the thirty-five winter shelters which were open this year. And we are proclaiming a struggle for peace and justice as we join together in a shared life of service, suffering and community. God wills that as we are brought to a deeper conversion by the poor, that we also evangelize the homeless with the Good News of Christ-for-them.

So Robert and I went out on the streets and in a few hours we returned to our comfortable homes. We were exhausted and our bodies ached. Yet, we were renewed and strengthened. Prayers of thanksgiving for God's call in our lives filled our hearts. If you wish to join us sometime, please call me at 874-9652.

III

The streets are those places of prison and darkness to which our society has condemned the homeless to live and die. The streets are those violent places where

cont. on page 9

life breaks apart and death grows strong. The streets are those places where Jesus is alive though dying; where he is risen though crucified. The streets are home and hell for 5,000 of God's children in Atlanta, Georgia.

The streets are to me what the tracks are to those who resist the nuclear train. I am called and sent by my Lord to be there. The streets are to me what the submarine bases are to those who are building faithful communities of peace and resistance beside the lands now occupied by death's kingdom. The streets are to me what the Nevada Test Site is to those who pray and protest and put their bodies on the earth that is used to test death instead of nurture life. The streets are to me what the nose cones of nuclear weapons are to our Plowshares sisters and brothers who sit in prison cells for obeying God's will to hammer swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. We are called and sent to live our lives close to the streets. We are called and sent to listen to the streets: for there do we hear the voice of our God.



Hila Corbin

Letters

May 1, 1986

Dear Friends and all of you!

I read the most recent issue of Hospitality and found it most interesting and artistically laid out. Could we get about 60 copies to put in the Druid Hills SS classes so these people can be more interested in the homeless? My friends and I will be responsible for getting the papers around to the classes if the papers are left in the lobby of the SS building.

The Lord bless you and your work.

Cordially yours,

Lila Bonner Miller

Sunday, June 8th, 1986

Thanking you immensely.

Due to my showing-up for your eye-glass treatment center yesterday (Saturday, June 7, 1986 @2:45p.m.) and my comments after having been treated for my nearsightedness by your eye specialist, he then treated me for my astigmatism and importantly to me, thru the glasses I received at no cost to me (also VERY important to me since I'm presently extremely low in finances), I can see more clearly at a distance than I've seen in years.

There's nothing beyond superfantasmagorical thanks from your appreciative optical patient named Jim Zerdecki.

Appreciatively,

Jim Zerdecki
222 East Lake Drive
Decatur, GA 30030



Dear Murphy,

Greetings from Bolivia! Recently I arrived in La Paz, after spending two months in Central America. When I arrived, the Easter edition of Hospitality was awaiting me. Easter had passed, but your article has helped to keep the Easter Season alive! I was touched by your article, and how all of you at the Open Door are sensitive to the inspiration of the Spirit - to spend Holy Week as the homeless - to be 24 hours on the streets - that is really incarnational, and really inserting yourselves into the lives of the homeless.

Bolivia after 6 years is in many ways the same, and in many ways different. The poverty is much, much deeper. Some people have almost nothing to eat. Many eat only once a day - soup which is boiled water with rice, some potatoes and maybe an onion. The neo-liberalism (laissez-faire) program of the government has been criticized by the Bolivian Bishops. The International Monetary Fund had a strong hand in the new economic program which froze wages and allowed prices to go to whatever the market could get.

I have visited the people I worked with years ago - the unemployed we tried to help to learn trades and skills. What made me rejoice was their ability to analyze and be critical of what is happening.

I have also visited Bishop Manrique. I don't know if I talked about him or not, but he is the prophet in Bolivia, and gave moral support to our ministry. He took me to see a large soup kitchen in La Paz that feeds 3,000 daily.

Today is May 1st - Feast of Joseph, the Worker. It is a holiday here. It is good to be able to rest. I'm still adjusting to the 14,000 feet altitude here in La Paz.

May the Lord continue to bless you richly at the Open Door! Thanks for keeping me on the mailing list at the Open Door. Please give my best to Ed, Rob and all.

Pray for me...

Take care!

Peace, Love, Prayers,

Justus Wirth

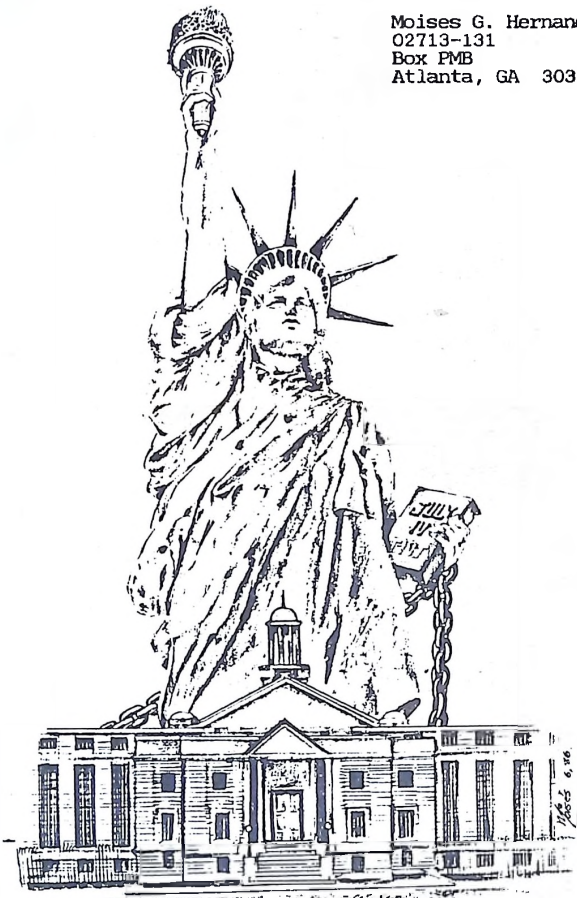


Letters cont. on page 10

June 25, 1986

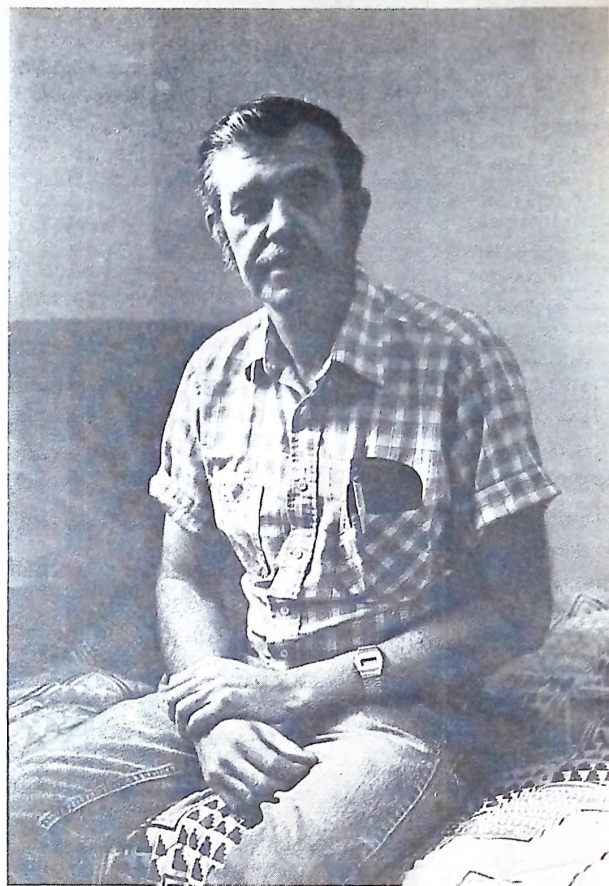
A few days ago you received a drawing I made here of the "Statue of Liberty" arising from walls of the United States Prison in Atlanta with chains attach(ed) to her wrist. This by all means is not a direct insult to the American people, but an expression of the reality of what we see and feel from this government's actions (Immigration). We all know that on the 4th of July the American people celebrated the birthday of this country's independence and used this wonderful lady and her real meaning for the world to see. But they did it in the blind and only because this government has not made the American people aware that on their own soil lie people (Cubans) in prisons for as much as six years, and only for the simple fact that they were invited by President Carter in 1980 to live and work in the land of liberty! I am merely stating fact, and since I have the right to do this - I will!

We hear the bells of freedom ring all around us, on television, newspapers, and by the happy expressions from all the people who guard us - We'll continue to wonder what all this really means!



Moises G. Hernandez
02713-131
Box PMB
Atlanta, GA 30315

Wayne Martin



While our community struggles to be peace-makers, it's often hard just to keep this old building in one piece. As one of our maintenance men, Jack Lenox helps us keep our house in order. Thanks, Jack!

Soon and very soon...

COME FOR A VISIT!

The Open Door welcomes anyone who would like to share our home, our food, and our work for a few hours, days, or weeks. Please call or write Jane Okrasinski if you'd like to come for a visit.

Jane is a resident volunteer at the Open Door. Her son Adam joined us upon his birth in March. While his turn cooking soup is still a few years off, we look forward to your participation in the life of our diverse family!



Rob Johnson



THE GANDHI 'TALISMAN'

RECALL THE FACES OF THE POOREST AND THE MOST HELPLESS ONES WHOM YOU MAY HAVE SEEN AND ASK YOURSELF, IF THE STEP YOU CONTEMPLATE IS GOING TO BE OF ANY USE TO THEM. WILL THEY BE ABLE TO GAIN ANYTHING BY IT? WILL IT RESTORE THEM TO A CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LIFE AND DESTINY? IN OTHER WORDS, WILL IT LEAD TO SWARAJ OR SELF-RULE FOR THE HUNGRY AND ALSO SPIRITUALLY STARVED MILLIONS OF OUR COUNTRY'S PEOPLE? THEN YOU WILL FIND YOUR DOUBTS AND YOUR 'SELF' MELTING AWAY.

एक अच्छे ताबीज मैं आपको एक ताबीज देता हूँ। जब कभी आप दुविधा में हों या आपको अपना स्वार्थ प्रबल होता दिखाई दे तो यह नुस्खा आजमा कर देखिएगा। अपने मन की आँखों के सामने किसी ऐसे गरीब और असहाय व्यक्ति का चेहरा लाइए जिसे आप जानते हों और अपने आप से पूछिए कि क्या आपकी करनी उसके किसी काम आएगी? क्या उसे कुछ लाभ होगा? क्या उस काम से उसे अपना जीवन और भविष्य बनाने में कुछ मदद मिलेगी? दूसरे मानों में, क्या आपकी करनी हमारे देश के लाखों करोड़ों, भूखे नंगे लोगों को स्वराज्य की राह दिखाएगी? बस इतना सोचते ही आपकी सारी दुविधाएं दूर हो जायेंगी और स्वार्थ मोम की तरह पिघलकर बह जाएगा।

M.K. Gandhi



M.K. Gandhi

GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION
221/23, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg
New Delhi-110002

गांधी शांति प्रतिष्ठान
221/23, दीनदयाल उपाध्याय मार्ग,
नई दिल्ली-110002



Sadako's Dream

NO MORE HIROSHIMAS

The little girl was told the ancient Japanese legend that whoever folded 1,000 cranes would have their wish come true. Eleven years after surviving the Hiroshima bomb, 13 year old Sadako Sasaki was stricken by the latent effects of the radiation. During her illness Sadako folded the paper cranes in the hope that her wish for no more Hiroshima victims would come true. She passed away after making 644 of the peace cranes, then her classmates folded the other 366 cranes so that the legend would be complete. In honor of Sadako's memory her friends collected contributions from other Japanese children so that a monument to her would be erected in Hiroshima's Peace Park. Each year people from the world over place paper cranes near the base of the monument where the inscription reads:

**THIS IS OUR CRY, THIS IS OUR PRAYER,
PEACE IN THE WORLD.**

HIROSHIMA AWARENESS DAY
AUGUST 6, 1986
11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
WOODRUFF PARK AMPHITHEATRE
 (Corner Peachtree and Luckie, downtown Atlanta, near
 Five Points Marta Station)

Music: Harrison Metzger of Extremes

Music: Melody and Tim

Reverend Tim McDonald, Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Traditional Japanese Poetry: Leila L'Abate

Music: Ernest Jackson of ICBM

Dr. Haran, Physicians for Social Responsibility

"Able" Mable Thomas, Georgia State Representative

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*Don't miss the giant peace crane -- 30 foot wing span! Also, crane folding (smaller) will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Come help while keeping the peace crane company.

Sponsored by: NUCLEAR FREEZE/JOB WITH PEACE AFSC (NF/JWP) • WOMEN'S ACTION FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT (WAND) • FRIENDS TEST BAN COMMITTEE • FIRST FRIDAY PEACE VIGIL GROUP • ATLANTA PEACE ALLIANCE (APA) • PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (PSR) • SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (SCLC) • CLERGY AND LAITY CONCERNED (CALC) • PERFORMING ARTISTS FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT (PAND) • VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR (VVAW) • FREEZE VOTERS

INFORMATION: 586-0460

A milestone in the struggle of African Americans for democratic rights is August 6. On this day in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. It was the will of the people which led to the passage of this law and in this democracy we can and will move our government toward a comprehensive nuclear test ban. August 6 — a day of remembrance and rededication to a world free from the fear of nuclear war and a world of justice for all peoples.

Newspaper Requests - If you or a friend would like to receive **HOSPITALITY**, please fill in this form and return to Ed Loring at the Open Door Community, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30306

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____