

# HOSPITALITY

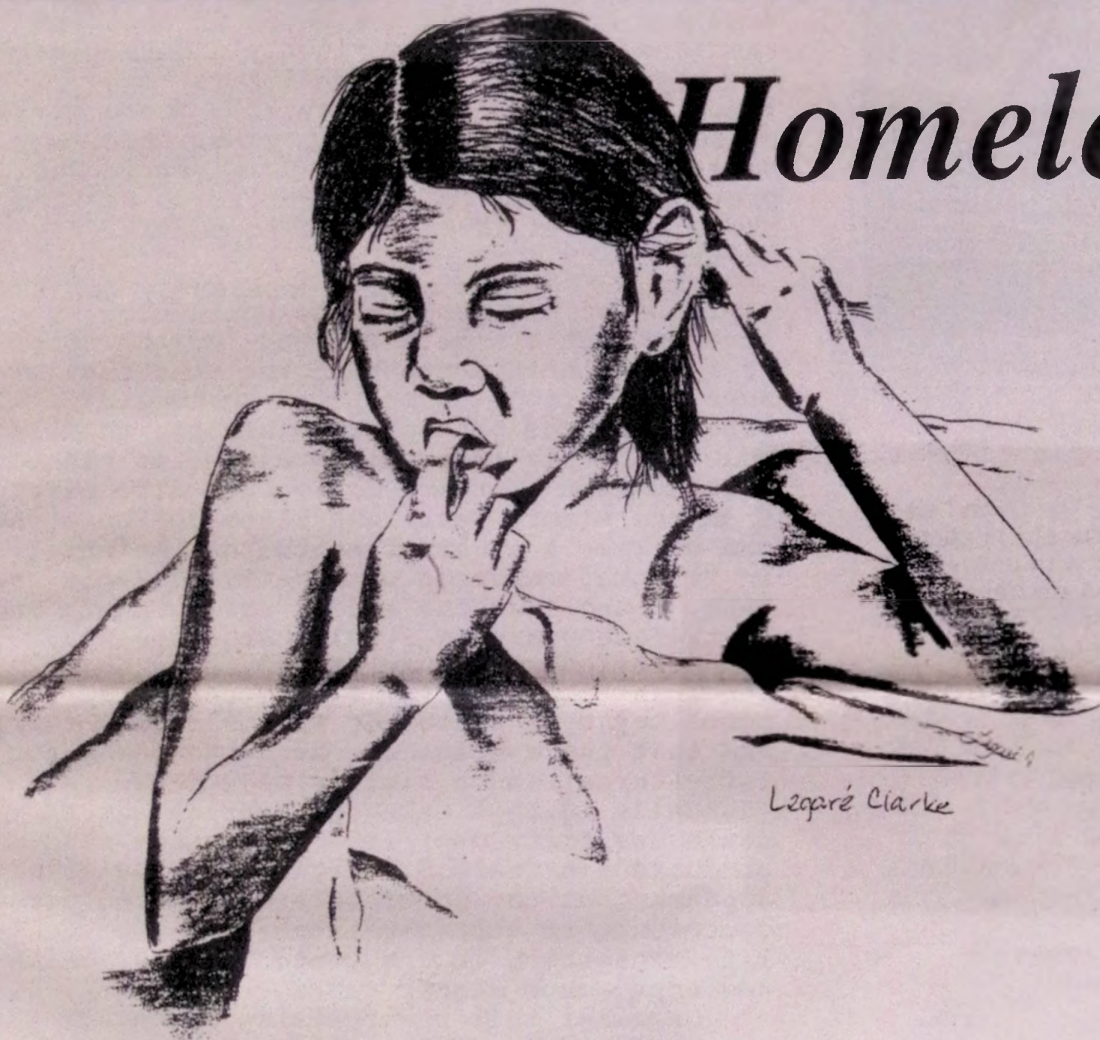
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

March 1991



## Homelessness

as a

Choice

by Ike Thacker

*Editor's note: Ike Thacker, a resident of Norcross, Georgia, has become involved with Cafe 458 and the Central Presbyterian Shelter because of his "perception that not enough people seemed to care. This article is his response to the "naysayers."*

I must confess to a certain bias in the matter I am about to discuss, for it seems to me perfectly reasonable to suggest, as has Jonathan Kozol, that a newly homeless woman standing on a New York traffic island screaming for revenge until her single room is restored to her sounds eminently healthy (in a mental sense) compared to a president who, as sort of a parting shot three days before Christmas in 1988, seriously claimed that the homeless "make it their own choice."

Let us briefly explore the lifestyle that, according to Ronald Reagan, the homeless have chosen.

The first thing the homeless choose is hunger. This point need not be belabored; suffice it to report that a study, commissioned by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

and prepared by The Urban Institute in late 1988, found that thirty-seven percent of the homeless reported eating one meal a day or less, and that thirty-six percent go one day or more per week without eating anything.

Not surprisingly, then, the homeless also "choose" ill health. A key conclusion of a nationwide study conducted by the National Academy of Sciences (hardly a bastion of bleeding-heart liberalism) and issued in September 1988 was the following: "The fundamental problem encountered by homeless people--lack of a stable residence--has a direct and deleterious impact on health. Not only does homelessness cause health problems, it perpetuates and exacerbates poor health by seriously impeding efforts to treat disease and reduce disability." Soup kitchens serve what they can afford; thus, even to treat hypertension with a low-sodium diet becomes almost impossible. Bed rest is impossible if you don't have a bed. The simplest prescriptions for getting well cannot be effected by the homeless.

(continued on page 2)



# HOSPITALITY



KARIN HERZER

## 910 Ponce de Leon

**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:

*Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry Director*  
*Ed Loring--Correspondence*  
*Pat Fons--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator*  
*Carol Schlicksup--Hardwick Prison Trip*  
*Dick Rustay--Volunteer Co-ordinator*

### Newspaper:

**Editorial Staff**--Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede,  
 Pat Fons, Ed Loring, Gladys Rustay,  
 CM Sherman, and Tim Wyse  
**Layout**--Gladys Rustay!!!  
**Circulation**--Chris Rustay and a multitude of  
 earthly hosts and guests  
**Subscriptions or change of address**--Willie London

### Our Cover Artist

Legare Clarke is a recent graduate of Agnes Scott College and is in the process of moving with her husband Chris Hartzbarger to northern Alabama where she will teach school.



(continued from page 1)

And there are myriad problems that need treating. In the conservative journal Commentary, Harvard's Thomas J. Main reports that between seventy and eighty percent of homeless people suffer from one or more major disability; basing his conclusions on a study of nearly 30,000 homeless persons seen in health clinics nationwide, James D. Wright found that homeless children suffer various physical disorders at rates "two to ten times those seen among children in general." Even these numbers are likely understated, as Lillian Gelberg and Lawrence Linn have noted in the October 13, 1989 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), because "determining the health status of the homeless by sampling residents of shelters [as is usually done] seriously underestimates the prevalence of many conditions" by ignoring "the most severely ill, those living outdoors." One can well imagine, then, why some twenty percent of the homeless in the previously-cited Food and Nutrition Service study reported having tried to commit suicide.

Many of the homeless apparently don't want to get old if it means continuing to live without a home. Few do. Wright notes that only three percent of the homeless are over sixty-five (as compared to twelve percent of the general population); this fact results partly from the obtaining of pensions and the like by the elderly, but also partly from the simple fact that lives on the street end early. A study of deaths of the homeless in Atlanta, reported on June 19, 1987 in JAMA, found that the median age at death was forty-four years; a Swedish study in 1975 found that observed mortality among the homeless "exceeded the age-adjusted expected mortality by a factor of approximately four," and that the average age at death was about fifty-three; and a similar figure was reached (actually in this case the average age at death was fifty-one) in a nationwide study conducted in the U.S. in the mid-1980's. It appears that the homeless are choosing not to contribute to the ever-increasing average life expectancy in the United States, which now approaches eighty years.

Against this unsurprising litany of obscenely serious ills suffered by the homeless, naysayers say several things. First, they allege that there are "not many" homeless people. Estimates of the number of homeless persons in the United States vary wildly, from a low of 250,000 claimed by HUD in 1984 to a high of about three million claimed by some advocates for the homeless. I cannot here resolve the questions of how many homeless there are in the U.S., but two things I do wish to say. First, the HUD estimate is almost certainly low: as noted in the NAS study, there were "several major flaws in the design and conduct of the HUD research," most notably the use of population figures (in determining rates of homelessness) for entire metropolitan areas when the surveys of the number of homeless took place only in the cities at the centers of those metropolitan areas. In Atlanta, where the city has only about a fifth of the metropolitan area's population, this plainly would lead to almost incredible underestimation; and the situation is similar in many other urban areas. Second, even if the HUD figures were adequate, a quarter million homeless persons is hardly a small problem.



Our friendly naysayers argue, also, that most of the homeless are either "undeserving" (whatever that means) of our help or incapable of putting it to good use. It is true but of little relevance that many of the homeless are mentally ill (The New Republic's estimate of one-third, based on an eighteen-city National Institutes of Mental Health study, seems the most reasonable to me). But this simply does not mean that they could not be helped by having a place to live. In fact, it seems to me that the mentally ill should receive even more of our attention than emotionally sturdier homeless persons for the simple reason that they need more help. Be that as it may, though, the fact remains that most of the homeless are not mentally ill.

Those who argue against broad-based additional help for homeless persons (our naysayers) also contend that sufficient welfare assistance is available to the homeless, and that anyway there exist shelters where they can bunk down at night. Let us take each of these arguments in turn.

enough for even a subsistence living. In Washington, D.C., for example, where a room cannot be rented for less than \$300, public assistance... pays a single person \$248 a month." Massachusetts pays General Assistance allotments of about \$270 per month; in Illinois, the figure is \$144.

A political cartoon by Dave Coverly. Dilbert is walking away from a man sitting on the ground, who is holding a bottle and looking dejected. Dilbert has a thought bubble that says "THERE, BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD GO I ...". The man on the ground has a thought bubble that says "THERE, BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD GO I .....". The cartoon is signed "D.C." in the bottom right corner.

First, there simply are not enough shelters for all the homeless. Steve Burghardt and Michael Fabricant report in their book Working Under the Safety Net (1987) that about 7,000 to 10,000 shelter beds were available to the 25,000 homeless persons in Chicago; that 370 beds were available in Cleveland, where the number of homeless exceeded 2,000; and that in Denver there were 682 beds for 2,500 homeless people. People without homes are routinely turned away from shelters due to this shortage of beds: Paul Boden of the San Francisco Homeless Coalition has documented that from July through September of 1990 in his city alone, over 2,000 persons were turned away from shelters for lack of space.

And third, to quote Burghardt and Fabricant, "The quality of life in most public shelters is so abysmal that" the streets almost seem preferable. "The price one may pay for residing in a shelter can be as small as being pushed to the back of the meal line or as large as being robbed of one's few remaining possessions and physically assaulted." Surely we can do better than that.

(continued on page 10)



# Psalm 23: Revised Street Edition Version

by Ed Loring

"Lord, you are our shepherd."

While wolves lap our blood  
and the lions sniff  
the air  
and eat at our kudzu patch.  
HELP, HELP, HELP, Lord God  
Almighty  
the townspeople are unbelieving  
faithless folk  
who claim as we cry  
"Housing, Housing, Housing"  
that we only cry  
"wolf, wolf."

"We shall not want."

Want? Want? Want?  
How my bloated belly bites  
on Courtland Street  
Waiting for ole St. Luke  
to slosh his soup at me.  
When shall we, sly shepherd,  
not want?  
In Heaven's Time?  
In the eschatological epiphany  
when all God's children got shoes?  
Do I wait for John Portman  
to carry me home from the  
Imperial Hotel? Oh well...  
Even if I shall not want  
You know, my gracious God,  
that I need, and need, and need  
a house to live in  
a better place to die.

"You make us lie down in green pastures;  
You lead us beside still waters;  
You restore our souls."

I tried to, Lord, but the policewoman  
stuck her finger in my ear, her nail  
dug down and red water  
foamed. I screamed at her; so  
went to jail.  
I promised the judge never to  
lie down on the green grass  
in the park again.  
So you see it's hard to  
follow Jesus when you're homeless.  
Some say, even in the light, that  
housing precedes faith.  
Hard to know unless you lie  
down in the public parks' green  
space.

"You lead us in right paths  
for your name's sake."

Your name's sake? Yahweh have  
you heard your name ain't  
mud downtown?  
The Blessed poor are dying in the  
streets  
while blind bigots built  
Underground Atlanta  
The Domed Stadium  
Hotel on Hotel on Hotel  
Could it be that Peachtree  
ain't the right path?  
Would it help if Joe and John  
were led to Industrial Labor Pool  
for a life's living? Where is the  
Royal Highway? HELP, HELP, HELP!

STREET EDITION

"Even though we walk through the  
Valley of the Shadow of Death  
we fear no evil;  
for you are with us:  
your rod and staff-  
they comfort us."

Thank you, Lord. Rising Star  
City Shelter burned out.  
M. Jackson put us in the jail  
filled with shadows  
and the cry of death.  
We sleep on concrete floors  
with a cotton mat.  
Three-piece men scream  
that we are lazy  
and on many a day and night  
I want to die. Just to quit  
this horrible hell of homelessness  
Maybe if you removed your rod and staff  
the city forces would just run us over,  
kick us out, close the  
curtain.

But  
we are not afraid.  
Ever seen the security  
'round Mr. Portman's beach  
house? Ever heard him wail  
at night as his empire splits  
apart? When will Maynard and  
Joe take out a full page  
ad to say: "he stuck in his  
thumb and pulled out a ...."

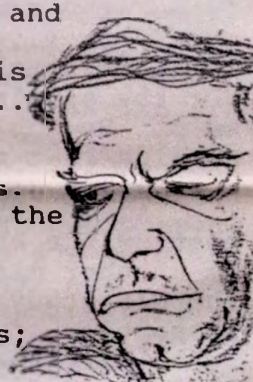
But,  
Lord, yes, there is evil  
lurking in the high places.  
See you tonight, Jesus, in the  
back of the barn.

"You prepare a table before us  
in the presence of our enemies;  
You anoint our heads with oil;  
and our cups overflow."

Why do all these folk despise  
your soup kitchens, Lord? I think  
you got more enemies than you  
thought. One Golgotha not enough?  
Ever been to a neighborhood meeting?  
They tried to pay us once to move  
the line to the back yard, not  
knowing that the Word of God says  
the table is prepared in the presence  
of our enemies. Oh well, I wonder  
does housing precede friendship  
and community?

"Surely goodness and mercy shall  
follow us  
All the days of our lives  
and we shall dwell in the house  
of the Lord forever."

Gracious God, I really  
like your house. But I'm  
tired of church shelters. (Nothing  
personal, now, Lord!) But I've  
noticed that those who shout  
the loudest go to their own house  
after worship, after work, after  
an evening out, after school,  
after a doctor's appointment. Lord,  
could you help us get our own  
house? Thank you, Lord, Your  
promises are sure.





# People for Urban Justice



## Honorary Chairs:

Dr. Frances Pauley  
Dr. Clinton Marsh

January 28, 1991

## SRO Advisory Committee Members:

At the January 17 committee meeting, we received information from Commissioner Scott Carlson regarding the city's proposed SRO and Transitional Housing Program for the Homeless. People for Urban Justice has questions about the plan and about its appropriateness as agenda for this committee.

First, I'll speak to the plan itself. The plan labels and segregates homeless people, proposing separate housing for the mentally ill, abused women and their children, the elderly and disabled and those with AIDS. This approach is reprehensible because it violates every person's right to privacy and freedom of choice. Since people of color are the majority of the homeless population, this proposal ensures the cultural separateness of housing patterns in Atlanta.

The proposal violates the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Mayor Jackson on July 3, 1990. The Memorandum states: "The mayor commits his administration to produce a **net increase** of 3,500 units of SRO housing over the next three and a half years. Such production will include 1,000 units per year, with the first started no later than September 1, 1990. . . . The target rental rate for said units of SRO housing shall be no more than \$49 per week/\$7 per day. At least 1,000 of the 3,500 units shall be available at such price and priority for city approval and assistance shall be given to proposals which maximize the number of units at that rental rate."

The occupation of the Imperial Hotel was the impetus that led to the signing of this memorandum. The 300+ residents of the Imperial were 99% single men. The one family who stayed at the Imperial received housing through a church in the city. The SRO housing referred to in the Memorandum of Understanding is to serve **single men** housed in single or double rooms. City officials are using the 3,500 units promised to cover the housing needs of the **entire city** of Atlanta! The 3,500 SRO units were a compromise from the beginning. They do not answer the need.

The city's proposed plan allows for only 900 SRO units for single men. Of those 900, 200 units are listed as sponsored by Central Atlanta Progress. Mr. Joseph Martin, president of CAP, has stated that the 200 units they build will include some single rooms and some efficiency apartments at various rent levels. Therefore, those 200 units can't be counted as totally serving the population described in the memorandum. Another 60 units in the city's plan are listed as sponsored by New Century Housing. Is this the Bethlehem Inn project that has stood partially finished for years? If so, then these are **not** part of the "**net increase**" of 3,500 units called for in the memorandum.

We believe that the agenda for this committee, titled the SRO Advisory Committee, is the production of 3,500 units of SRO housing promised in the Memorandum of Understanding. The city needs a comprehensive housing plan. The mentally ill, the elderly, families, single women and people with AIDS need and have a right to housing! Let the city work with the Housing Authority and the various state agencies to serve the needs of these citizens. This committee was formed out of the agenda of the Imperial Hotel. People for Urban Justice supports you in carrying out this agenda.

Sincerely,

S. Carol Schlicksup  
People for Urban Justice

*Editors note: This letter from People for Urban Justice was sent to members of the SRO Advisory Committee, a group formed to monitor the development of affordable SRO housing as promised in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Mayor Jackson as a result of the occupation of the Imperial Hotel. Copies of this letter have been sent to Mayor Jackson, Housing Commissioner Scott Carlson, Attorney Dennis Goldstein and Atlanta Journal Constitution reporter Mark Sherman. To date ground has not been broken for the first 200 units of the SRO housing promised by the Mayor in the Memorandum of Understanding!*

## In Memoriam



GLADYS RUSTAY

The body of our friend J.W. Jacobs was found in his cathole at a nearby church Saturday night. Would he still be alive if there was housing for all?



# nine-ten

by Gladys Rustay

● On January 13 there was a festive air at 910 as each member of the community rushed around to dress up in special clothes. We loaded in the van and went to Peachtree Presbyterian Church. Once there we watched Murphy and Ed receive the Martin Luther King Sr. Community Service Award on behalf of the community. This was part of the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s sixty second birthday.

This annual award, given in memory of Martin Luther King, Sr., goes to the ministers who have contributed the most to justice, peace and community service in Atlanta during the year.

● We celebrated Dr. King's birthday in other ways as well. Some of us met old friends as we marched up Auburn Avenue in the pouring rain to protest against possible involvement in war. Others, lead by C.M. Sherman, participated in the annual Service of Rededication for Peace and Justice Groups at Ebenezer Baptist Church that same evening.

● We were able to send community members to court in Madison, GA during the trial of William Brooks, a new experience for us. This supported our sister community, New Hope House, which was monitoring the case. There was a happy ending. William was given a life sentence instead of the death penalty.



GLADYS RUSTAY

Coretta Scott King presenting the award to Murphy and Ed.



GLADYS RUSTAY

Community members enjoying the reception after the award ceremony.



GLADYS RUSTAY

● Our dining room was given a new lease on life when members of Roswell Presbyterian Church donated new drapes. Special thanks go to Jill Cohn and June Jones. It is absolutely beautiful now with a new floor, recently painted walls and special drapes. Stop by and see it - better yet come and volunteer for our soup kitchen and see our new dining room while you're here!





GLADYS RUSTAY

● We were glad to be represented by community member Eddie Torres at the Peace March in Washington, January, 26.



DICK RUSTAY

● Sunday, January 20, was a banner day for us. Tim Wyse became a partner. Tim has been a part of our community for three and a half years and we welcome his long-term commitment.



GLADYS RUSTAY

Susie Smith, Converse College Chaplain, and volunteer, David Studtman admire their planting handiwork.

● Seven students plus two professors arrived from Converse College to learn about our work by being involved in it with us. We were enriched by their energy and enthusiasm and their interest in learning about street people and those in prison.

● The month was rounded out by the planting of two trees in our front yard - the promise of future shade for our brothers and sisters on the street.

## Volunteers

by Dick Rustay

Regularly at 10:55am every Wednesday, Chuck Verzyl strides into our kitchen, puts on an apron, grabs a soup dipper, enters the Open Door dining room and readies himself to dip hot soup into bowls for our 11:00 soup kitchen. He serves to our friends from the streets with smiles and good spirits. At 11:55 Chuck turns the soup ladle over to someone else and returns to his regular office work in downtown Atlanta.

Chuck became acquainted with the Open Door by writing a letter enquiring about us and what we did. We invited him to lunch to see first-hand what we were about. The soup must have done it! Immediately after, Chuck started coming on his lunch hour to help us out and he is still dipping our soup. Our thanks to you, Chuck, and many like you who keep the Open Door running.



DICK RUSTAY



# Nicaragua Update

by Tom Klein

*Editors note: Tom Klein was a resident volunteer at the Open Door during 1984-85. Since that time, he has been working with Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua. This is an excerpt from a recent letter.*

Nov. 20

For a week or two it looked as if war were about to break out again in Nicaragua. Here on the East Coast our only land connection with the rest of Nicaragua was blocked.

In Haulover about 80 men were organized into two groups. The largest group walked to Kukra an hour to the south - it is said they were armed, hiding their weapons before entering town. The remainder came unarmed into the town of Pearl Lagoon where they first closed the school, threatening its "Sandinista" administrator, then took over the Frente house, threw everything into the street and took equipment, followed by "weapons searches" of known Frente supporters' houses. They effectively controlled the town for several days. We all feared the worst.

The radio station was taken over in Bluefields by several ex-contras or "desalzados" and was blasting provocative anti-Sandinista hate speeches. Failing to incite a riot, those in the radio station finally agreed to several compromises, among which were the naming of a civilian to head a commission to investigate any alleged police abuse, and, as already planned by the previous government, a policy whereby the police of each area are to become strictly regional.

For those who blocked the Rama highway in the Fifth Region, the original demands were that the government simply comply with the promises made at the time of transition, giving the "desalzados" land and money to begin again. Suspiciously, this very quickly shifted to the demands that Violetta change her closest ministers and totally dismantle the army and police - even though the police in this area are all newly organized "desalzados."

In Managua a large cache of arms was found stored in the home of a recently returned contra commander. An OAS representative was along with the police to witness making it impossible to believe the statement that the weapons were planted. Those charges have been dropped, however, by order of the President.

What is suspicious about this uprising is its level of orchestration: people in Haulover and in other communities were "called up" by an existing structure, having, themselves, little clarity as to why. Also suspicious is that what should have been concrete demands for real benefit to the strikers changed into the impossible - including that several of Violetta's ministers be replaced.

What is certain is that the profound division within the UNO's ranks continues to deepen. Those who have risen up, supported by local "UNO" officials, are supporters of vice-president Godoy. Godoy also received support from certain big businesses, ex-contras commanders and it is believed, the US



Embassy. Stress has been made these past few months on the need for "concertacion": an economic and social policy arrived at through discussion and supported by both government and opposition, syndicates and businesses. The Frente and Violetta are in favor of such concerted action. Godoy and numerous business interests are against any type of negotiation. What they seek is the eradication of the Frente as a political or social force in the country.

Nov. 28

Things have calmed in the region this past week. What was not mentioned last week is that Habitat is heavily involved on both sides of this conflict. I spend most of my time with the Coordinator from Pearl Lagoon, who has been threatened by contras, and the project leader in Haulover, one of the "commandantes" who spoke anti-Sandinista rhetoric on the radio.

During the days of the "occupation" Habitat continued, with people of both sides, working together on each other's houses. We are forming a new committee including members of both sides to build bridges of trust and understanding.

I have checked up on the situation in cooperatives where I used to work in north-west Chinandega. German Pomares will be losing its dairy cooperative, the main source of support. In Luis Andino and Pancasan work continues though there will be no more favorable loans from the banks. Workers earn thirty cents a day and divide what is produced. There is the constant danger of losing everything by drought or flood with no guarantee of outside assistance.

Because of an inflation rate of several thousand percent no reasonable loans can be had. This means that these coops and all small businesses here will continue to see themselves growing poorer week by week. (Every week the cordoba devalues some 7%.)

These cooperatives have not lost their land, as is happening in many other parts of the country when the wealthy previous owners either reclaim their "possession" or work in concert with elements in the government to evict the cooperativistas. Only slowly is the central government moving to gain control over this chaotic situation.



Nov. 30

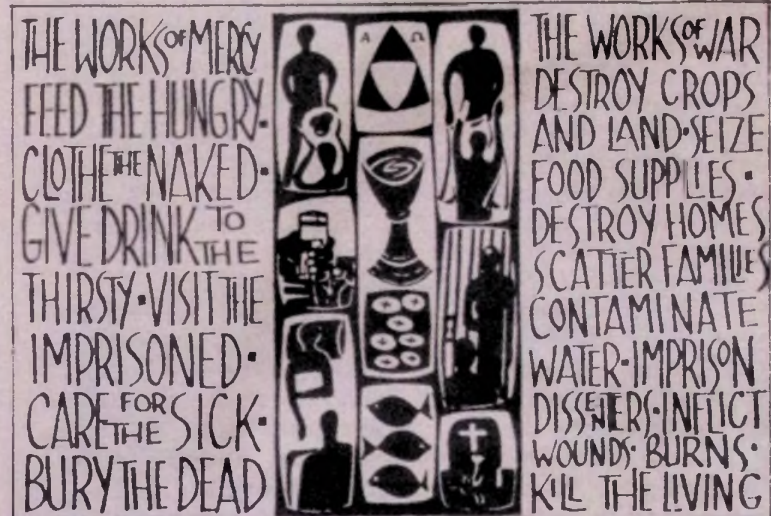
Today, we've been told that Habitat is forcing all projects in Nicaragua to cut spending drastically. For 1991 no new projects will be approved. For Nicaragua, as for most countries in this region, this is happening at a time when the countries themselves are being forced to cut their budgets including much, if not all, of their housing assistance. In addition, this occurs at a time of rapidly rising dollar costs for basic materials.

With our new budget we will be forced to fire workers and slow down the rate of house construction drastically. Pearl Lagoon had planned to be largely finished with the first 50 houses by March; Haulover with some 10 to 15 houses. Now these projects may require another six months.

As I prepare to return to the US in March after 18 months here, I thank you for whatever support you have given and encourage you to think seriously of continuing with your support of Habitat, either in Nicaragua, where the need increases day by day, or elsewhere.

To support the work of Habitat write:

Habitat for Humanity  
Habitat & Church Sts.  
Americus, GA 31709-3498



Rita Corbin

## A Little Good News

Richard Celeste left office in January after two terms as Governor of Ohio. On January 10, as one of his final acts as governor, he commuted the death sentences of four women and four men. Each of the eight is mentally ill or retarded.

**On Easter Sunday morning we will serve a ham and eggs breakfast to 500 people. Please help us by donating hams for the breakfast.**



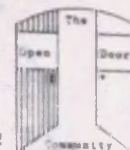
# Holy Week with the Homeless

We invite you to join us for worship and/or a 24 hour period of solidarity with our friends on the street during Holy Week, March 24--March 30.

### Services of Worship:

PALM SUNDAY, March 24	Open Door Community 5:00pm.
MONDAY, March 25	Grady Hospital, Butler St. 5:00pm.
TUESDAY, March 26	City Jail, Peachtree St., SW 5:00pm.
WEDNESDAY, March 27	Trust Company Bank, Park Place 5:00pm.
MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 28	Woodruff Park 5:00pm.
GOOD FRIDAY, March 29	City Hall, Trinity Ave., SW 5:00pm
HOLY SATURDAY, March 30	City Shelter, Jefferson St., NW 5:00pm.
EASTER MORNING, March 31	23 Butler St. 6:30am

WORSHIP OF THE RESURRECTED LORD  
FOLLOWED BY A HAM AND EGGS BREAKFAST



910 Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E. Atlanta, Ga. 30306 404-874-9652



(CHOICES continued from page 3)

homeless problem. People become homeless for a variety of reasons, and many who do become homeless need much more than a public housing apartment to turn their lives fully around. Still, creating affordable housing would be an excellent place to start. From the time of the Great Depression to 1980, the federal government was the main source of low-income housing, but (according to the NAS), "Since 1980, federal support for subsidized housing has been reduced by 60 percent, and most of the remaining funds reflect subsidy commitments undertaken before 1980. Federal support for development of new low-income housing has essentially disappeared." The poor can't even turn to single-room occupancy (SRO) units any longer, because half of them have been lost to conversion or demolition; the aggregate supply of low-income housing has decreased by about 2,500,000 units since 1980; and the waiting list for public housing in New York City is now eighteen years long.

Add to all this the Reagan budget cuts in welfare payments and the deep recession of the early 1980's, and you have a pretty good recipe for creating homelessness. Ronald Reagan certainly made the "choice" to become homeless an easy one. While increasing the supply of government-subsidized low-income housing is nomanacea, it would go a long way toward making the lives of millions of American better. It's not as if we would be blazing a new trail: Willaim van Vliet of the University of Colorado points out that the social housing sector in Great Britain is 27 percent of the total market, in the Netherlands 43 percent, in Germany 20 percent, and in Sweden 35 percent. Here in the U.S., the comparable figure is 1.5 percent. With a recession underway and millions on the very edge of becoming homeless (the American Institute of Affordable Housing suggested, in March 1990, that there were four to fourteen million American families who were "one paycheck, one domestic argument away from being homeless"), this disparity cannot humanely persist. Already in December 1990, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has released a thirty-city study which shows that requests for emergency shelter have increased by twenty-four percent.

In keeping with my policy in this discussion to leave the soapbox-climbing (mostly) to others, I will close with an approving quotation of JAMA's September 8, 1989 editorial, which suggests a different sort of "choice" having been made in the United States as regards our homeless citizens: "We forget that the other developed countries have successful public programs that provide basic levels of housing...to all citizens much as we provide basic education for all....Poverty such as we see on the streets of large American cities is not inevitable. Homelessness and intractable poverty are not social givens but the results of particular social policies." □



The Christ of the Homeless

Fritz Eichenberg

## In Memoriam

by Murphy Davis

Fritz Eichenberg died in December. He was 89 years old. We came to know his beautiful woodcuts over many years in The Catholic Worker, and we have used them again and again in Hospitality. His prints hang on many of the walls of the Open Door.

Eichenberg illustrated a number of books including several of Dostoyevsky's novels and Dorothy Day's The Long Loneliness. He chaired the department of graphic arts and illustration at the Pratt Institute in New York and later the art department at the University of Rhode Island.

Eichenberg's compelling woodcuts showed human suffering in the faces and drooping bodies of the poor, the hungry, the lonely, the rejected, the prisoner, the homeless. But there again and again, we find the Christ: a humble but radiant presence that holds out always the promise of redemptive suffering.

Thank you, Fritz Eichenberg, that you saw so clearly. Thank you that your art speaks so boldly. And thank you that you shared it so freely. Your vision lives.

\*\*\*\*\*

Where all is forgiven, all is enjoyed,  
where the unique sparkle of each is  
cherished and honored,  
there I would dwell.

Where the bending face, aglow, imbues  
with love each returning soul, where  
the joy of the other is the joy of the self  
there I have dwelt.

Where the light without is the light within,  
where to love is to give and to glow,  
and to be loved and be known  
there I have dwelt forever.

Frank Morgan  
Conyers, GA



## Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Open Door,

My family and I have been supporters of your center for many years, both financially and materially, and we applaud your difficult task and effort on behalf of those less fortunate. We wish we could do more but economic conditions prevent that for now. We will, however, gather up as many of the items listed as possible and get them to you shortly.

In your Jan. '91 issue of Hospitality, an article titled "Dear Free World" caught my attention enough to prompt a response.

Mr. Parker's statement; "killing people to show that killing people is wrong, in order to prevent crime...does that make sense?" At first reading, no this doesn't make sense. However, executing people who 'murder' people, in some cases does! When referring to this "free land", he neglects to point out that you are also 'free' not to murder people. How many sons, husbands, fathers and human beings' lives have been cut short by a murderer? Wasn't that 'cruel, unusual and merciless, vile, wanton and inhumane'? At least he has had 6 years to prepare for death - victims have no time at all! Neither do their families and friends!

The message of capital punishment is directed at those who are on the edge. It was meant as a deterrent for the majority. Those who didn't know about the penalty still committed the murders and still will! There is no quick fix for those individuals. No programs, schools or wonder drugs. They will murder regardless!

In most cases I don't believe that retarded and minors should receive the death penalty. I also believe that the money tax payers spend keeping and appealing murder's until execution day, could be better spent on eliminating poverty, helping retrain the jobless and homeless, finding non-abusive homes for our children, birth control in poverty areas and the elimination of addictive drugs and drug dealers.

I noticed Mr. Parker's article did not mention his crime of murder. I noticed it was also void of the pain and suffering incurred by his victim's family and friends. How cruel and unusual was his method of murder?!

His message of murder is: without the death penalty, if you murder someone the State will confine you and will take "care of" you forever. You don't have to work for a living, your meals, clothes, etc. will all be provided - no responsibility, no financial worries - no nothing! Just sit there and spend other peoples' hard-earned money.

Maybe if we changed the rules of the execution to provide for the death penalty in the same manner in which the murder was committed - maybe a few more would-be killers might not cross the line!?!

Bob McGregor  
Atlanta, GA

Dear Open Door Friends,

As we enter a new year it is good to have strong voices, such as those at the Open Door, trying to bring some sanity to a world caught up with the "Glory of Might". And if we would only use the same commitment and funds for the homeless and those others incapable of surviving without some assistance we could have a better place.

Keep up your good deeds.

Shalom  
Roy Herzbach  
Atlanta, GA

Dear Friends,

Here is wishing you and everybody at the Open Door Community God's Blessing for a peaceful Christmas and a better New Year 1991 for the homeless, where more houses will be provided for them.

Our thoughts and remembrances go across the ocean. They picture you in the streets of Atlanta, at Butler Street breakfast, at 910 Ponce de Leon Avenue and wherever you work to help the poor. I followed with interest your issues about the activities at the Imperial Hotel. What a shame that you were forced to clear it.

From your Sept. Hospitality I have learned that you had many busy helpers in summer, who among others did decorations and repairs and made your house more beautiful and hospitable.

In Germany many things have changed for the good. We are united and one nation again, which makes us happy and thankful. But of course many new problems have arisen due to that.

Hoping and praying that not another war will turn up in the Middle East but that there will be an agreement between the nations. We wish you and your blessed work all the best.

Margot and Manfred Gerstner  
Pforzheim-Sonnenhof, Germany

Dear Open Door Friends,

"Kindness shapes the soul in a wonderful direction"

Unknown

God bless you for your kindness to those on the streets. You are instruments of God's love.

Chris Miles  
Decatur, GA

Dear Friends,

Please accept this donation on behalf of the library, Presbyterian Pan American School. We appreciate receiving Hospitality and having it read by our students, mostly from Latin America, and staff. God bless you in your ministry.

Craig S. Checkel  
Kingsville, TX



**WE ARE OPEN. . .**

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 1:30 until 6:00pm, and from 7:00 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 open from 7:00am until noon. Sunday afternoon our door is answered until 5:00pm.

**OUR MINISTRY. . .**

SOUP KITCHEN--Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon

SUNDAY BREAKFAST--Sunday morning at 910, 7:15am

BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST--Monday-Friday, 6:15am

SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES--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), April 5-7.

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.

**NEEDS**

**JEANS**

Men's Work Shirts

Men's Underwear

**Curtains for Bedrooms**

Quick Grits

Cheese

Mayonnaise

**Trailer for hauling**

Multi-Vitamins

MARTA Tokens

Men's Large Shoes (12-14)

Coffee

Non-Aerosol Deodorant

Washcloths

**HATS & GLOVES**

**10-SPEED BICYCLES**

We need volunteers to answer our phone  
and door on Mondays between 1 and 4pm.

*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 11:00 or after 1:30, it would be helpful.*

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, GA 30306-4212.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Open Door Community Worship**

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

*Join us!*

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| March 3   | Worship at 910<br>Nibs Stroupe, Preaching  |
| March 10  | Worship at 910<br>Charles Black, Preaching   |
| March 17  | Worship at 910<br>Jackie Jenkins, Preaching  |
| March 24  | Worship at 910<br>Bob Smith, Preaching   |
| March 31  | Easter Morning!<br>Cynthia Hale, Preaching<br>Worship will be held at<br>6:30am in the Municipal<br>Market Parking Lot. This<br>replaces worship at 910. |
| April 5-7 | Spring Retreat at Dayspring<br>(No Sunday Worship at 910)  |
| April 14  | Worship at 910<br>5:00 Eucharist<br>5:30 Music Night   |
| April 21  | Worship at 910<br>Phoebe Smith, Preaching  |
| April 28  | 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.