

HOSPITALITY

Volume 3 No. 5

July 1989

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Underground Atlanta and Daily Bread

by Ed Loring

"Give us this day our daily bread."

—Jesus, March 18, 32 AD

"I ask you, God, to let me have two things before I die: keep me from lying, and let me be neither rich nor poor. So give me only as much food as I need. If I have more, I might say that I do not need you. But if I am poor, I might steal and bring disgrace on my God."

—Proverbs 30: 7-9

The United States has 6% of the world's population

and controls and consumes 50% of the world's resources. This imbalance creates a problem: because we have more than we need, we no longer need God. The Biblical God did not die; our God just faded away behind the loaves of bread. Isn't it ironic that we have more bread than we need, yet we steal from the wretched of the earth? We disgrace our God.

Therefore, the fastest growing faith in the United States is the Muslim faith which offers another way to live, and the largest religion today is the worship of television and obedience to its lies: you deserve more

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bread; the good life is a materialistic life of consumption and comfort; those who are not well-to-do, beautiful people are bad and deserve the plight in which they find themselves, so it would be wrong to help them or care for them.

32% of the people in Atlanta, Georgia live below the poverty level. Atlanta is a city in crisis because of the sheer quantity of homelessness, hunger, and unemployment among African-American teenagers and men. Atlanta is the home of Andrew Young, SCLC, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change, the regional office of the NAACP, Ralph David Abernathy, and the greatest consortium of African-American educational institutions in the U.S. Yet we have no local leadership in the political community (mostly Black) or the business community (mostly white) who gives voice or vision (much less policy) for the poor. In fact, with the opening of Underground Atlanta, our leadership not only celebrated all that food, but the silent victory of the Vagrant Free Zone.

Isaiah, wonderful old prophet who seemingly was neither poor nor rich, tells us that if we forget our God and turn away from the Lord, we will meet the following devastating form of punishment: "The LORD will let the people be governed by immature boys." (Isaiah 3:4) That is certainly true in Atlanta today: we are governed (and led by the business community as well) by "immature boys." Our leaders appear in the grown bodies of men and women, but they are selfish, spoiled, greedy, and deaf to the poor and the demands of love and justice. That is the fundamental reason why 32% of the boys and girls and the men and women in this city live a life of squalor and die a death of degradation. We have no mature and courageous leadership. Andy Young has sold his birth-right of Civil Rights leadership and visionary Black leadership of all people for a bowl of porridge served in a chic cafe in Underground. Why? Watch television; it will tell you.

Hunger in Atlanta is a paradox. We have entirely too much food, but we have more than 20,000 hungry people. Why? Watch television; it will tell you. The Atlanta Community Food Bank has to relocate every few years because of ever-increasing needs for warehouse space. We cannot even store the stuff. We have too much food in Atlanta, and that is a primary reason that we are faced with starvation and malnutrition on the streets and in the ghettos. (On Memorial Day we were the only soup line open in the city. We, with a dining hall that seats 42 folk, served 619 people. We served from 10:00am until 4:00pm. Why? Watch television; it will tell you.)

Hunger in Atlanta is a political issue, not an agricultural issue. The opening of Underground Atlanta will increase poverty and hunger in Atlanta because it was built and is now maintained at the expense of the poor. If we are given more food than we need, according to the Scriptures, we reject God and that, of course, brings despair and death through the leadership of "immature boys."

So, what can we do apart from turning off our televisions? First, we can love our God and obey the words of life which we have been given. An immediate social norm will be Enough for Everyone. That is certainly one aspect of Biblical justice. Second, we can love the poor--an amazing 32% of our city. Love of the poor means politically to stand in solidarity with the poor. Let our lives be "good news for the poor." Where we eat, where we play and work, how we vote, with whom we live. Let it be "good news to the poor."



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

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But politics is not enough. We must also serve the poor with our hands and hearts. Love builds community, and the one who loves God is one in community with the poor.

Finally, we must love and live in a way that will help the "immature boys" (many of whom are female) grow up. Good leadership, faithful to all people, taking care of the weak and limiting the power of the strong, is a part of both the Biblical and the American traditions. There is no reason on earth for a city to lack moral vision and a commitment to justice for the poor and Black. I believe that the tons and tons of bread (and money) that has come into Atlanta since World War II has simply blinded and crippled our leadership. But God is faithful and can restore sight to the blind and give to us--the flock--a good shepherd.

Let us be neither rich nor poor. Let us have only as much as we need. Then we can eat and dance and play at Underground with no one homeless, and hunger will be only that rumbling we hear before we sit at table.

Open Letter to Mayor Andrew Young

Atlanta Pretrial Detention Center

June 16, 1989

Dear Mayor Young,

I wanted to write and explain some of the reasoning behind our actions which disrupted your speech to open Underground Atlanta. I'd like to make it clear that it was not meant as a personal attack on you but hopefully to be understood as a cry on behalf of the poor in our society for the obscenity of building more playgrounds for the wealthy while at the same time planning to close a shelter for 150 homeless men. While your action to use community block grant monies for Underground may be legal in a technical way, it is certainly questionable in a city in desperate need for more housing for low-income folk.

I serve as the director of a housing ministry in Sumter County, Georgia which has provided low-cost, interest-free housing to some 175 families as part of the outreach of Koinonia Partners. I've seen federal housing monies in my home county used to restore an old landmark hotel while many more residents continue to live in substandard dwellings. When friends from the Open Door Community told me of their desire to speak out, I asked to join them.

It saddens me to see you needing to be a target of our protest. Thirteen years ago I brought four young African-American men from Sumter County to your congressional office in Washington, DC to meet you and Rep. Ron Dellums, knowing that they would be inspired by your willingness to be outspoken advocates for those under-represented in our society--a voice for the voiceless. Your courage and leadership in the 60's and 70's side-by-side with Martin Luther King is a memory I cherish in my years of political awakening. All six of us involved in the vocal protest Thursday in Underground and the many others who leafletted outside recited and recovenanted ourselves to the principles of loving non-violence which Dr. King proclaimed and embodied--and it is not a little ironic that we now focus his strategies on you. One lesson we have tried to learn from Dr. King is the willingness to break the standards of public propriety and the law to rail out against injustice--especially to the poor in our society. The news account said you called for us to "be polite." Our morality must precede our manners and we must not let a desire to be polite pre-empt our desire for justice.

We so much want to see strong, dynamic African-American leadership in our society and you certainly can be a source of that. We don't want our witness to be an attack on you but rather a pleading for you not to forget your brothers and sisters on the streets while you are given access to the halls of the powerful.

Underground Atlanta has a statue by the entrance of a hobo--a "homeless derelict"--the type of which would be run out of the place it graces! The site of Underground, the former Plaza Park, was one of the few places downtown for the homeless. The promise to replace it with another park nearby remains unfulfilled while those with power and money wine and dine themselves at that very site. Of course the many poor that you and Martin suffered so valiantly for in the

60's couldn't afford the \$75 charged for the pre-opening VIP agenda.

I urge you in the waning days of your administration to let those with money and influence fend for themselves. We need Andy Young as an advocate for the homeless, the poor, the thousands of young African-American men and women that I now share jail cells with in your city. Dr. King wrote a powerful letter from his cell in Birmingham. It is my prayer and hope that in some small way our witness might enable you to take a fresh look at priorities. We don't need more jails--and Underground will just serve as another reason to incarcerate more people here. We need alternatives and models of hope. Maybe one place to start is in one of the Soup Kitchens or hospitality houses in your city.

I write also as a brother in the Christian faith encouraging you to remember "the Lord hears the cry of the poor." I know it may be hard to hear a lot of shouting and noise-making which drowns out your speech as a cry on behalf of the poor; but it is clear that the poor have no reason to celebrate Underground and we wished to disrupt the "celebration." We ask your forgiveness for ways in which our acts seemed as a personal attack, trusting that some day you will see our witness as an attempt to call you to a goal of social justice we both embrace. We also ask forgiveness from our homeless and hungry brothers and sisters for so often taking for granted our comfortable beds and our tendencies to eat more than we need. As fruits of our repentance, let's stand together with them.

Shalom,

Steve Clemens, Partner
Rt. 2 Koinonia Partners
Americus, GA 31709



Steve Clemens as he was being arrested while protesting the opening of Underground Atlanta.

What is the Problem With Underground?

by Murphy Davis

Underground Atlanta has opened amidst fireworks, fanfare and a public response that exceeded the fondest hopes of the project's developers. In the first four days, more than a million people visited Underground and who knows how many millions of dollars were spent in the restaurants, bars, balloon and t-shirt shops? "The fun's back in town," screamed the billboards and politicians.

In the midst of all the hoopla, some of us went to jail. Others of us, along with homeless advocates from around the city, leafleted and picketed in a driving rain. Why? When everybody was having such a great time why would we want to be the spoilsports who insist on raising the unpleasant issues? Why interrupt the speech of Mayor Andrew Young, civil rights hero and successful politician? And what does Underground have to do with homelessness anyway?

Underground Atlanta is an unequivocal statement of what is important to our city. It has been the primary agenda of the Young administration and the centerpiece in the business community's plan for the city. But development of Underground has not just ignored the poor; Underground has been developed at the expense of the poor. It is an entertainment center (only, of course, for those who can afford it). But at the same time, 32% of the people who live in Atlanta live below the poverty line (only Newark, NJ has a higher percentage of poor people). In this year 35,000--40,000 men, women, and children have slept in Atlanta's private and public shelters for the homeless.

\$142 million has been spent and the city anticipates spending another \$20-30 million to subsidize the project over the next ten years.

Eight and a half million dollars spent on Underground Atlanta came from Community Development Block Grant Funds: federal money specifically allocated for housing and jobs for the poor. Serious efforts were made to persuade Mayor Young to put that money into housing which this city so desperately needs. The excuse has been that Underground is creating jobs. But really--what kind of jobs? Jobs that provide a living wage? Surely not. 40% of the men and women living in Atlanta's shelters for the homeless are employed. But still they cannot afford a place to live for themselves or their families.

Twelve million dollars came from city sales tax revenues. Tax money belongs to all the people of the city. Surely some of that could have been used to address the increasing suffering of the poor.

Without even a vote on the matter, Atlanta taxpayers were committed to backing \$85 million of revenue bonds. If Underground fails, the home and property owners of the city will pay off a debt of \$7.5 million per year for 25 years.

In the seven years that the new Underground was planned and developed the city has sunk more deeply into crisis. The schools are a mess. Drugs control the lives of thousands of people and entire areas of the city. Many recreation centers and playgrounds around the city are closed down and boarded up as are thousands of units of public housing. The soup kitchen

lines are longer and the shelters more crowded as the number of homeless men, women and children grows.

In the face of it all, we have chosen to spend our major resources on an entertainment center for the well-to-do. There is, of course, nothing inherently wrong with entertainment. Good food and music are among life's good gifts! But how can we justify such expense for entertainment in the face of ever-increasing human suffering?

* * * * *

Plaza Park was for years a home--a sanctuary of sorts--to hundreds of homeless men, most of them older black men. In March 1987, the park was closed so that Plaza Park could be transformed into an elegant entrance to Underground. Replacing the old men on park benches are cascading fountains, a light tower, and wide stairways. The ultimate irony is seated on a wall at the base of the fountain: a bronze statue of a homeless man. He sits, frozen in time, feeding a pigeon with his bedroll beside him.

The cruelty of the irony is that any real flesh-and-blood human being who looks like the statue is not welcomed in Underground Atlanta. If a man who looked like the statue were to sit down beside the statue, the real one would be arrested.

The stated policy of Underground is this: If a "derelict" comes into Underground s/he will be asked to prove their legitimate business there. Anyone unable to prove legitimate business will be warned; if the "derelict" fails to leave immediately or ever returns to Underground s/he will be arrested on a Criminal Trespass charge (the sentence for which is up to a year in prison and/or a \$1,000 fine).

Such policies concerning Underground are a part of a larger plan introduced two years ago for what was called a "Vagrant-Free Zone" in the downtown area (in the face of public criticism the planners changed the name to the "Sanitized Zone"). The plan, if not the terminology, was endorsed by the mayor and the city's business leaders.

Homeless people and other poor people are not welcomed in downtown Atlanta. To keep them out, police arrests have been stepped up for sleeping on a park bench, panhandling (begging), public urination (despite the continuing lack of any public toilets) and criminal trespass (for sleeping in an abandoned building or daring to enter Underground). To visit Atlanta's Municipal Court is to see the Vagrant Free Zone at work. The city jail and prison farm are literally stuffed with poor people--a large percentage of whom have "offended" with their mere presence downtown.

* * * * *

Underground Atlanta has become a statement that the rich of our city are willing to be cruel and greedy to find a good time. If the poor are in the way, or seeing them frightens suburban shoppers, then city policy will be mustered to move them out of the way.

It just cannot happen. We often sing a spiritual in our community, "If anybody asks you who I am, just tell 'em I'm a child of God." And so it is.

When God's children are humiliated, degraded, insulted and when what is rightfully theirs is taken away, we should never stand for it.

And we will not.



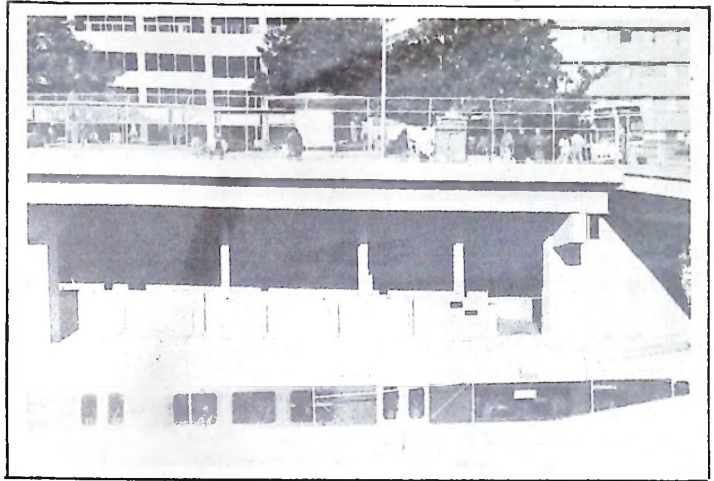
Underground is not "Fun for Everyone"



Plaza Park today - "Fun in Town" replaces luxuries such as toilets and drinking fountains for the poor.



Start of Poor Peoples' Brigade - in the pouring rain!



Plaza Park 3 years ago - a place of safety for the homeless.



Ed Loring being arrested as he protests block monies for the poor being used to subsidize playgrounds for the rich.



Supporters from Koinonia join the Brigade.

Disorientation

by Elizabeth Dede

On the morning after I got out of jail, I woke up from a vivid dream in which I was back in jail in a dark holding cell, trying to sleep on the hard bench. From the cell next to me came the tortured yell of a man coming down hard from a drug-induced high. Over and over and over again he wailed, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind but now I see." I was completely confused and disoriented. Was I back in my own bed? Or was I still in jail? Where had I heard that mournful scream before? Slowly the confusion cleared, and I realized that I was back in my own bed, and I remembered that I had heard the song yelled from a holding cell in the Atlanta Pretrial Detention Center.

I spent two days and one night in jail because, along with Ty Brown, Tim Wyse, Pete Stinner, Ed Loring, and Steve Clemens, I disrupted Mayor Andrew Young's speech at the opening of Underground Atlanta. During that time in jail I experienced and learned much about the disorientation of our society. We have lost our sense of direction, and in our confusion, our singing of hymns to God becomes a cacophonous scream. Therefore, it was, and is, our hope that our loud interruption of Mayor Young, called rude and impolite by many, could be a quiet voice of truth amidst all the clamor and celebration.



Elizabeth being arrested as she protests on behalf of the poor at Underground Atlanta.

What is our orientation? Jesus directs us clearly in Matthew 25 to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome strangers into our homes, take care of the sick, and visit the prisoner. Yet the city of Atlanta just spent 142 million dollars to redevelop Underground Atlanta, which is clearly nothing but entertainment for the rich and powerful. Those of us who would argue that Underground creates jobs for the poor, must remember that the president of our country vetoed an increase of the minimum wage, and minimum wage is not a living wage: you cannot rent a room, eat, and wear clothes on \$3.35 an hour. Thus, we have ignored the very people whom Jesus has called us to serve. They sleep on the floor in an abandoned church; they sleep on the floor in the city jail; they are among the 250 people who line up to eat breakfast with us daily; they were among the 600 people who ate lunch with us on Memorial Day while everyone else celebrated and vacationed; they are among the growing numbers of homeless and hungry people in Atlanta. Three and a half years ago, when I first moved to Atlanta, we served sixty-five people at the Bulter St. Breakfast; now we serve 250. Our daily soup kitchen has more than doubled in size this year. On Sundays it used to take us fifteen minutes to serve the people who came to eat with us. Now we serve 300 people, and we're open over two hours. And yet our city took 8 million dollars that was designated for the poor and spent it on Underground Atlanta. In response to our disruption on behalf of the homeless, Andrew Young claimed that Atlanta does more for the homeless than any other city in the nation, and "we scrape together every little nickle and dime for the homeless," he said. \$142 million for the rich; nickles and dimes for the poor: it seems to me that we're confused and disoriented, and it's time to redirect our lives.

I believe that the orientation in our lives is clear, and we must stop following blindly as our "leaders" try to direct our lives. If we had allowed the city of Atlanta to lead us, then tonight as a thunderstorm moves through the city, dumping rain on the streets, 150 men would have been sleeping on those soaked streets. The city planned to close its only shelter for men, but through letters, calls, and meetings we managed to get another space.

On June 21, I went to this new shelter and was reminded of my time in jail. 110 men slept on mats on the floor of an abandoned church with no sheets or blankets. There were no showers, no drinking fountains; three of the four toilets worked. A few blocks away, business is booming at Underground: \$142 million for entertainment, while men who work hard on construction jobs during the day sleep on the floor, one right next to the other--every little nickle and dime was scraped together for them. Yet the direction from Jesus is clear: "Welcome strangers into your homes."

Not far from Underground Atlanta there is a housing project. Shortly after I was arrested for disrupting Mayor Young's speech at the celebration of the opening of Underground, undercover agents conducted a drug raid at this housing project. I was in jail with many women who were arrested during the raid. We spent the night in a cell that was designed to hold twelve, but there were thirty-five of us crammed in, lying on mats on the floor. I was welcomed to the cell by a young woman named Elaine, who took one look at me and said, "What you in for? Stayin' at church too long? Come on over and tell me about it!" So we sat together and talked about the disorientation of Atlanta. And Elaine speaks from deep knowledge. She

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was in for possession of cocaine, although the police only found empty plastic zip-loc baggies on her. When the old Underground Atlanta was still open, Elaine worked in a bar, so she knew that the jobs created by the reopening of Underground did not provide any sense of security. Elaine confessed to me the shame she felt when she once had to sell her body in order to get money for a month's rent on her apartment. Then, not willing to be degraded and dehumanized like that again, Elaine turned to selling drugs because it was the only other "employment" she could find. And yet the answer our city gives to Elaine's struggle is a long jail sentence, and we turn our backs on her as we shop and are entertained at Underground Atlanta. We are disoriented.

During our disruption of Mayor Young's speech as we chanted "Atlanta Keeps the Homeless Underground!", I could see Young's face clearly, and for a time he wore an expression of confusion. Andy Young was disoriented. "How could a word from the homeless and poor be spoken and heard on such a day? This just isn't the place; it doesn't belong here." I imagine those thoughts may have gone through Young's head.

Confusion and disorientation require a conversion and a redirection. In order to become clear and to move in the right way, we must make some fundamental changes. As members of the Open Door Community, as readers of Hospitality, as Civil Rights workers our orientation must be clear: we need only to focus again on the word that God speaks to us through the prophet Isaiah:

The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives.

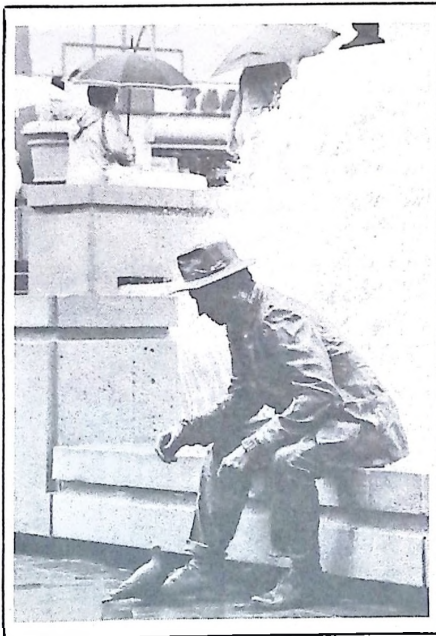
Then my favor will shine on you like the morning sun, and your wounds will be quickly healed. I will always be with you to save you; my presence will protect you on every side. When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond.

If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon. And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never goes dry. Your people will rebuild what has long been in ruins, building again on the old foundation. You will be known as the people who rebuilt the walls, who restored the ruined homes.

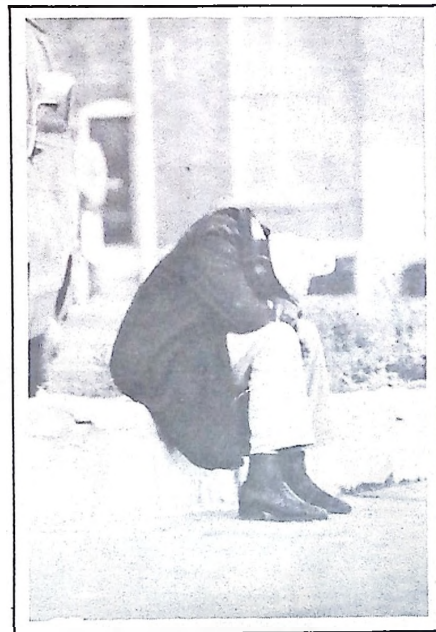
—Isaiah 58:6-12.

Our re-orientation is clear. We should spend \$142 million to rebuild the Imperial Hotel and other abandoned dwellings. We should spend \$142 million to provide drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs for Elaine and so many others. We should spend \$142 million to provide jobs at a living wage. The list of ways to spend \$142 million in our re-oriented society could go on. But the point is clear. As long as we are not sharing food with the hungry, opening our homes to the homeless, giving clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and helping our relatives, then we are living underground in the dark, and we are lost and confused.

We must come up and walk in the light. We must be converted and follow a new direction. When we have rebuilt the homes, emptied the shelters and the jails, fed and clothed everyone, and satisfied the needs of all, then we can all clearly and joyfully sing, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind, but now I see!" And what a clear and shining day that will be!



This statue is allowed in underground Atlanta...



...This man is not.

The Street is for Celebration

by Thomas Merton

"The Street is for Celebration" from LOVE AND LIVING by Thomas Merton. Copyright (c) 1979 by the Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc.

A city is something you do with space.

A street is a space. A building is an enclosed space. A room is a small enclosed space.

A city is made up of rooms, buildings, streets. It is a crowd of occupied spaces. Occupied or inhabited? Filled or lived in?

The quality of a city depends on whether these spaces are "inhabited" or just "occupied." The character of the city is set by the way the rooms are lived in. The way the buildings are lived in. And what goes on in the streets.

Can a street be an inhabited space?

This may turn out to be a crucial question for a city, for a country, and for the world.

There is a close relation between what goes on in the street and what goes on in the buildings. For instance: Suppose the street is an impersonal no-man's-land: a mere tube through which a huge quantity of traffic is sucked down toward the glass walls where business happens. Suppose the street is a tunnel, a kind of nowhere, something to go through. Something to get out of. Or a nightmare space where you run without getting away.

Then the street cannot be an inhabited space (unless something happens to it). When a street is like a tunnel, a passage, a tube from someplace to someplace else, the people who "live" on it do not really live on it. The street is not where they live but where they have been dumped.

When a street is not inhabited it is a dump.

A street may be a dump for thousands of people who aren't there.

They have been dumped there, but their presence is so provisional they might as well be absent. They occupy space by being displaced in it.

They are out of place in the space allotted to them by society.

They are out of place in small enclosed spaces ("apartments") in which they are constantly reminded that their presence is unimportant and they are unwanted. For instance: waiting for someone to fix the toilet that doesn't work. One week, three weeks, three months. Waiting for the heat. Waiting for the ceiling to fall in. "Oh, yes, I live on X Street." (I am a displaced person who has been dumped in a box on X Street.) (My apartment is uninhabited though there are six of us in it.) (It is not inhabited, just crowded.)

A street where there are thousands of people in this condition is an alienated street. It is a street in a foreign country: yet all the people on it may be natives.

Such a street is always somebody else's street. But whose? The owner is never there. So the building belongs to the landlord? But who is he? Maybe he is a business. So the street belongs to a fiction. (That's why the toilet isn't fixed.) To set the machinery of the big downtown fictions in motion, you have to have that imaginary fluid called money.

Somebody says the street belongs to the city. It is everybody's public street. All right. Is it? You can move around in it under certain conditions. But the conditions are such that you do not feel it is your street, because you are not safe, you are not wanted, you are not noticed, you are not liked, and in the end you may just not be allowed.

The street does not even belong to the fuzz. They are no safer on it than anybody else.

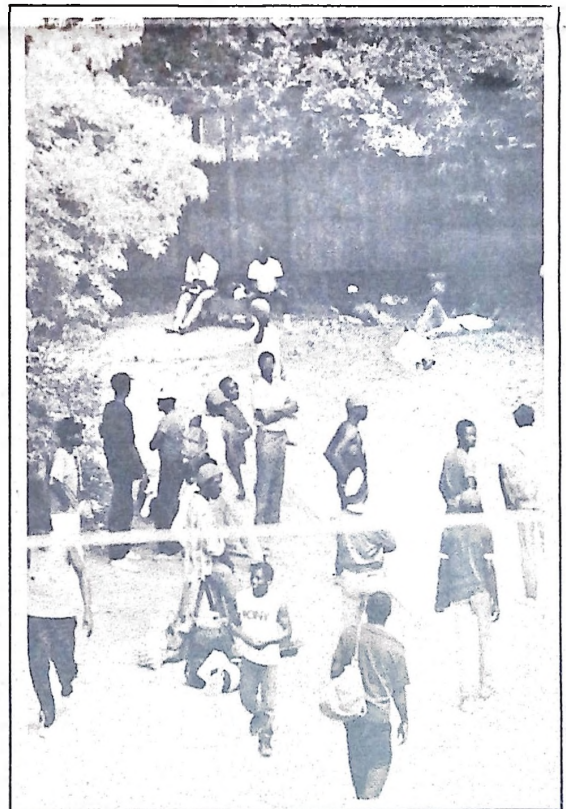
Some street!

Can a street be an inhabited space? A space where people enjoy being? A space where people are present to themselves, with full identities, as real people, as happy people?

All right, they sit on the front steps, or sit in the windows, or sit on the fire escapes: but they are sitting there passively watching all the cars go someplace else. Wondering if the people in the cars are the real people. (But those people in the cars: their street is no more inhabited than this street.)

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The back yard of 910 serves as a combination park and waiting area for many who call the street "home".

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An alienated space, an uninhabited space, is a space where you submit.

You stay where you are put, even though this cannot really be called "living." You stop asking questions about it and you know there is not much point in making any complaint. (Business is not interested in your complaint, only in your rent.) "I live on X Street." Translated: "X Street is the place where I submit, where I give in, where I quit."

* * * * *

Instead of submitting to the street, [people] must change it.

Instead of being formally and impersonally put in their place by the street, they must transform the street and make it over so that it is livable.

The street can be inhabited if the people on it begin to make their life credible by changing their environment.

Living is more than submission: it is creation.

To live is to create one's own world as a scene of personal happiness.

How do you do that?

Various approaches have been tried.

For instance, you can tear the place apart.

This does, admittedly, have points. It is a way of reminding business, the city, the fuzz, etc., that you are there, that you are tired of being a non-person, that you are not just a passive machine for secreting indefinite amounts of submission. It may get you a TV set or a case of liquor or a new suit. It may even (if the operation is on a larger scale) get you a whole new building. (Though the honeycomb you live in may be replaced by a better one for somebody else.)

But the trouble with this approach is:

--It does not make the street any more habitable.

--It does not make life on this street any more credible.

--It does not make anybody happy.

--It does not change the kind of space the street is.

--It does not change the city's negative idea of itself and of its streets.

--It accepts the idea that the street is a place going someplace else.

It accepts the street as a tunnel, the city as a rabbit warren. It takes for granted what business and money and the fuzz and everyone else takes for granted: that the street is an impersonal tube for "circulation" of traffic, business, and wealth, so that consequently all the real action is someplace else. That life really happens inside the buildings. But for life to happen inside buildings, it must first find expensive buildings to happen in--downtown or in the suburbs where the money goes along with the traffic.

Violence in the street is all right as an

affirmation that one does not submit, but it fails because it accepts the general myth of the street as no-man's-land, as battleground, as no place. Hence, it is another kind of submission. It takes alienation for granted. Merely to fight in the street is to protest, in desperation, that one is unable to change anything. So in the long run it is another way of giving up.

* * * * *

We can dance in the street, but that will not change the fact that our buildings are lousy, the rent is too high, the garbage is not taken away, and the back yards look like bomb craters.

Never mind. We can begin now to change this street and this city.

We will begin to discover our power to transform our own world.

Those who celebrate are not powerless. They become creators because they are lovers.

But celebration is not for the alone.

To pull down the blind and empty the bottle and lie on the floor in a stupor: this may help you to forget the street for a while, but it is a surrender. It is the crowning submission, the acceptance of powerlessness, willingness to admit you are a nothing. The alienated city isolates people from one another in despair, lovelessness, defeat. It is crowded with people who are not present to each other: it is like a desert, although it is full of people.

Celebration is not noise. It is not a spinning head. It is not just individual kicks.

It is the creation of a common identity, a common consciousness.

* * * * *

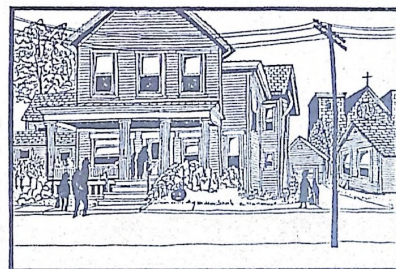
We can build a fire of happiness in this city that will put them to shame.

They with their gold have turned our lives into rubble. But we with love will set our lives on fire and turn the rubble back into gold. This time the gold will have real worth. It will not be just crap that came out of the earth. It will be the infinite value of human identity flaming up in a heart that is confident in loving. That is the beginning of power. That is the beginning of the transformation. One day, you'll see!

Meanwhile, we have an answer to the question:

Can the street become an inhabited space?

Yes, when it becomes a space for celebration. □



Grace and peaces of mail

Dear Ed and Murphy,

Your June issues of Hospitality was tops! It was just loaded with all the right stuff. I went to work on it with the scissors, clipping bits here and there for my mind's menu for the week.

Your "Dismal History of the Bible" was right on! You would not be surprised, I am sure, to know that "Bible organizations" here and in other countries will spend vast sums to print and distribute the Bible in order to shore up the status quo. The good news is only good to those who want to be set free! That should be all of us, but it ain't!

Again, congratulations and keep up the good work.

In Christ's love,

Bill Reyburn
Blairsville, GA

Editor's note: Bill Reyburn is currently a linguistic consultant to translators for the American Bible Society.

Dear Ed, Murphy, and Community,

I just read your request for donations in Hospitality. Enclosed is my "monk's mite." But I would also remind you that every loaf of Monastery Bread gets pushed down by me in my machine in our bakery--and I try to work with love, in union with God--so that each loaf will bring blessings to the eaters. Every seed has divine and cosmic consequences. May we all be sensitized to the energizing Presence of God wherever we are, whatever we do!

Love to all,

Tom
Thomas Francis
Holy Spirit Monastery
Conyers, GA

Dear Friends,

I visited Atlanta two years ago and got home with the enclosed tokens from the Atlanta Metro system. I've wondered when I might ever get back to Atlanta to use them.

In a copy of Hospitality I noted that you can use them in your ministry.

Keep up the good work.

Yours truly,

John Taylor, Pastor
First United Methodist Church
Sherman, Texas

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Can you believe it--we cleared 9,000 dollars on our annual dinner benefit for Casa Maria Catholic Worker House. It's the most we've made, and it will really be needed. As all of you know, hunger is getting worse and homelessness increases. 9,000 homeless in the Tucson area alone is just unbelievable and unbearable. I imagine Atlanta is a lot higher.

Like you we have experienced only a slight drop off at our soup kitchen. We expect about 600 every day all summer.

My solidarity dollar is enclosed with thanks to all of you for what you do.

Viva la causa!

With love, peace, and hope,

Jerry Robinett
Casa Maria Catholic Worker House
Tucson, AZ



Feel The Street

by Charlotte Allen

The streets run blood
with a shimmering light
from the full moon.

A knife cuts flesh
and leaves a scar
on both skin and in the soul.

The night time
never ends. . . .
The day just fades away.

There is no love on the street,
only heat.
The passion there is
a hellish fire.
Two souls temporarily unite
in burning desire.

Cold is the air
as it cuts through your body,
Feel the street!

MOVING?

WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS, PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SIMPLY PRINT YOUR COMPLETE OLD AND NEW ADDRESSES ON A CARD AND ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR MAILING LABEL. IT TAKES LONGER TO MAKE THE CORRECT CHANGE WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION. WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE YOU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING.



Our Dining Room Needs Help!

The dining room at 910 is the most used room in the house. We eat there, we invite 1,003 people to come in and sit and eat in our dining room each week, we meet there, we study the Bible in the dining room, we watch movies there, and we worship in the dining room. In any week, approximately 1,703 bodies will take a seat in the chairs in our dining room. After eight years of such hard use, our chairs are falling apart. Many are cracked and broken beyond repair. Replacing the chairs in our dining room will cost \$750. Can you help us?



HELP!

The Open Door still needs a reliable used car. If you have one to donate, please call 874-9652 or 876-6977.

Atlanta Keeps the Homeless Underground!



In this same year that Atlanta has spent \$142 million to develop the Underground as entertainment for the well-to-do, 40,000 men, women and children have slept in shelters for the homeless.

LET'S GET OUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT!!!!!!!!!!



PLEASE HELP. Call 874-9652



ORDER NOW and take maximum

advantage of The Other Side's 1989/1990 Giver's Guide! Detailed information on 120 groups that appeal for your support, both religious and secular: peace, justice, missions, minority rights, environment, housing, relief and development, advocacy and education. • Rules for effective giving. • How to develop giving priorities. • Why giving doesn't always help. • A theology for jubilee giving. • Learn which organizations never audit their books. • Which discriminate against gays and lesbians in hiring. • Which have enough money in the bank to operate for two years without raising another penny. • Which pay their executives more than \$70,000 a year. • Which are dominated by white men. • How to spot a fraudulent appeal before you open the envelope. • Why never to give money over the phone. • Rewarding insights. Copies are just \$7.50 each from The Other Side, 300 W. Apsley Philadelphia, Pa. 19144. ORDER NOW!

WE ARE OPEN. . .

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

OUR MINISTRY. . .

SOUP KITCHEN--Monday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon; Sunday 2-4pm

BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST--Monday-Friday, 7:15am

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

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

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

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

WEEKEND RETREATS--Four times each year (for our household & volunteers/supporters)--
July 21,22,23.

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

Open Door Community Worship

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

Child care available.

Join us!



July 2	Worship at 910
July 9	Worship at 910
July 16	Worship at 910
July 21-23	Community Retreat at Dayspring Farm
July 30	Worship at 910
August 6	Worship at 910
August 13	Worship at 910
August 20	Worship at 910
August 27	Worship at 910

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

Needs

CHEESE
MAYONNAISE
VITAMIN C
MARTA TOKENS
POSTAGE STAMPS
MEN'S LARGE SHOES (12-14)
COFFEE
DEODORANT
HAMS AND TURKEYS
POSTAL MONEY ORDERS
RAZORS
SHAMPOO
FOOT POWDER
BATH POWDER

WE NEED VASELINE FOR HAIR CARE!

VOLUNTEERS ON MONDAYS AND TUESDAYS TO HELP PREPARE
SACK LUNCHES BETWEEN 9AM AND 12:30PM.

*From 11am - 1pm Monday- 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
11:00 or after 1:00, it would be helpful.
Thanks.*

Newspaper Requests - If you or a friend would like
to receive HOSPITALITY, please fill in this form
and return to Willie London at the Open Door
Community, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta,
Georgia 30306-4212.

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____