

HOSPITALITY

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

Address Service Requested

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

vol. 18, no. 6

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

June 1999

Trouble at Grady: Local Symptoms, National Crisis

By Murphy Davis

The county commissioner looked perplexed. "You understand, don't you, that we're the bottom of the food chain here. You're coming to us because you know who and where we are. But we're not the *real* cause of this crisis at Grady Hospital. It's much bigger than DeKalb and Fulton Counties."

She is absolutely right, and she is absolutely wrong. Grady, our local public hospital is facing a \$26.4 million deficit for this calendar year. To cut costs the administration recommended to the Hospital Board that they begin to charge even the poorest of the poor a \$5 charge for each clinic visit and a \$10 copayment for each prescription and medical supply. This disastrous policy attempted to address the budget problems on the backs of the poor and amounted to a death sentence for many Grady patients, especially the poorest who are elderly and/or with chronic illnesses that require several medications to sustain life and health.

These problems at Grady are a local problem with local causes; they are as well, the local symptoms of a national crisis with national causes. Local governments are responsible for the problem; local governments are victims of the problem. The health care crisis is a particular place where the national drama is being played out on a local level. I have begun to wonder if it might be the place where we come together nationally to seek significant change.

Over the past twenty years, the United States has undergone massive and sweeping change that has increasingly consolidated our resources and put them in fewer and fewer hands. The wealthiest 1% of our people have amassed fortunes in the millions and billions. A significant number of people near the top have accumulated more money and possessions than anybody could ever need in one lifetime; the middle class is more vulnerable; the working class is close to falling over the edge; and the poor have sunk more and more deeply into the misery of substandard housing, homelessness, prison, and limited access to good schools, proper nutrition, and health care.

This change has been brought about since the early 1980s by a steady and persistent legislative and judicial program that has given every advantage to wealthy individuals, corporations, and institutions and increasing disadvantages to working class and poor people. Public institutions and services have been opened up to the forces of privatization for the

purpose of increasing profits for the already-wealthy and a destabilized environment for workers. All services and institutions are becoming fair game for the market and all space is becoming commercial space. The values and language of the market have come so to dominate our common life, that ethical discussion, or religious or moral discourse have begun to seem at least quaint if not completely irrelevant. The bottom line is everything. Those who matter are consumers. But poor people (by definition, without capital) are not consumers, so they literally don't count. In fact, they don't even exist except as commodities in the prison industrial complex.

At the same time, at national, state and local levels, we have cut every program that in any way helps the poor and vulnerable among us. The results

are increasingly disastrous for individuals, families, public institutions, and yes, the common good. The Grady crisis represents this unfolding drama.

As a single example of the national trend, two pieces of federal legislation, the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 meant a loss of \$28 million for Grady Hospital in 1998. \$28 million—more than this year's projected deficit. As people have been moved "from welfare to work," they have more often than not, moved into low-wage, dead-end jobs that almost never provide health insurance. Without access to Medicaid, these families continue to depend on Grady for medical services, but the patients cannot pay for services and medication, and the hospital can no longer be reimbursed by Medicaid. Grady's plight is one that is, to some degree, affecting teaching hospitals across the country. Even Harvard University's several teaching hospitals are in trouble.

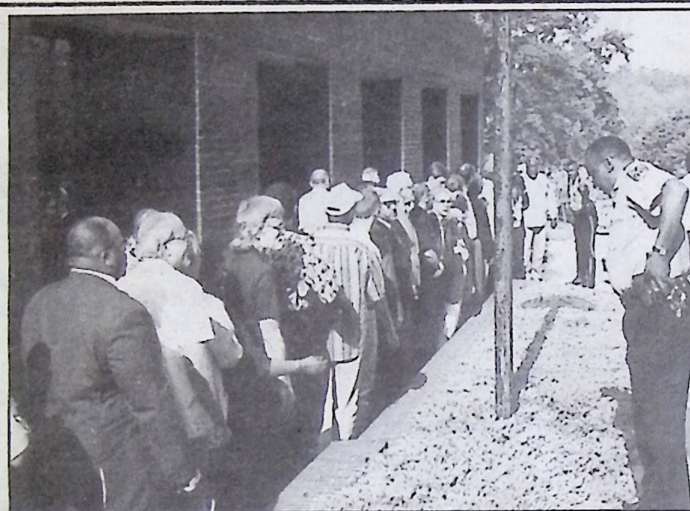
The state of Georgia has taken the federal cuts and made even deeper cuts in Medicaid and Medicare. The DeKalb and Fulton County Commissions, who are legally responsible for Grady have voted for less and less county support for the hospital since 1992. Simply put, the emergency that Grady faces has been created by specific policy decisions at every level of government over a period of years. Some folks knew doggone well what they were doing, a few people protested in vain, and the rest seemed to be watching t.v. and shopping at the mall. But as all of the cuts continue to trickle down to the local level, they are deadly for the poor, the sick, and the vulnerable.

The crisis is local, so the organizing has to begin locally. The elected officials

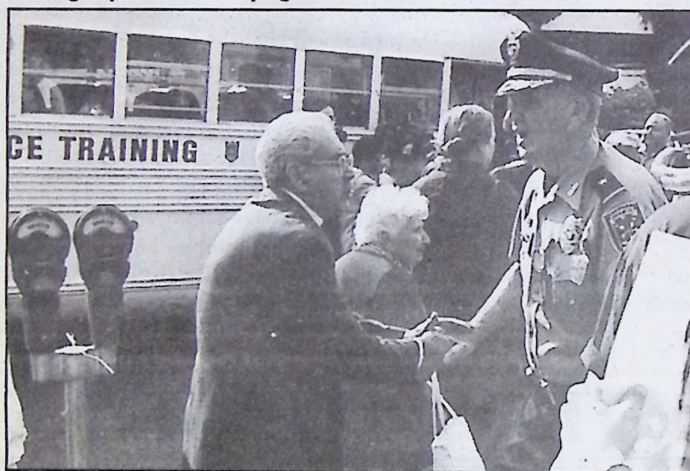
closest to home are those who must first take the heat for this multi-level assault on public institutions and poor people. They are responsible for their own malicious policy decisions. And they are responsible for not raising Cain with state and federal decision-makers who helped them to craft this disaster.

For us there is a rich privilege in being part of a diverse and growing coalition that is confronting the local health care emergency and crying out for those who cannot cry out for themselves. When we forced a discussion with the Grady Board, they voted to temporarily rescind the co-payments. We made a commitment to work with them and help advocate for additional funding to meet the deficit. We knocked first on the door of the Fulton County Commission,

(continued on next page)



GLADYS RUSTAY
DeKalb County Police corral 30 activists arrested for disrupting the County Commission meeting in an effort to get the Grady Hospital emergency on the County agenda.



GLADYS RUSTAY
Under arrest, Joe Criscuolo, 81, greets a police officer as he, his wife Goldy, and 28 others are taken to jail.

(continued from page 1)

and were received by those commissioners who are friends of the poor and advocates for Grady. They allocated an additional \$3.5 million. When we went to the DeKalb County Commission and CEO with the same appeal, we were met with a stone wall. More than a month since we first asked them to respond, the DeKalb Commission has directed arrests of 37 advocates but has still refused to put the hospital's request for \$1.1 million on the agenda for a public discussion.

We are continuing this struggle on several fronts. We will knock on DeKalb's door until it opens and until this additional funding (small change in a county budget) is allocated. In the meantime, we are appealing to Governor Roy Barnes to get involved to make state resources available to move past this crisis toward long-term resolution of Grady's support as a regional and state resource. We understand that this must include discussion and action for public hospitals in every area of Georgia.

We are also looking toward public dialogue about the responsibility of the private institutions who have a role in Grady's long-term health. Emory University made its international reputation as a medical school and research center at Grady Hospital. The medical school has been a major source of Emory's growing wealth and power. With an endowment of \$6 billion, Emory's is the fastest-growing endowment of any private university in the nation. It is time for the wealth to be shared to endow Grady's future as a resource for health care for the poor and the excellent teaching context that it continues to be.

Other private sources that must be called to accountability are the many for-profit hospitals in the Atlanta area who sometimes send their patients to Grady when insurance monies have run out. We understand that some cities or regions levy a tax on for-profit hospitals to help support public hospitals. Drug companies and insurance companies must be called to account for their massive profits and pricing based on market feasibility rather than their own costs. And finally, Morehouse Medical School and other smaller teaching institutions and programs must be called into the discussions to explore shared responsibility for this precious resource in our community.

As all the local partners are called to account, we must be seeking new ways to work together to advocate in Washington. The Balanced Budget Act will bring deeper cuts in the coming years. Our health care system is in serious trouble. We must stop the

damage and move toward a national health insurance plan.

On May 11, thirty members of our coalition of activists were arrested for praying and singing when the DeKalb Commission once again refused to discuss the hospital. It was, without a doubt, the largest and most diverse group arrested for an act of civil disobedience in Atlanta since the movement activities of the 1960's. We were clergy and layfolks, Christians, Jews, and Buddhists, women and men, gay and straight, Black, white and Asian, students and



GLADYS RUSTAY
Saxophonist Jimmy Compton greets the jail birds after 24-hours in the DeKalb County Jail. Pictured are (left to right) Ed Potts, Rev. Walter Baldwin, Stewart Acuff, and Ed Loring.

retirees (the oldest were 79 and 81!), medical professionals in white uniform and members of organized labor taking the day off. While we were loaded onto the police bus and taken to jail, 200 or more supporters sang and prayed. Then they moved the vigil to the DeKalb County Jail. When Rev. Stalmacher, a local pastor, heard about the action, he brought a candle and signs saying "Letting the Light Shine for Grady Hospital." He walked and vigiled all night in front of the jail and greeted us when we were released the next morning.

The diverse and lively coalition that has formed around the Grady crisis is a long-haul group of committed activists. We are working and planning together with clarity that we have a long road ahead. We look forward to learning more of how this struggle has taken shape in other cities and regions. And we hope to be part of a growing movement that will struggle for not only a guarantee

of decent health care for all God's children, but justice, housing, freedom and peace for every woman, man and child.

Please help us cry out for Grady patients. No more clinic charges and co-payments! Nurture the public health; support Grady Hospital. Write, Fax, or Call:

- Mr. Robert Brown, Chair
Board of Trustees, Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority
80 Butler St., SE
Atlanta, GA 30335
404-616-4307
FAX 404-616-9204
Ask him to lead the Board to advocacy for the resolution of this emergency and fulfillment of the hospital's mission to care for our poorest citizens.
- Governor Roy Barnes
203 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334
404-656-1776
FAX 404-657-7332
Ask him to expedite money owed to Grady Hospital by the state and to find additional funds for the emergency before us. Ask him to acknowledge Grady's role as a state and regional hospital and to fund it accordingly.
- Liane Lévitan, CEO (and your individual representatives)
DeKalb County Commission
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, GA 30030
404-371-2886
Ask them to respond to this emergency with an allocation of \$1.5 million for the Grady pharmacy and to restore full funding to our public hospital and commitment to the public health.
- Dr. William Chace, President
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322
404-727-6013
Ask him to step forward to use Emory's resources to help insure the health of Grady Hospital.

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

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:

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



Open Door Community

PHOTO BY GARY BECK

Newspaper
Editorial Staff—Chuck Campbell,
Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede,
Joyce Hollyday, Ed Loring, Tamara
Puffer, Gladys Rustay, Brenda
Smith, and Stan Saunders
Managing Editor—Michael Galovic
Layout—Michael Galovic
Copy Editing—Alice Alexander,
Gabriella Boston, Murphy Davis,
Elizabeth Dede, Julie Martin,
Tamara Puffer, Gladys Rustay, and
Heather Spahr
Circulation—Phillip Williams, Joe
Miller, and a multitude of earthly
hosts and guests
Subscriptions or change of address—
Anne Wheeler
(A \$7 donation to the Open Door would
help to cover the costs of printing and
mailing *Hospitality* for one year.)

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

Healing Without Housing: the Open Door Community's Medical Clinic

by Ed Loring

A dark damp Thursday night in February, the wind is howling and the neighborhood dogs, held at bay by chain link fences, bark into the starless night.

Their growls are muffled by the mad traffic that roars up and down Ponce de Leon Avenue winking at the red traffic lights. 7:30 p.m.: we open our front door to our homeless friends who are sick, abandoned and filthy. They enter like the shepherds coming to see the Christ child: timid, hopeful for healing, tired and disturbed.

Nancy Phillips is a friend of mine. She lives along the streets in our neighborhood. Often she is cheerful and has a sweet smile. She is also broken and bent. She has been brutalized and objectified by the lust and pleasure of men who slide along the street like fog on a winter night. Nancy came to our medical clinic on a Thursday night, lame and tormented from a recent beating. She held a police report in her hand and smiled with self-respect. "I ain't gonna take this anymore," she proclaimed. Marisa Rogers, the overall coordinator of the clinic, bound her wounds after Phillip Williams, a former homeless man who is now a leader in the community, had prepared the initial paperwork. Nancy was then sent to Grady Memorial Hospital for further care. She was admitted later that night.

Nancy Phillips was loved and cared for at Grady Hospital. She was given a walker and dismissed in a few days. She limped her way along Ponce de Leon Avenue for several days, and then entered our home for lunch on Wednesday. After filling herself with steaming chunks of meat in the hearty soup, she approached me at the door. "Ed, I'm finished in this walker. I want to donate it to the Open Door Community." "Thank you," I replied. I took the walker to our medical closet to give it a rest until the next lame person should come along.

An hour later Ben Brown hobbled into our living room. Ben had joined the community on a Friday morning a couple of weeks earlier. He had reached our breakfast served near Grady Hospital at 6:00 a.m. in the 25 degree cold. He was living outside wrapped in blankets and on the move from storefront to back alley. Ben was in a wheelchair, with metal spikes and wires running circles

around and through his leg. His leg reminded me of a Picasso wire sculpture. Ben was invited to live at the Open Door Community, and he did. On Wednesday Ben was out of the wheelchair and jerking his way into the living room. He was all smiles. Someone had given Nancy's

have a bathroom that is open to the public 15-hours a day. This is the only time for many men and women to have access to soap, towels, and all the hot water they want. We also have a small but most important medical clinic.

Our funding comes from

residents are seen along with folks who live in our yard or nearby on the streets and under bridges. Ten to fifteen men and women attend the clinic on most Thursdays although the number is higher in the colder months.

Dr. Jann left in the Fall of 1997 to return to her home in Switzerland and be near her family. She brought many gifts with her work among us. Perhaps because of her field of Rehabilitative Medicine, she was very helpful getting needy people through the bureaucratic hoops to receive disability resources. This is a good and necessary public program that is available for many, but is often beyond the reach of the homeless and poor. Dr. Jann became their friend and advocate.

In October, 1997 Roald Rees died. Dr. Jann began a fund for prescriptions in honor of her son. This fund continues today and is a primary resource for prescriptive medications for the clinic. We are always in need of money and medicine.

After Dr. Jann's departure, we went for too many months with no clinic at all. During the winter of 1998, Dr. Marilyn Washburn, a Presbyterian minister and medical school faculty member at Emory University reorganized the clinic. We joined in jubilation and thanksgiving. Marisa Rogers, a fourth-year medical student, became the coordinator and visionary of the clinic. Before entering medical school at Emory University, she was a volunteer in our soup kitchen and at the Butler Street Breakfast. We have three doctors who rotate sharing leadership of the clinic: Drs. Marilyn Washburn, Pierre Felix, and Pam Logan. A number of medical students assist the doctors by taking blood pressures, temperatures, and making the initial reports. On many occasions the students offer a loving and needed ear to a lonely and despairing woman or man. Often the hospitality we share is the most appreciated gift of the evening.

Marisa Rogers notes, "The range of medical problems seen is quite diverse, but usually consists of cold and flu-type illnesses and various musculoskeletal complaints." Homelessness, like poverty itself, is violent. We have friends, like Nancy Phillips, who arrive after being robbed or raped—usually badly beaten. Many people are referred to the Grady Hospital system. Sometimes we take them; sometimes we give

(continued on next page)



TONNIE KING

Marisa Rogers with her parents Brenda and James Rogers after her recent graduation from the Emory School of Medicine.

gift to him. The walker had empowered Ben to start walking again. The bread cast upon the waters had come full circle. We cheered. Ben walked.

Ben, like Nancy, like you and me, has a long way to go yet. He will be in physical therapy for months and may never walk again without a limp. But he is being cared for by loving doctors and medical staff who come to our home every Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m.. The poor are always welcomed. They are always wounded. They are always loved.

The Open Door Community is a residential Christian community in downtown Atlanta. Twenty-five to thirty of us live together in an old apartment building. Our tasks are several. One is to build a shared life of diversity and love. Others are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, house the homeless, visit the prisoner, and heal the wounds of the broken. We serve thousands of meals each month, hundreds of folks come for showers and a change of clothes. We are the legal mailing address for many. We

voluntary contributions. We receive no public money. None of us have employment outside our house. We are all homemakers. We are supported by hundreds of volunteers who help us in every aspect of our lives. They help us in our dying as well. Usually one or two of us have AIDS; often several of us are HIV infected. Most of us are addicts; a couple of us are nuts; all of us stand in the need of love and friendship to help us through the days.

In the Fall of 1995, Dr. Brigetta Jann, then head of the Department of Rehabilitative Medicine at Emory University, came to the Open Door Community to learn about the medical needs we and our homeless friends had. After several conversations she offered to begin a regular Thursday evening clinic in our home. We were elated. Dr. Jann came each week with her son Roald Rees who helped by doing intake and blood pressure readings.

The clinic, then and now, begins at 7:30 p.m. and concludes around 9:00 p.m. People who are

them bus fare. Occasionally we call an ambulance.

Behind the scenes is Phillip Williams, a partner and mentor at the Open Door Community. Phillip lived on the streets for a while after losing a job and a marriage. He came to live in our home seven years ago. He has worked with the clinic from the beginning. Phillip told me once, "The medical clinic is my pride and joy." Phillip builds the list of folk to see the medical team throughout the day on Thursday. Phillip has the supplies ready and the living room ordered by 7 p.m. when the doctors and students arrive.

As the Bible might have said, "The sick you will always have with you." Therefore we must open our lives and homes and offices to all people. John, a 58-year-old, recently joined our community. Thirty years ago he had an aneurysm that left him brain injured. He developed heart disease, had a heart attack, and went through open-heart surgery. John has, unfortunately, been a smoker for years. He has emphysema and other lung problems. John, who has not qualified for SSI, is weak and always fatigued. Our clinic referred him to the DeKalb-Grady Clinic and John is now in a smoking cessation group.

We are deeply thankful and grateful for the privilege of sharing in the work of the medical clinic and the healing of those without homes. Yet there is a certain pathos, despair almost, in working with those who have so few resources. No matter how great the medical treatments are, to send someone back onto the streets is a hard and harsh reality of this work. Housing precedes health. We need to house the homeless for them to recover the level of health and vitality that creates a life ready to make a contribution to the economy and society. Though the diversity among homeless people is great, all homeless people share the common denominator—no home. We who do this work and live this life know a simple but profound truth—health, healing, and housing cannot be separated. Yet, in this society steeped in poverty and filled with homelessness, we are joyful for the care, love and bandages that we may provide for those in such desperate need, even as we turn them back onto the streets where it is easier to find a drink of liquor or a smoke of crack than a sandwich or a coat.

Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY MEDICAL CLINIC Information Sheet

FOUNDED: In 1995 by Dr. Bridget Jann, when she approached the Leadership Team at the Open Door about providing medical care there. She organized the clinic so that homeless people with conditions like high blood pressure, muscular-skeletal complaints, sprained ankles, asthma and other health problems could receive treatment there. She has since moved back to her home in Switzerland. A fund set up in memory of her son helps provide needed medications.

MEDICAL STAFF:

- Clinic Manager: Marisa Rogers, Emory Medical School student
- Three volunteer doctors: Dr. Marilyn Washburn, Dr. Pierre Felix and Dr. Pam Logan.
- A first-year and a second-year medical student each take patients' histories as well as their vitals before they see the doctor.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

- Phillip Williams, Open Door Partner, keeps a list of the patients that will attend the clinic that day, organizes the medical staff, makes certain the rooms are ready, and oversees the clinic as it happens.
- Gladys Rustay, Open Door Partner, is the treasurer.

EQUIPMENT: Blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, thermometer, urine dip-stick. Marisa brings her own otoscope and ophthalmoscope every week. It would be great if the clinic could own these items.

PRESCRIPTIONS: The doctors write them and they are taken to the nearby drug store or Grady hospital by Phillip Williams. Prescriptions are often very expensive and the memorial fund helps cover them.



BETTY JANE CRANDALL

Dr. Pierre Felix examines former Open Door Community member Neal Kimes.

SERIOUS ILLNESSES: People are transported to Grady by car or by ambulance. If it is not an emergency but follow-up care is needed, patients are sent to the DeKalb Grady Clinic.

ONGOING NEEDS: Cough and cold medicines, antifungal medication, aspirin.

TIME: Every Thursday at 7 p.m.

LOGISTICS: A small office is often used to take patients' medical history and to get their vitals. They wait in the living room until they see a doctor in the central office.

NAMES: They are taken to call patients in for their appointments, but no other identification (e.g. social security number) is required for admission to the clinic.

Compiled by Tamara Puffer

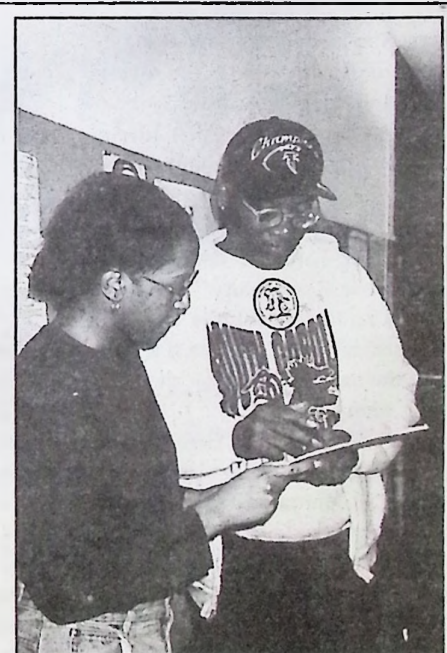
Medications and Supplies

The clinic is continually in need of money for medications and supplies to help care for our homeless friends. Please contact us if you can help.



BETTY JANE CRANDALL

Coming in for an examination, Lisa is interviewed by first and second-year medical students Larissa Buccolo and Jonathan Murrow, respectively.



BETTY JANE CRANDALL

Open Door Partner Phillip Williams confers with Marisa Rogers. Phillip organizes the clinic for the Open Door.

You Just Don't Know the Misery of Poverty

by Elizabeth Dede

In an otherwise globally-warmed winter, there were a few very cold days in January of 1999. Morning temperatures plunged into the teens. That's deadly weather for our homeless friends, and we opened an emergency shelter for a few nights. For most of the other mornings, though, it was either 10 to 20 degrees warmer than normal, or the typical damp, rainy, chilled gray of an Atlanta winter.

Even though I've lived and worked at the Open Door for 13 years now, I am still always surprised by the good cheer that our homeless friends bring to breakfast to share with us. There are always smiles, laughs, friendly greetings, and warm thanks. I'm not like that in the morning, and I sleep in a room with a ceiling, walls, windows, doors, and a comfortable bed. I'm pretty much a grouch until I've had my coffee and have been up and around for a while. I've noticed, too, that this observation about the breakfast good cheer is not one that only I have made. Often at our reflection time after we've served the breakfast, many volunteers will make a comment about how much joy they saw, heard, and felt in the dining room. We are surprised by joy.

One Thursday night, though, it rained hard all through the night. I was leading the Friday breakfast, and each time I'd wake up and hear the rain, I'd moan for myself and for the people outside. It was a miserable morning. People were cold and soaked. Nobody had dry clothes, socks, or shoes. There was misery in the cold, wrinkled hands, and weariness on the lined faces. Even the ones whose personalities are gregarious and jovial were quiet. And there was a morose, sullen cloud hanging in the dining room.

Often on Friday mornings we have just enough volunteers to serve the breakfast. Leo "plays the keyboard," as he calls it, running back and forth behind the serving table to pour grits, pile more bread in the baskets, put more oranges in the bowls, and refill the coffee pitchers. It was like that on this particular Friday, and we were all running just to get the breakfast served. But our homeless friends needed dry clothes, too, and we just weren't able to help.

Like the relentless rain pouring down, anger and disappointment spilled from the over-filled bucket of misery. I was discouraged and weary by the time we sat down to eat our own breakfast and reflect on the morning.

One of the younger volunteers, a college student spending her January term with us, said, "There were a lot of mean and hung-over people here this morning. A lot of drinking went on last night. I don't understand that."

Alcohol is really destructive. It makes some folks fighting-mad. Others just get sad and defeated by its depressive effects. In the winter, alcohol causes people to be dangerously numb to the cold. And the numbness seems like a desirable, blessed release from the pain of homelessness. While it makes serving the breakfast much more difficult, I sure understand the morose, sullen, angry, hung-over, depressed mood better than I do the joy. I said something about the misery of the night and the comfort of a bottle in response to the college student's judgment.

But I was speaking from a certain ignorance and innocence of the harsh realities of the streets. Stuart, a member of the Open Door for about eight months, spoke with the wisdom and authority of hard, agonizing experience. He said, "Homelessness is pure misery. You're out there, and you've lost everything—work, home, family, dignity, self-respect, and the respect of others—it's all gone. You're raggedy and you smell bad. You're tired all the time, but there's no place to rest. It's dangerous and you're afraid all the time, but you've got to act tough. You can't show any vulnerability. You can't cry out there. You know, I've lived here eight months now, and I'm only just feeling like I can cry again. You don't have any choices. You eat what's put in front of you, or what you dig out of the dumpster. You don't feel like a human anymore. You feel like a dog. You just don't know the misery of poverty," Stuart told us. "Yeah, I understand people being hung-over today. Alcohol and drugs, they become your friends, your comfort, your family. And that's all I have to say."

We sat there silently for a time. I felt stunned, like the breath

had been knocked out of me. We thanked Stuart for his sharing. What more could be said at that point?

Later I thought, "I need to sit down with Stuart and the tape recorder and get him to do that teaching again so I can transcribe his words for *Hospitality*." I never got the chance. A short time afterwards, Stuart left the Open Door and never returned. He received several pieces of hard news, one right after the other. His younger brother was shot and killed up in New York. Then one of his grandbabies had a severe asthma attack, was rushed to the hospital, and almost died. Stuart's older brother had a heart attack when he heard the news about their younger brother. That's an awful lot for any person to take and hold together.

Several times on the day before he left and again on that morning, Stuart said to me, "You've

got to help me. I'm really hurting." I let him down. I tried to comfort him. I hugged him and told him that he was a good man. That we cared for him. That he could make it through this. The morning he left Stuart said to me, "I've got to go to my family." I let him down. I didn't say, "Stuart, why don't you stay here with us where we can be with you and support you until you know more about the funeral plans?" Looking back on it, I think that's what Stuart was asking me to say when he kept pleading with me, "You've got to help me."

Instead I gave him two bus tokens, and Stuart went back to his family. Adolphus saw him sitting on a corner in Northwest Atlanta, his head hung back, a bottle of vodka upturned to his lips.

Elizabeth Dede is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Cocktail Party

The harsh sodium lights illuminate the yard
And I see you sprawled unconscious on cardboard and rags
behind the dumpster.
Sometimes I have approached you as quietly as I could.
So as not to disturb your sleep and bring you back to the homeless horror you live with.
I've looked closely just to see your chest rise and fall;
To make sure by some movement that you are still breathing.

Occasionally I have paused in fascination, as I gazed at your face.
The strain is gone, and even in your drunken slumber, your brow is relaxed;
And I can see something there of the child you once were,
Before alcohol and the streets and broken dreams crushed you.
It is then I remember the person in the tombs,
Tormented by demons, who wore no clothes and abode in no house.

I want to grab you and shake you and slap your face, and yell at you,
"You fool, you don't have to live like this:
You can lick this thing. Thousands have done it."
But then I remember you live behind the dumpster,
And these thousands who have licked it lived in houses, with beds and running water and comfort.

So I walk away in silence, and occasionally I remember to pray for you;
That the Lord will touch your broken heart and lead you out of the valley.
You are my brother and sister, but you are the children of God.
And only there lies salvation.

- Jim Carter

(Editor's note: Jim Carter of Atlanta was a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door in 1984-85.)

Beyond the Sadness

By Joyce Hollyday

"It's totally unprecedented!" the nuclear engineer was telling us with enthusiasm. "We're designing a missile that won't make a trail." He went on to say that one of the major problems with missiles today is that they leave behind a mark in the air, making it easy for "enemies" to trace their launch point and thus destroy equipment and personnel there.

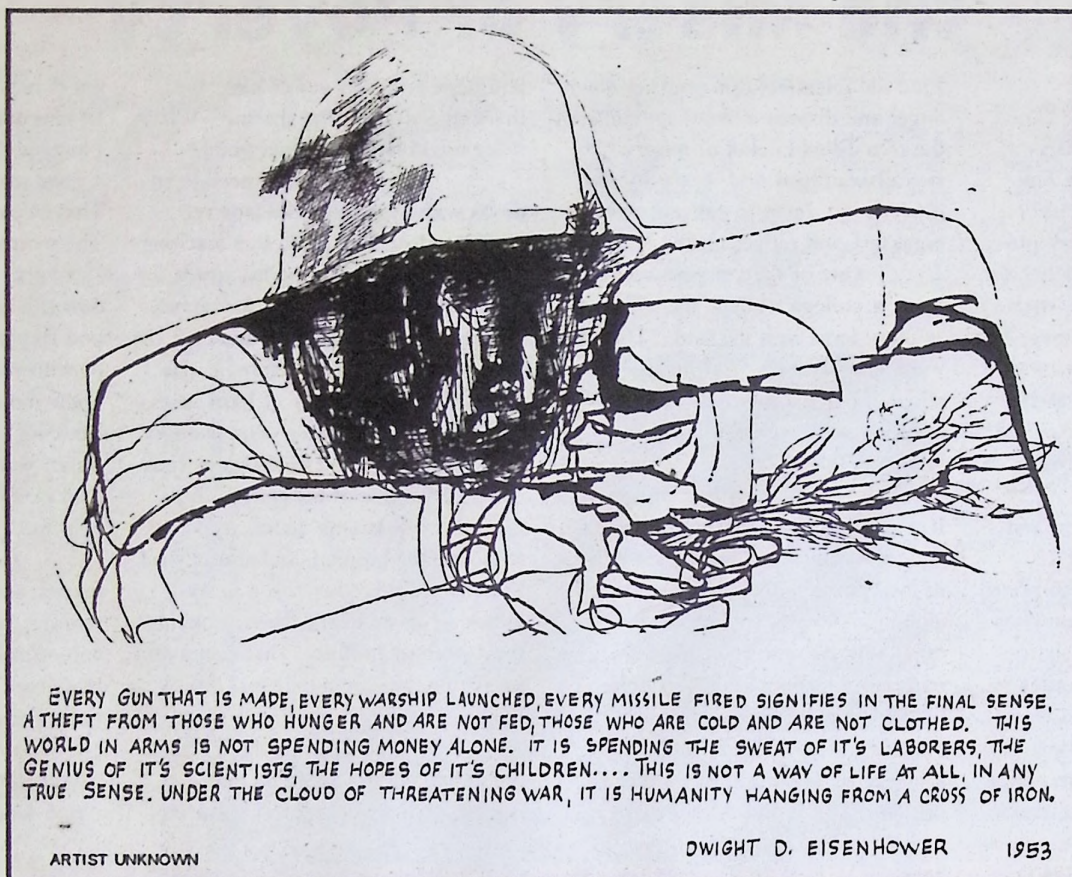
We were in a Shoney's in Alabama, on an early Saturday morning three weeks after Easter, fortifying ourselves for a day of church business. All around us, ordinary people were getting up with plates and heading toward the breakfast bar, loading up on sausage and eggs and home fries and biscuits. The engineer began describing the new missile's combustion system. I tried not to make eye contact.

I felt distracted, despairing that this conversation was going on among church people over breakfast, as if the topic at hand was as innocent as gardening or the weather. It didn't help that at the very moment that we were putting syrup on our pancakes and downing our orange juice, NATO forces were raining bombs on Yugoslavia, retaliating for "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo and justifying civilian deaths from bombs as tragic but inevitable.

I sat silent, unable to voice the outrage that stuck uncomfortably in my throat. By the time we finished our meal and made our way out to the parking lot, the missile engineer had turned his thoughts to another tragedy—the high school massacre in Littleton, Colorado, which had happened just days before. "I have two children in high school," he said, expressing fear for their safety. "What gives kids the idea that violence can solve their problems?"

Long pause.

Personally, I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to see the tragic irony in such a statement. But this one didn't get it. Neither, it seems, does the president of the United States, who took a brief pause from explaining why we need to bomb



EVERY GUN THAT IS MADE, EVERY WARSHIP LAUNCHED, EVERY MISSILE FIRED SIGNIFIES IN THE FINAL SENSE, A THEFT FROM THOSE WHO HUNGER AND ARE NOT FED, THOSE WHO ARE COLD AND ARE NOT CLOTHED. THIS WORLD IN ARMS IS NOT SPENDING MONEY ALONE. IT IS SPENDING THE SWEAT OF IT'S LABORERS, THE GENIUS OF IT'S SCIENTISTS, THE HOPES OF IT'S CHILDREN.... THIS IS NOT A WAY OF LIFE AT ALL, IN ANY TRUE SENSE. UNDER THE CLOUD OF THREATENING WAR, IT IS HUMANITY HANGING FROM A CROSS OF IRON.

ARTIST UNKNOWN

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

1953

Yugoslavia to smithereens in order to tell us that it's time to start teaching young people to resolve their angry conflicts "with words instead of weapons."

I found my voice in the parking lot. The engineer responded to my confrontation by telling me that he really wanted to be working in nuclear medicine, or maybe nuclear power, but the only jobs available are with the military. He wrestles with how to justify his work in light of his Christian faith, but he has a family to support...

I started toward my car. In my mind I heard—but tried to ignore—the voice of Chuck Campbell, with whom I teach a seminary course on "Principalities, Powers, and Preaching." Chuck had asserted in class the week before that most of the violence and injustice in the world exists not because people are evil, but because they are weak, trapped in systems and assumptions they don't know how to resist. Such an understanding calls for compassion. But I was too caught up at that moment in my judgment.

Now, with a little distance, I recognize all that was eating at me that day. I know that I, too, am complicit. Despite all my efforts to live nonviolently, as long as I drive a car and shop in stores and live in the world as a citizen of the United States, I am part of the violence. And that's really the heart of my anger and feelings of

helplessness. I don't much like the way the world is ordered.

I don't know when I've ever felt that the joy of Easter and the hope of Resurrection were followed so quickly by such overwhelming sadness. Kosovo. Littleton. Grady Hospital. Death abroad; death across the country; the threat of death close to home.

I spent the weeks after Easter immersing myself in the post-Resurrection appearance stories in scripture. They are comfort. I love them for their humanity. I love it that Jesus eats a fish, cooks a breakfast, gives Peter three chances to assert his love for Jesus, to erase his three betrayals.

My favorite is the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). This road, this town, these people, appear as if out of nowhere—never mentioned before or after. Who is Cleopas? Who is his unnamed companion? They walk with Jesus, not knowing it is him, because "their eyes were kept from recognizing him." The scripture tells us they are sad.

Jesus wants to know what they are discussing. "Are you the only one who doesn't know what has happened?" they ask in disbelief. "How could you have missed it? Jesus is dead! We thought that he would be the one to redeem Israel, but..."

When I put myself in the shoes of the two walking that road on

the evening of Jesus' Resurrection, I imagine that my doubts would be similar to theirs. Surely if Jesus had risen from the dead, the Roman occupiers would have fled by now. They've had all day, for God's sake! Surely there would be justice. Surely the world would look and feel different.

If Jesus had risen from the dead, surely children wouldn't massacre other children. Surely there would be medical care for the poor. Surely the bombs would have fallen silent by now, and the missiles would be off the drawing boards forever.

When I reread the Emmaus story this Spring, I realized for the first time that it was their sadness that kept the two on the road from recognizing Jesus. Their despair kept

blindness on their eyes. "We thought he would save us, but..." I share their dismay. "I thought Jesus had risen, but..."

What Cleopas and his companion remind us is that Resurrection isn't just a one-time, instantaneous extravaganza. Results don't usually come overnight—or even in three days. But that doesn't in any way detract from the power. The Resurrection continues! We need to see beyond the sadness.

We need to keep coming back to the table, sharing the bread, feeding one another for the long walk down the road. Because it was indeed in the breaking of the bread that the two on the road recognized Jesus. And it is in breaking the bread that we know him today, and thereby proclaim his Resurrection. With that hope, we can see beyond the sadness to a world without bombs, a world without poverty, a world without tears.

Rev. Joyce Hollyday is author of Clothed with the Sun, Turning Toward Home, and Then Shall Your Light Rise: Spiritual Formation and Social Witness from Upper Room Books. She is also Conference Associate for Spiritual Development and Community Building for the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. Joyce is a friend of the Open Door.

Reflection From Prison

by Bill Bichsel

(Editor's note: Bill Bichsel is a Catholic priest serving time for his participation in an action against the School of Americas. He is a member of the Tacoma, Washington, Catholic Worker and a friend of our friend Chuks Okeke.)

Another prisoner and I from the camp walked past the medium-security prison, with its double high fences and razor wire, to within 50 yards of the target firing range, which is out-of-bounds to camp prisoners. A line of prison guards and other federal agents were target practicing. The targets were the upper torso of a man. The sight and sound of the automatic fire got to me. I saw myself and other prisoners as potential targets.

After leaving the firing range, I returned to walk around the prison camp track. This is my hallowed spot for prayer and reflection. I began to reflect on my subdued feelings of being imprisoned within myself. I could still hear the fire of automatic weapons. How in love with the gun is the American male. It's a love that pervades our nation at every level of our society — from the homeless man on skid row to the affluent executive of a corporation. In my imagination I saw a team of those at the firing range kicking open a door and with automatic weapons ready, rushing into a room where a small group of drug users were sitting. One of the drug users began to bolt and a team member pumped lead into the false mover. The orgasm of lead stopped after the false mover was fully dead.

My thoughts moved to Martin Luther King taking lead into his body in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to be in solidarity with the garbage collectors who were on strike. He stood more than most Americans, facing the hailstorm of racism and militarism, and gave his life in testimony to God's non-violent world. His dream has been badly eroded by the steady growth of violence in our culture and government. It could be that our violence has been accentuated by our first use of atomic weapons and our consequent national policy of M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction) — a policy in which we passively acquiesced to the annihilation of ourselves and untold millions in Russia and

other countries if they made a false move. As a people and as individuals we have grown in violence and are more ready to return the insult for insult, the bullet for bullet, the bomb for bomb. We make sure we are better armed and more prepared to do this.

As I

walked
I grew
deeper in the
conviction that
my only freedom

from this love affair with violence is to put myself completely in the hands of God and strip myself naked of any of my retaliatory responses to violence.

This love affair with the gun and retaliatory responses to violence are especially strong in the macho setting of an all-male prison. One afternoon I was in conversation with some other prisoners and I mentioned the need for gun control. The conversation heated up and I felt the flames of deep disagreement. All prisoners are already alienated from the government—especially as a result of the government's practice of manipulating friends or relatives to testify against them. They see gun control as a further diminishment of their constitutional rights and a measure that will leave people defenseless before the government.

The prison system reflects the domination and violence of our culture and government. The prison officials and guards are taught that prisoners are inferior human beings and rubbish and need to be treated that way. Over a period of time prisoners begin to suck in these vibes of worthlessness. It is a deeply human tendency for subdued people to take on the characteristics of the oppressor. Unless prisoners develop strong spiritual lives to ward off those prison-nurtured tendencies to place control above trust, might above right, and domination above freedom, there is the likelihood that they will return to the outside with these government-sponsored qualities intact. There is

the possibility of prisoners using their time in camp as a retreat, to consider whether their lives in prison and on the outside will contribute to the climate of violence or resist that national disease. This is why I am

happy that my
friends are
working to
have

I am convinced that if we succumb to the temptation to use violence in our struggle for freedom, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness and our chief legacy to them will be a never-ending reign of chaos.

— Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

books
on non-
violence and
peace sent into

the camp. At our Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Service on January 18, we announced that a shelf in the chapel library would be devoted to books dealing with peace in honor of Martin Luther King.

Here in the prison camp there is talk in Christian gatherings of the Second Coming. This is especially accentuated now and is being connected to the Y2K phenomenon. There are foreboding, dire predictions, survival strategies, and gleeful anxiety going on that indicate that the Second Coming will be ushered in by a global computer meltdown at 12:01 a.m. January 1, 2000. Even aside from the Y2K phenomenon the Second Coming is a very fundamental and emphasized belief. I think there is a danger that this emphasis can keep people looking up and passively waiting for the Second Coming to take care of the problems of violence and immorality in our country.

I do not know the when, where, how, or what of the Second Coming. I leave this in the hands of God. Jesus told us that only the Creator knows that. (Mark, 13, 32). What I do know is that Jesus is with us now and will be with us all days until the end of time. He invites us to follow him in discipleship so that God's reign "will come on earth as it is in heaven." So instead of waiting for the Y2K Second Coming we have the opportunity to celebrate the Year 2000—a Jubilee Year.

In Leviticus 25, we read that every 50th year was a Jubilee Year in which it was prescribed to set cap-

tives free and release prisoners.

Land that had been accumulated by large landowners from small farmers would be returned to the original owners through just and affordable sales. It was a time of forgiving debts. The Year 2000 can be a time to focus on forgiveness in families, communities, ethnic groups and on our need to let go of grudges and prejudices which keep us separated. It can be a time to reflect on what we can do to change national policies which keep people in poverty and hopelessness and seek to build more prisons to handle the problems. It can be a time for us to look south of the border and consider what we can do to relieve the debts Latin American countries owe to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and American Lending Institutions. It can be a time for us to consider what we can do to reverse the expansion of the prison-industry complex which is holding more prisoners in our punitive dungeons than any other nation. It can be a time to reverse the climate of violence and hopelessness and replace it with forgiveness, hard work, and hope. †

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PEACE LIBRARY

This library was inaugurated at the Federal Prison Camp in Sheridan, Oregon by Bill Bichsel, S.J. "Bix" on January 18, 1999. The books are being chosen by "Bix" and friends at the camp from publishing lists. School of Americas Watch NW is accepting donations for this purpose. The books are being sent from the publishers through the Chaplain at the Prison.

Please do not send books for this library through "Bix"! Instead make checks to S.O.A. Watch NW and indicate for the Peace Library. Checks can be sent to S.O.A. Watch NW in the U.S.:

Ken Little
2809 92nd St. E.
Tacoma, WA 98445

For more information contact:

Sheila McShane
206-367-3567 or e-mail at
mcshane@u.washington.edu

Pat O'Brien: From A Mustard Seed

by Richard Rustay

Jesus told them another parable: The reign of heaven is like this. Someone takes a mustard seed and sows it in their field. It is the smallest of all seeds. But when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches. Matthew 13: 21-32.

Pat O'Brien is a volunteer at the Open Door Community. His relationship with the Open Door Community started in a very small and quiet way. The company where Pat worked—Kimberly Clark, the Kleenex people—transferred him to Atlanta. As Pat envisioned it, retirement after Kimberly-Clark would be quiet and peaceful, and he would relax every day just playing golf. But at the same time, a desire for something more than just a succession of days spent on the golf course began to tug at Pat's heart. Gradually, he began to pay attention to this yearning.

The feeling had its roots, Pat thinks, somewhere back in his early childhood. When he was a boy of about six, Pat says he remembers the dawn of an awareness that there was something odd going on at his house. Every morning, Pat's father would get up very early, leave for a few hours, and then return later to have breakfast before heading to work.

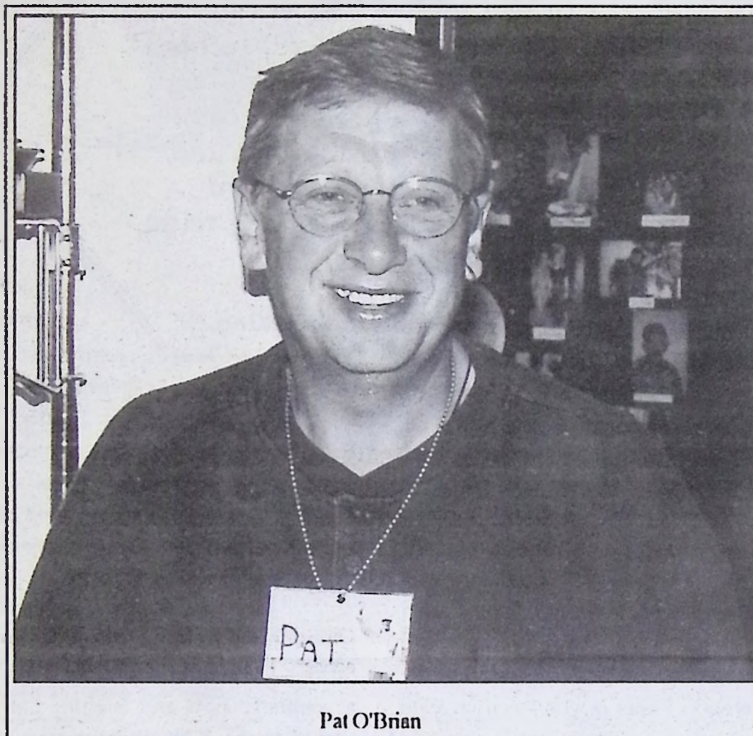
Eventually, the boy learned his father's secret. Without having talked much about it, Pat's dad had agreed to help an amputee, a man who needed assistance getting out of bed, bathing, and getting breakfast. So every morning, Pat's father rose early, went to the man's house, and helped him with these chores.

Pat was so impressed to learn about his father's quiet commitment that he resolved that he, too, would someday perform such a kindness. The resolve took root in the boy, and nestled in his heart. His mother remarked on the change in her son. One night, after the two had prayed together, she looked at her son and said, "My goodness. Sometimes I think you're becoming a clone of your father." The years passed. Pat grew up, got a job, married, had children and eventually moved to the Atlanta area. The resolution to help others continued to grow. One year, Thanksgiving was drawing near. Due to family circumstances, Pat was scheduled to spend this particular Thanksgiving alone. Instead, he thought, maybe he would find something to do "for charity."

An acquaintance mentioned the Open Door Community; someone else told him about the huge Thanksgiving feast that is hosted every year by Hosea Williams, the civil rights worker who'd fought alongside Martin Luther King, Jr. First Pat called Hosea's headquarters; but as it turned out, they already had plenty of volunteers. So Pat called the Open Door. The day after Thanksgiving, when we traditionally serve our big meal, the Open Door did need volunteers, and we'd be very glad indeed to have some help then, I told him. So it was that Pat first arrived at the Open Door. It was the Friday after Thanksgiving of 1989. As Pat sees it, it was

the day his life changed.

Ever since, Pat has been helping to serve breakfast at the Open Door every Monday. He rises early, before 5 a.m., and makes the 45-minute drive into town so that he can be here by 6 a.m. After everyone has been fed, he often stays to share with the rest of us the amazement and joy he experiences in coming here. "This place really touches you," he says. "But you have to be here to see it. If you haven't, you imagine frightening things about working with the homeless. It's simply not



Pat O'Brien

so." Instead, the gratitude that people show makes Pat feel some how humbled and grateful, he says. People thank him for getting up early to serve breakfast. They give encouragement. Says Pat: "I'm the one who leaves refreshed!"

He reflects on the people he meets here. "There are so many extraordinary people here at the Open Door. They keep me coming back. Ira Terrell, Tonnie King, Phillip Williams—they're all such special people. Where else would I get the opportunity to work and talk with people like them?"

At the same time, Pat acknowledges that the streets exact a heavy toll. He has become especially close to Johnny, a former member of the Open Door, whose addictions have proven so strong that they've pulled Johnny back onto the streets. Pat meets Johnny regularly at a service station where Johnny hangs out. As Pat sees it, even though Johnny is a man of enormous integrity and courage, he still cannot find the strength to kick the habits that are ingrained deep within his soul, and that are slowly stealing his life away. This is the tragic aspect part of working with the homeless, Pat says. Seldom are there changes for the better. "You make friends with people, and then you can no longer see them as labels—as simply homeless, needy, or addicted—but as fellow humans struggling to live lives that are steeped in God, just as you struggle to live a life steeped in God. Then all of a sudden they are gone and you don't see them anymore. What a waste of human life," says Pat. "You need strength beyond yourself to keep coming back."

And Pat does keep coming back. After we serve breakfast, as we eat together, we talk about what went on, and reflect about the people we've served. Sometimes someone has said something funny; sometimes we've heard the news of someone's death. We pour out our sadness and our frustration over how hard it is to change things. Sometimes, Pat reflects on the way society treats us as numbers, not as human beings who need support, love and caring from each other. That these needs are universal is something we see so clearly in the lives of our homeless friends, who can't hide behind the facade of a fancy house or a fat paycheck. In these meetings we receive strength from each other as we share our worries, fears, and sadness.

Pat's work at the Open Door has grown beyond serving breakfast. Now, he also drives families of prisoners to the prisons in Hardwick, Georgia—a two-hour drive from Atlanta. "Being with these families has opened my eyes," says Pat. "I drive wives, children, grandmothers, fathers, and friends. As we drive, they're quiet. But when I talk with them one at a time, they begin to open up." During one part of the trip, Pat and his passengers customarily share a meal prepared by the Milledgeville Presbyterian Church; then people visit with their loved ones. Sometimes on the ride back, there is total silence, Pat says. People think about their visit and the beloved family members they left behind the bars of the prison. "When we get back to Atlanta, they hug me and say goodbye," says Pat. "Trust is so important. They have trust in me and I have trust in them. Otherwise, not much happens."

As Pat reflects on his time at the Open Door he wonders why the richest country in the world still has homeless people walking the streets. Why are there so many people who have mental illnesses struggling in the streets? Why are people who have health problems but are not able to receive treatment? "It's scary to see the effects of privatization on medicine, and the way hospitals using profit-making as the bottom line instead of people's lives," he says. "Something has gone drastically wrong in our country when people must work at low-paying jobs that are dangerous and provide no benefits, and yet still don't pay enough to meet basic human needs." Pat's words stay with us after he leaves. He thinks on these things as he meets with friends and shares his experiences at the Open Door Community. His eyes are opened in a different way and I suspect he has heeded Christ's call to have ears to hear and eyes to see what the world is about. What started as a thirty-minute visit here at the Open Door has grown to a consuming concern for the poor and down-trodden.

Each year Pat also goes to Haiti, where he works with the poorest of the poor. He comes back renewed, yet also aware of how rich this country is, and how little concern it shows its poor. The mustard seed in Pat has grown, until his vision of the good life has changed from one of playing golf in retirement, to one in which he spends his days with the "least of these."

Dick Rustay is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

4th of July

Meal for the Homeless

- Needs -

For the Fourth of July, we will serve:

- barbequed chicken
- cole slaw
- baked beans, and
- bread, with
- watermelon for dessert.

We could use help with donations of any of these items, or money to purchase what we need.
Thank you.



Murphy Davis and Ed Loring were the George and Bee Wolfe Award recipients at the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia's 1999 Bill of Rights Dinner.

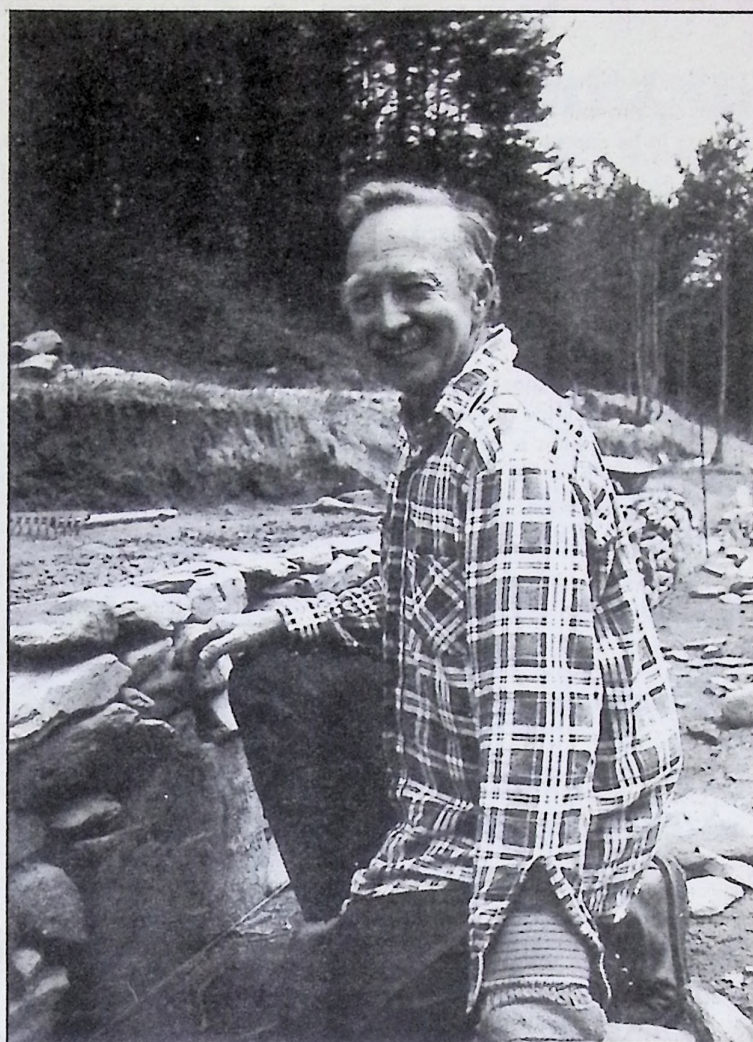
Dear Elizabeth,

Last evening, I finished reading the book *Christ Comes in a Stranger's Guise*. It is really a wonderful little book which offers much thought for reflection. I am going to send it to a priest friend of mine who is now beginning a new ministry in Guatemala. I am sure that it will be helpful to him.

Peace be with all of you.

Sincerely,

Fr. Louis Eassy, O.P.
St. Anthony of Padua Priory
New Orleans, LA



On April 18th we held a memorial service for Bill Shain who recently died of cancer. Here he is shown building decorative walls at Dayspring. We scattered part of Bill's ashes on these walls he so lovingly built.

Let It Be Known

What is right and good
will be known.

What is wrong
will be known.

What is dead wrong
let it be known.

If it disrupts a life,
It is dead wrong.
If it destroys a life,
It is dead wrong.
If it is fatal,
It is dead wrong.

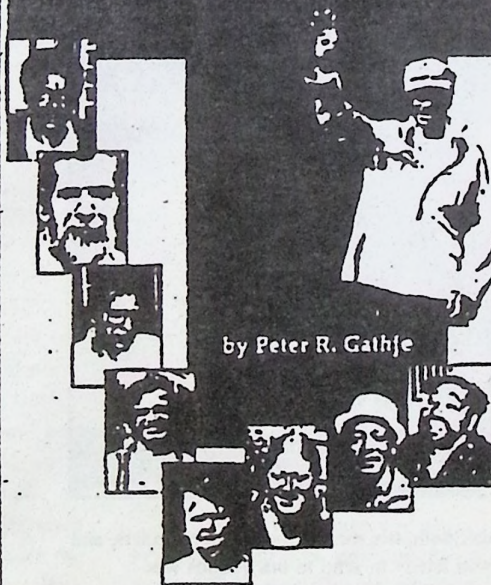
We have been dead
wrong
too long!

- Ed Potts

Ed Potts is a Partner at the
Open Door Community.

Christ Comes in The Stranger's Guise

A History of the Open Door Community



NCDP FACT SHEET #3

- The U.S. leads the world in killing kids.
- There are currently 74 juvenile offenders waiting to be executed on America's death rows.
- Since 1990, only six countries have executed people for crimes they committed as kids: Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran...and the United States. The U.S. has executed more children than the other 5 countries combined.
- Every major international human rights treaty prohibits the execution of juvenile offenders, the best known and most revered of which is the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. The U.S. is the only signatory to this treaty which has yet to ratify it.
- The United States Supreme Court has ruled that the execution of children as young as 16 is *not* "cruel and unusual" punishment. *It has yet to make a definitive statement about children under 16.*
- Of the 38 states with the death penalty: 13 have set the minimum age for death at 18; 4 states set the minimum at 17; 9 set it at 16; 12 have *no specified minimum age.*
- In 1996, prosecutors in Mississippi sought the death penalty for juveniles as young as 13 years of age. This year, a state legislator in Texas announced his plan to lower that state's minimum age to 11.

There's no limit to how low we can go.

Most often the United States kills children of color.

- Two-thirds of children sent to death row are kids of color.
- Historically, 2 out of 3 people executed for crimes they committed as children have been African-American. During this century, the ratio has jumped to 3 out of 4.
- Of the 9 girls executed in U.S. history, 8 were black and 1 was American-Indian.
- The youngest person executed since World War II in the United States was an African-American boy named George Stinney. Only 14 at the time of his execution, George was so small that his mask fell off while being electrocuted by the state of Georgia.
- The U.S. Government has killed American-Indian children for crimes they committed at the age of 10.

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

1436 'U' Street, NW Suite 104 Washington, DC 20009 — (202) 387-3890 www.ncadp.org

The Catholic Worker Bookstore

Books for Peace, Justice and Nonviolent Resistance in the Catholic Worker tradition

For a catalog, contact:

Peter Maurin Center
PO Box 3087
Washington DC 20010
202-722-1911

News conference to address:

Confederate Memorial Day Observance and the need to Change the Georgia State Flag

While Confederate memorials celebrate a lost and wrongful cause, we can understand why many southerners want to remember their ancestors with endearment. We believe it would be better to do this in some unmandated (state) fashion; nevertheless, this day is far less insulting and injurious than the current state flag which is symbolic of who we are as a people, and defines our sense of direction for the future.

The Confederacy is a fact of history that cannot be denied nor ignored, but the present flag is a mockery of history. It is a product of bigotry and persecution; conceived in hate, born in defiance, nurtured in hostility, and perpetuated in racially motivated vindictiveness. The Confederacy is a reminder of our past, while the flag is a symbol—a weathervane—of our future. We can understand the day of remembrance which we can choose to observe or ignore, to a certain extent. But every citizen must bear the burden and wear the stigma of the state flag which in the words of former Governor Zell Miller, gives bigotry sanction, and persecution assistance!

Georgia Association Of Black Elected Officials (GABEO)



Open Door Volunteer Coordinator Brenda Smith, her son Carson Smith-Saunders, and Carson's teddy bear put together thank you letters to send to our friends who provide financial support.

Join us as a Resident Volunteer!

Spend 6 to 12 months as a Resident Volunteer

- Live in a residential Christian community.
- Serve Jesus Christ and the hungry, homeless and prisoners.
- Bible study and theological reflections from the Base.
- Street actions and peaceful demonstrations.
- Regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

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

Re: "A New Kind of Slavery"

Dear Open Door Community:

I am a white male, and a recent newcomer to your publication, *Hospitality*, being initiated by the Catholic Chaplain of the Jail in which I am incarcerated. I look forward each month to reading your paper, which admirably exposes abuses of human rights so prevalent in America today, the so-called 'Land of the Free.' Free, yes, for those who have big bucks and, thus, the power that money can buy. From what I hear from those around me here, to be poor and/or homeless has become a punishable crime.

I feel that I am one of the many thousand victims of a system in which prosecutors and judges no longer appear to be interested in — guilty or innocent — but only in stuffing as many people as possible behind bars in order to cater to a new industry, made economically viable, yet proven abusers as recently highlighted so succinctly in your article, "Dungeons and Dollars."

Those who don't have the means to buy themselves a private attorney must undergo all kinds of humiliating abuses — the inhumanity, needless restrictions, and complete lack of rehabilitation facilities, thanks in no small way to the prevailing public attitude that incarceration is only about punishment. Additionally, we read about the glaring racial disparity which is present, especially in county jails, and must, of necessity, be a wake-up call for those who care about equality and justice. According to six-year old statistics, 51% of state and federal prisoners were African-Americans, though only 12% of America is African-American, and 15% Hispanic. The figures for county jails far exceed this.

Could one not have hoped that, with the emergence of African-American judges, D.A.'s and Law Enforcement Officers, some kind of fairness in sentencing would have prevailed? But on the contrary, figures show the opposite. These officials have failed their people, succumbing to the temptation of greed and power, at the expense of those hoping for something better.

How correct was your article by Barry Burnside, "The Facts of Wax," and where the tax dollars go. I can attest that they certainly don't go towards food, or medical services. I have witnessed a comatose patient ignored for hours, an asthmatic kept waiting weeks for his medication, all due to an uncaring staff and a disorganized systems, and even staff who consider inmates "the enemy" and wouldn't speak if they were to happen to meet outside the prison walls. So much depends on the caliber of staff, but how can caring employees be found for such a low, basic wage as they are paid? On the other hand, we read that Sheriff Dorsey has the nerve to want a personal pay raise of \$30,000, a third more than is the basic wage for one of his prison guards. It's obscene!

The power to appoint officials who are honest and compassionate lies with relatives and friends of those who suffer these abuses. They should vote with their feet next time the opportunity presents itself.

Latest studies show that the present "lock 'em up and throw away the key" attitude is

Grace and Peaces of Mail

not working. Locally, it has created a growing and simmering problem which will not go away. I am happy to associate myself with my brothers and sisters in Christ, who for so long have silently endured this 'new form of slavery.' Let us pray that in the future, the public will adopt a more Christ-like and less vengeful position.

Keep up the good work!

Yours in the Lord,

(Editor's note: we run this letter anonymously to protect our friend in prison.)

Dear Open Door Community:

I am sending some extra money this month. Please use it to help those in prison—or to help stamp out the death penalty—whichever needs the most help.

Frances McFarlane
Atlanta, GA

Admired Friends:

Enclosed is an extra check in the amount of \$25. Use it however will meet the needs of your work.

I am 75 years old, in poor health, income of \$606 a month—one-third of which goes for medicine so I will not be able to do more than the \$5 a month I have been sending—I think of it as 5 loaves of bread to feed 5 hungry people

name withheld

Dear Friends,

Your witness and life are an inspiration to many. For me it is heartening to read your paper and the witness it brings to many. I am strengthened by it.

Do not lose heart. God be with you.

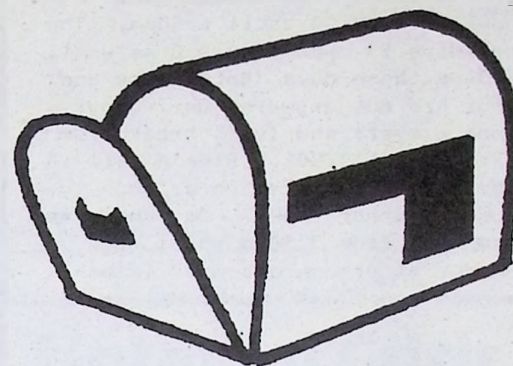
Peace,

Jean Miller
Lees Summit, MO

To my friends at The Open Door:

I hope this note finds you well. Siira and I were fortunate to hear from Katie & Emily about their visit with you in January—we really wanted to be with you, but hopefully after graduation in May we'll be lucky enough to make it to Atlanta.

I also want to thank you (belatedly, I know)—so very much for opening your hearts and hospitality to Katie and I when we visited back in July. I cannot adequately express in words how much your community has touched my life. You



have so generously shared with me and taught me, helped open my eyes—I see everything differently now, just a little clearer than before. I've always cared about people, and I have had many experiences that destroyed stereotypes and illusions about the world, but now I see how deeply ingrained in society's structures the problems are...

I'll be attending Mayo Medical School in August, and I'm going to be a doctor, not out of a need to "be something," but because we need to take care of each other, and I feel that I can do this best through medicine. Although the times that I'll be able to physically be at The Open Door may be few in the coming years, I hope to be a part of your efforts of justice and love, particularly for the oppressed. As someone who will naturally care about the health of her patients, I hope to not only work through biochemical means of improving and maintaining health, but to also strive for better socioeconomic conditions which often play an even greater role.

Once again—words are inadequate for me; but I hope to "work together" with you, though the miles may be many—

With love,

Leah Rowland
Library, PA

Hey!

It's a wonderful thing to speak up for those so much less fortunate—but go to jail? Isn't that rabble-rousing? You'll be called a follower of Jesus!

With Prayers and Love,

Thomas Newton Pike
Atlanta, GA

Dear Open Door Community,

Deep gratitude for community of prayer and more!

Daniel Berrigan,
New York, NY

WE ARE OPEN. . .

Monday through Saturday: telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 2:00 until 6:00pm. The building is open from 9:00am until 8:30pm those days (Both phone and door are not answered during our noon prayers and lunch break from 12:30 until 2:00). Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are open from 7:30am until noon. Sunday afternoon our door is answered until 5:00pm.

* * *

OUR MINISTRY. . .

SOUP KITCHEN: Wednesday-Saturday, 11 am-- 12 noon
 SUNDAY BREAKFAST: Sunday morning at 910, 7:30 am
 WEEKDAY BREAKFAST: Monday-Friday, 6:45 am
 SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 2-4pm (Be sure to call; schedule varies)
 USE OF PHONE: Monday-Saturday, 9am-noon, 2:00pm-5pm
 CLARIFICATION MEETINGS: Selected Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm.
 WEEKEND RETREATS: Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), next retreat is our Summer retreat, July 9 - 11.

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

If you have found Hospitality helpful and would like to know more about the Open Door Community, please fill out, clip and send this coupon to The Open Door Community * 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE * Atlanta, GA 30306-4212.

____ Please ADD to the Hospitality mailing list.

____ Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.

____ I'm interested in volunteering. Please give me more information.

____ I would like to explore a six to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please send more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Open Door Community Worship

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

Please join us!

June 6	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Joyce Hollyday, preaching
June 13	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Ed Loring, preaching
June 20	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Dick Rustay, preaching
June 27	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Tamara Puffer, preaching

**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.

Are You Moving?

Bulk rate mail is not forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service. Send Hospitality, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA, 30306-4212, your new mailing address as soon as you know it. Please enclose the mailing label from your most recent issue.

Thank you!

Volunteer Needs

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

Are you available to drive to Savannah to pick up underwear that we give out during Showers?

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

Open Door Community Needs

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

Meat for the soup in
 our Soup Kitchen
 Sandwiches
 Table and Floor Lamps
 Vacuum Cleaners
 an Accoustic Guitar to be available
 for visitors to play at
 our Sunday Worship

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

From 11am til 1:30pm, Monday through Saturday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate

your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. THANK YOU!