

HOSPITALITY

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

Providing hospitality to the homeless and to those in prison, through Christ's love.
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 * 404/874-9652

vol. 11, no. 3

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

March 1992

Invitation to the Body of Christ

by Murphy Davis

Editor's note: The following piece was first shared as a meditation at West End Presbyterian Church on Sunday, January 12, 1992.

There was once a rich man who dressed in the most expensive clothes and lived in great luxury every day. There was also a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who used to be brought to the rich man's door, hoping to eat the bits of food that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the feast in heaven. The rich man died and was buried, and in Hades, where he was in great pain, he looked up and saw Abraham, far away, with Lazarus at his side. So he called out, "Father Abraham! Take pity on me, and send Lazarus to dip his finger in some water and cool off my tongue, because I am in great pain in this fire!" But Abraham said, "Remember, my son, that in your lifetime you were given all the good things, while Lazarus got all the bad things. But now he is enjoying himself here, while you are in pain. Besides all that, there is a deep pit lying between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, nor can anyone cross over to us from where you are." The rich man said, "Then I beg you, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house, where I have five brothers. Let him go and warn them so that they, at least, will not come to this place of pain." Abraham said, "Your brothers have Moses and the prophets to warn them; your brothers should listen to what they say." The rich man answered, "That is not enough, father Abraham! But if someone were to rise from death and go to them, then they would turn from their sins." But Abraham said, "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone were to rise from death."

Luke 16:19-31

Luke's story is, first of all, about some rich folks: good solid citizens of the community, Dives and Mary Jones. They were rich, yes, but of course it hadn't always been that way. No. . . . Why, they worked **HARD** for what they had--pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps, you might say. Scrimped and saved and then--well, don't you think they **deserved** to enjoy what they'd made?

Yessiree! It was the good life for the Joneses. Life was a party. They bought their clothes at Phipp's Plaza, drove good cars, sent their kids to good schools and threw a lot of dinner parties. They loved gourmet food.



Good folks--mind you. Even church-going folks. They were looked up to in the community.

But the story is also about some folks who never dared walk up to the Jones' front door: Lazarus and Gert Phillips were folks you might see occasionally around the back alley behind the Jones' home but never for long. They were--well, face it, they were vagrants: smelly and unhealthy-looking, and they wore dirty old clothes that didn't fit right to start with.

(continued on page 2)

HOSPITALITY



910 Ponce de Leon

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 and about others involved in ministry to Atlanta's homeless, please contact any of the following:

Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry
Ed Loring--Correspondence
Pat Fons--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator
Murphy Davis--Hardwick Prison Trip
Phillip Williams & Dick Rustay--Volunteer Co-ordinators

Newspaper:
Editorial Staff--Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede, Pat Fons,
Ed Loring, Dick Rustay, Gladys Rustay, CM Sherman,
and Tim Wyse
Layout--Gladys Rustay
Circulation--Phillip Williams, and a multitude of
earthly hosts and guests
Subscriptions or change of address--Tim Wyse

"The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us. When we begin to take the lowest place, to wash the feet of others, to love our brothers (and sisters) with that burning love, that passion, which led to the cross, then we can truly say, 'Now I have begun.'" — Dorothy Day

(continued from page 1)

Lazarus and Gert tried to eat out of the Jones' garbage can--there was always so much good leftover food thrown away. But it was harder than it used to be, what with the neighborhood watch and all. The neighbors were on the look-out and would call the police in a flash if they saw a stranger on their street. And of course City Council had passed some ordinances that made it a lot easier for the police to haul the likes of Lazarus and Gert off to jail--again.

So the long and short of it was that they had to work pretty hard to stay out of sight. They felt like animals slinking around in the shadows and eating other people's garbage. Lazarus had an ulcerated leg--bad circulation from the years of labor pool work that kept him on his feet all the time--and Gert had diabetes. But every time they went to Grady they were just patched up and sent back out to the streets. So it all just got worse.

Finally one morning Gert and Lazarus were found frozen to death in the abandoned car that had become their home. Around the same time Dives died in Piedmont Hospital just three months after Mary died at Northside.

Well, when they all got where they were going, Dives and Mary realized right quick that they were pretty hot and uncomfortable. 'Course comfort was more important than anything so they were upset when they looked way up the way and saw Lazarus and Gert sitting around a fine table and enjoying a delicious meal with Mr. Abraham and Miss Sarah.

"Not fair!" they cried and then they took to hollerin'.

"Mr. Abraham, Miss Sarah! Hey! remember us? We're good Presbyterians. We went to church and tithed and even helped with the stewardship campaign. And hey, look, it's awful hot down here so y'all please send Lazarus and Gert down here with a little drink of water. I'm sure they won't mind. Okay?"

Yo.

"Wow," said Miss Sarah, "looks like things have really changed, huh? But remember how long y'all enjoyed everything you wanted? You had all the good stuff and ol' Lazarus and Gert were lucky to get your garbage."

"Besides," said Mr. Abraham, "it's a shame, but they can't get to where you are and you can't get over here. You see--somebody put up a security fence--matter of fact, I b'lieve it was you. Yes, you put up a fence to keep Lazarus and Gert and their kind from comin' around you. Now even though you want them to come to you they can't. Nope. The fence can't be crossed from either direction.

Sorry folks. You built the fence. You'll have to live with it.

I assumed for most of my life that this story of Dives and Lazarus meant that if

you're rich and you're not kind and helpful to the poor you'll go to hell and burn forever and never even get a drop of water on your tongue.

Maybe that's part of what it's about. But I think what's important about this story is that it's reminding us we were created for community.

And then we are reminded that when we break community with our neighbors--when we isolate ourselves with our privilege--when we segregate our neighbors--when we create, or settle for, public policy that labels and segregates and divides us--then we **create** hell on earth.

One of the gifts of scripture is that it paints very vivid, clear pictures for us.

"Do you want to see heaven?" asks Jesus. "Do you want a picture of life abundant? I invite you into the Kingdom of God, the full life, the Reign of God's power and amazing grace."

"Come on, I'll show you what it looks like. I'll draw you a picture." And again and again, Jesus, the prophets, and the psalmists, show us a feast--a party--a celebration--a banquet where the blind, the crippled and the lame come in from the highways and the byways; they come from North and South, from East and West, to sit at the overflowing table of the Kingdom of God. They are the misfits and the prodigals, the foreigners and the friendless. They come, perhaps uncertain at first, but soon drawn into the joy of the celebration. Sitting together enjoying new-found sisters and brothers and the abundance of everything they need and more, which is what our Creator wants and intends for every child of God.

But so often in this picture, sulking around the edge: just outside the circle of the fun and laughter, is the elder brother party-pooper.

He sees life as a system of simple rules, unbending rules.

"I worked hard and did right so I deserve a lot--"

"My sisters and brothers messed up and ended up homeless or in jail so they deserve what **they** got."

"If Lazarus and Gert are so poor they obviously weren't as deserving as I am. Why I studied hard in school and paid off my student loans and now I have a good salary and it's **mine**."

"I came early to work in the vineyard and I, by **rights**, should get a higher wage than those who came late."

But God has such an **odd** sense of humor. God is throwing a party and inviting everybody in and urging us to do the same. And there are no questions at the door about what you earned or deserved--just a welcome.

But the elder brothers--the Dives of the world--are too concerned with grasping their

good reputations and their possessions to be able to open their hands and their arms to enjoy. . . to dance. . . to sing. . . and laugh with their sisters and brothers.

So Dives' and Mary's parties are reserved for other people who look, act, and smell **just like them**. They rush around shopping, and if they see Lazarus and Gert they look quickly away and try not to think about them.

By the time they finally figure out that they're living in hell it's too late.

Sorry, say Abraham and Sarah, but you were in a position to make the rules, draw the lines, put up the fences, do the city planning, get on the Olympic committee and the NPU. . . .



Meg Crocker-Birmingham

You worked it all out to have the best things for yourselves and to keep the poor away from your door. Not in your neighborhood, remember? You set up this segregation.

And now you've got to live with it.

And, yes, I know, it's hell.

Segregation is hell, whether for reasons of race or class.

It's hell for those who plan it and for those who endure it.

Mr. Dives and Miss Mary are in charge these days. They sit in the mayor's office, on the city council, in the governor's office, on the state legislature, the Congress, the Senate, the office of the President, and all over the court system.

Our public policy spouted from their mouths says, "We got ours (and by golly we're gonna keep it and increase it), and if you didn't get yours it must be your own fault (and one way or another you should probably be punished)."

By that kind of logic, your cousin caught in credit card theft is a **CRIMINAL**, but Neal Bush and John Sununu just misspoke themselves.

(continued on page 10)

THE PRISON FLIMFLAM

by Michael A. Kroll

Note from Murphy Davis: "I first met Michael Kroll when he swept into town in 1977 to help organize the National Witness Against Executions, and my life has never been the same. For all the years since then, my work and commitment have been nourished by Michael's tireless organizing and writing and the special creative and life-affirming spirit he brings to everything he does. We welcome him to the pages of *Hospitality* with this piece written for Pacific News Service and used with permission."

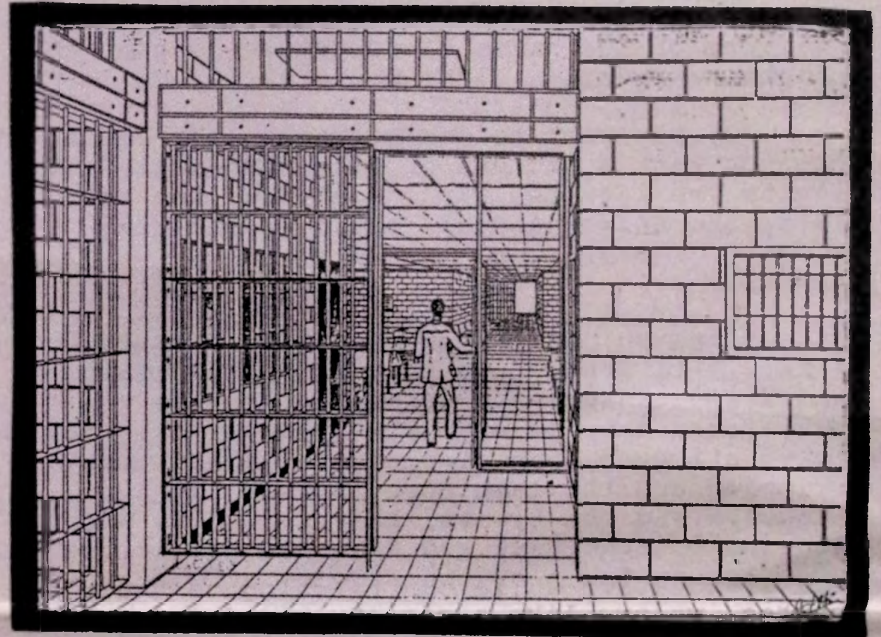
The fastest growing occupational group in the public sector in the U.S. is prison guards.
Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1990

In a January speech to the California District Attorneys Association, Attorney General William Barr, the nation's chief law enforcement officer, succinctly expressed the administration's prescription for the epidemic of violence we face: "The choice is simple," he told the prosecutors. "More crime or more prisons." If we required truth in packaging of political slogans, the attorney general would have described the "more crime or more prisons" alternative not as a simple choice but a simple-minded one.

Two weeks later, President Bush himself weighed in with his State of the Union message. "...It is time for a major, renewed investment in fighting violent street crime," he thundered. "Congress, pass my comprehensive crime bill!" The budget he proposed the next day included his vision of "a major, renewed investment": a \$1 billion increase in Attorney General Barr's Justice Department allocation over last year, \$353 million of which was to finance more prison space.

More prisons or more crime? From 1980 to 1990, the number of prisoners in local jails and state and federal prisons has more than doubled until today, with more than 1.15 million Americans behind bars, we outdistance every country on earth for the sheer size of our prison population. The President's request for more than a quarter of a billion dollars to build more prisons is not a "renewed investment" but more of the same. We have, over the same decade when our economic well-being has plunged, already expended a substantial fortune in this endeavor.

Has this brought the promised reduction in crime? Hardly.



According to the Uniform Crime Reports provided by the FBI, the number of robbery offenses grew by eight percent between 1981 and 1990. There were 24 percent more forcible rapes over the same period. Incidents of aggravated assault grew by 59 percent.

Rather than a choice between more prisons or more crime, government policies have given us both more prisons and more crime. Does anyone doubt the relationship between the growing rate of unemployment, officially seven percent and rising, and crime? Can anyone deny that homelessness and crime are both symptoms of the same social rot? Is there no relationship between our failing schools and crime? But our government has no money to train the unemployed, no money for rent subsidies or low cost housing, no money to ensure smaller classroom size or better paid teachers. Our government has money for more prisons. And more. And more.

In the President's budget, more than \$100 million will be taken from public libraries. A staggering \$800 million will be slashed from the current \$1.5 billion available to build low-income housing and provide rent subsidies to the poor. The \$432 million in Health and Human Services community block grants now earmarked for extinction could be funded with the money the President wants for more prison space.

In fact, it is not far-fetched to view the growing prison budget as our one remaining public commitment to health and human services for the poor. In prison, the homeless get housed, the hungry are fed and the sick are treated. But prisons are not proposed as the solution to these problems, but as the solution to crime. More prisons or more crime.

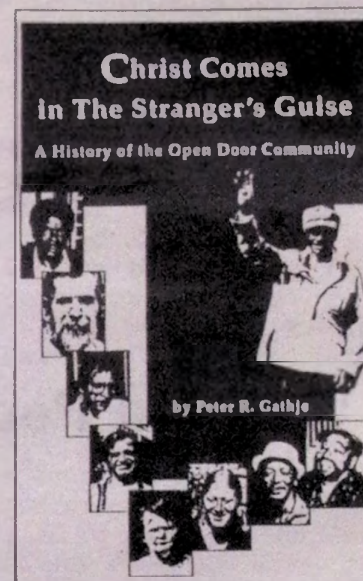
When William Barr's predecessor, former attorney general Dick Thornburgh, announced an earlier version of the same prison expansion solution, he asserted that the American people were not interested in finding the causes of crime. "We are not here to search for the roots of crime or to discuss sociological theory," Thornburgh told an audience of law enforcement officials in Washington last March. "The American people demand action to stop criminal violence whatever its causes." The public wants relief, and relief is spelled P-R-I-S-O-N.

If the country were in the tenth year of a devastating epidemic of diarrhea, how would we assess the surgeon general who, year after endless year, proposed to build more commodes as a solution to the problem while ignoring the causes of the epidemic? One can imagine a future with a full commode on every corner. Because the virus goes unaddressed, there can never be enough commodes.

That is the situation we now face - or, more accurately, refuse to face - with regard to crime and its solutions. As long as our "solutions" go to the effects of social decay and dislocation while contributing to their causes, we are like a society mired in commodes. And, like our political leadership, they will always be full.



*Your donation
will assist us in
feeding the hungry
and
visiting the prisoner.*



Please send a \$10 donation to:

Phillip Williams
Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

for a copy of our 10th Anniversary Book, or call 404/874-9652.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____, State _____
Zip _____



**GEORGIANS AGAINST
GUN VIOLENCE, INC.**

Affiliated With Handgun Control, Inc.
P.O. Box 673732 • Marietta, Georgia 30067-0063

John Edwards
Chairman
952-4865

Sam Darden
Vice-Chairman
422-8209

January 1992

If you have questions or ideas or time to volunteer, please write us. We are ordinary citizens like you who simply reached the point where we had to do something. And we'd appreciate your help. To have your voice heard, mail the form below.

**Georgians Against
Gun Violence**
P. O. Box 673732
Marietta, Ga. 30067-0063

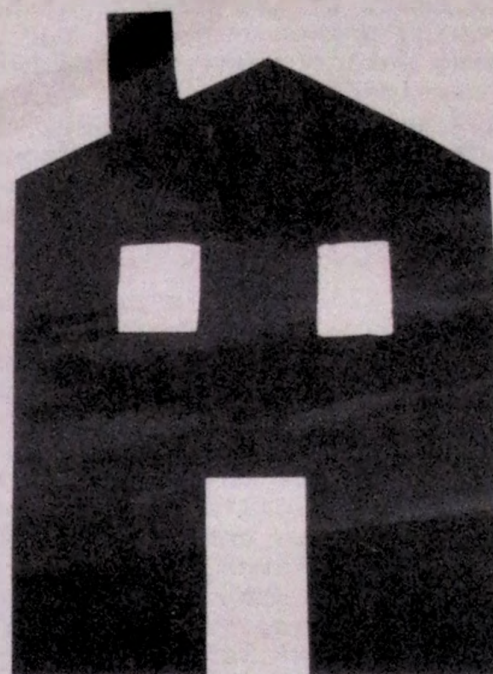
Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

- () Enroll me as a member
my \$10.00 is enclosed.
() I am unable to pay \$10.00
please enroll me anyway.
() Enclosed is my contribution.

Shelter from the Storm:



Why Do People Live in Houses?

by Ed Loring

Editor's note: This article is the first in a series on the question: "Why do people live in houses?"

Part I: Housing is a Basic Necessity for Survival

*"I've heard newborn babies wailin' like a
mournin' dove
And old men with broken teeth stranded
without love
Do I understand your question, man, is it
hopeless and forlorn?
"Come in," she said,
"I'll give you shelter from the storm."*

Bob Dylan

*"Ebbie, come on in now. It's supper
time."
"Aw Mom, can't I play a little longer?"
"No, your supper is ready and it's
getting dark."
"Aw Mom . . ."
"Come on in now."*

What wonderful grace! I grew up, and now I am growing old, well-housed. I have tasted homelessness a few bleak and desolate times, but never houselessness. A place of one's own is a means of grace. It's where sacramental things happen like learning to trust your mom's voice at eveningtide to beckon you inward toward a shared meal and family warmth.

Because Yahweh is who she is and because Jesus does what he does and because the Holy Ghost blows through my window, I, like my mother, call people inside. "It's 11:00,

come on in now. It's lunch time." I shout to the 125 folk in our front yard on the mornings Gladys lets me do the door. Through Dorothy Day's amazing book The Long Loneliness I fell in love with the homeless poor, Yahweh's chosen ones, thirteen years ago. Since then a basic aim and a fundamental purpose of my life has been to get folks inside, that is: off the streets. (I also struggle to get people outside, that is: out of prison. What moments of resurrection and joy we have experienced recently as Gary Nelson and Billy Neal Moore came out of prison! Thank you! Thank you! Of course, we work hard to get folk outside the prison walls and into decent shelter. One source of houselessness is the vast number of prisoners, like veterans, turned out with no resources and no place to go, who end up on our streets and in our front yard at 11:00 a.m.)

Every day now there are less and less Americans who deny that we are in the midst of a storm. Certainly the very rich continue to live in the eye of the storm, but the raging waters, the fierce winds, and the ferocious fire are demanding the attention of even many middle-class Americans. (In a democratic society where public policy reflects the will of the majority the problems of minorities, like the homeless, are ignored until the consequences begin to affect the status-quo. The first response of the American people was to help charitably the homeless; the second was to condemn them and blame them for their poverty, unemployment, addictions and houselessness. Now, even Jimmy Carter and his handpicked alter-ego Dan Sweat, say we need to respond to the poor, not only for the sake of this minority but for our own, i.e. the majority's welfare.) Every one of us, even the most well-to-do in our midst, need shelter from the storm. The homeless and houseless on our streets are among the most vulnerable. The winds are blowing them (and our communities)

apart; the waters are drowning them (and our families); the fires burn up our very souls and char our compassion which should constitute the resources for any mature and decent life.

We all need shelter. The need for housing is not a class, ethnic or gender issue. We all need shelter from the storm. The word shelter has an interesting etymology. It comes from Old English (400-1100 AD) and is a military term. Shield troop is the original. A large body of people who gather together and interlock their arms and thus their many shields formed one large shield for protection. Images of cooperation, mutual support, shared resources for security are rooted in this word shelter. Also, a communal response to threat, challenge and war. To face the storm, the community made shelter available for all the people. As is often the case, word history is a source of imaginal hope! Today, when those of us who are prophets for housing as a human right gather our bodies and voices together, we have a particular image in our hearts for all people. Human domicile must be warm when the weather is cold and cool when the weather is hot (that leaves Georgia prisons out), always dry, safe, healthy and accessible. To be human shelter, unlike the bird cage where Hannah keeps her parakeet Niña, freedom must make her bed in that place. A significant amount of control, private space, must constitute the environment. Migrant workers who pick peaches in Spartanburg County, South Carolina each summer -- you can see them and their little white slave quarters from I-85 -- do not have human shelter. Over the years at The Open Door Community we have lowered the number of people who live together. When we began there were 50 of us. Tonight there are 30. As we have loved and fought, served and been served, grown old and died together, we have come to more profoundly grasp the interplay between shared space and private space. So we have no bedroom in the house now with more than two people sleeping there. All of us have access to private space. I note this because of the growing government greed to control the lives of the poor by zoning laws and behavior ordinances. To be poor is a crime in the USA and to find shelter is often a quiet little jail or the seeds of night time concentration camps. But we all need shelter, freedom, private space, as well as family, friends, community and shared space. But why? Why do we live in houses? What twists of fate and freedom would the response to such a question bear for us? Let's see where it will lead us. "Ebbie, come on in now. It's suppertime."

Why do People Live in Houses?

Foremost, we live in houses because shelter is a basic necessity of physical life, of survival. Our shelter links us historically and mythically to our earliest ancestors: the cave dwellers. Human beings require shelter to exist. Unlike the turtle we do not carry our homes on our backs. Unlike dogs we are not all covered with hair; unlike fish we cannot stay under water. Shelter is a necessity for survival.

About two million years ago when we took the agonistic and glorious leap into

humankind, climbing out of trees, cleaning off the mud, and losing lots of fur, we shared the knowledge that those who looked like us (i.e., other human beings) needed what we need: shelter. For the most part we shared caves, igloos, tents, wigwams and houses. Only since the industrial revolution and its concomitant movement of people from land to the concrete of the city, has the acceptance of people without shelter emerged in human history.

Our minds and hearts, however, have retained an impulse toward houselessness through dreams and myths, one ancient and one modern: that we were originally cast to live naked in the woods without shelter. The Biblical story of Adam and Eve at home with each other, God and nature before the fall into sin is often experienced as a story of innocence and how we would really like to live if we did not have to deal with all the complications of modern life. Adam and Eve before the fall have been basic symbols for interpretation of American life. A modern imagining of the Adam and Eve story comes from the British invasion of Africa: Tarzan and Jane. This story also reaches us in the places of our fatigue and disgust with urban life and bureaucratic strictures of our lives. Don't we all wish we could live in absolute freedom of the jungle with chimpanzees to protect us, pure water to drink and clean air to breathe, swinging from tree to tree with the love of our lives?

One consequence of this primordial dream is that as you sip cool coffee and listen to the latest Washington scandal on the morning news, sitting in your car during rush hour on the way to a job while we know you would rather be sailing, and you glance out the window at a group of homeless men warming their hands over a primitive fire in a modern garbage can, you experience a slight twinge of envy, quickly concealed by anger and with certainty you know that these homeless men choose to be homeless. They like it like that. In fact, they are all that is left of Adam and Eve, Tarzan and Jane. Then the car behind you blows its horn awaking you from your reverie; you move down the road with your mind still on the S&L scandal. Perhaps this fantasy is a creative way to deal with the boredom of our transportation system, but it is a dangerous source for social analysis and political policy.

Notwithstanding our dreams and myths of childlikeness and innocence, without housing, a human being cannot live. Shelter is a matter of life and death; a physical necessity. Without shelter from the storm, disease, freezing weather, or the blasting sun will kill you. Houselessness inevitably leads to death.

Houselessness is murderous.
The causes of houselessness are murder.
The causers of houselessness are murderers.

Why do people live in houses? Housing is a basic necessity of physical survival. We want to live. What about the homeless?

Editor's note: Next month this series will continue with "How do we find access to shelter?"

New

Novice

Phillip Williams

by Murphy Davis

Since June, 1990 Phillip Williams' quiet, helpful presence has graced our life at the Open Door community. Having served as a Resident Volunteer for the past year, Phillip joined the Leadership Team as a novice in January.

Phillip was born and raised in Washington, D.C. In 1984 he moved with his family to Atlanta and held a job until 1989, when he was laid off. Over 40, and African-American, Phillip found that occasional part-time work was the best he could find. The pressure on his family led to divorce, and Phillip ended up on the streets.



Phillip celebrating Thanksgiving at the Open Door with his daughter, Stacy.

After some months on the street, Phillip was eating breakfast at Butler Street when C.M. Sherman invited him to come out to the Open Door. He came and quickly found a place and became part of our family.

"I love this life," says Phillip, "serving those who for whatever reason are unable to do for themselves. It's a new experience and there are new challenges with every day. And I like community life. Each person is unique. I learn a lot, and what I learn helps me to grow. My Christian faith grows stronger."

Phillip has assumed leadership in People for Urban Justice. Knowing the pain of homelessness, he finds joy in advocacy for people on the streets and in prison.

"I just really enjoy this," he says quietly, "I figure I'm doing something great with my life."

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, April 12-April 18.

Services of Worship:

PALM SUNDAY, April 12	Open Door Community 5:00am.
MONDAY, April 13	Grady Hospital, Butler St. 5:00am.
TUESDAY, April 14	City Jail, Peachtree St., SW 5:00am.
WEDNESDAY, April 15	Trust Company Bank, Park Place 5:00am.
MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 16	Woodruff Park 5:00am.
GOOD FRIDAY, April 17	City Hall, Trinity Ave., SW 5:00am.
HOLY SATURDAY, April 18	City Shelter, Jefferson St., NW 5:00am.
EASTER MORNING, April 19, 11 Butler St. 8:30am	

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

910 Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E. Atlanta, Ga. 30306 404-476-3452

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

NEW HOPE HOUSE is looking for additional permanent community members and volunteers.

Service focuses on death row prisoners and a hospitality house for their family and friends.

For more information contact:
New Hope House
PO Box 1213
Griffin, GA 30224

New Resident Volunteer

Paul Weissburg

In trying to write a brief summary about myself for Hospitality, I am faced with a problem that I have to deal with every day at the Open Door; my past few years are the stuff of a great resumé or application for graduate school, but appear rather absurd for a resident in a house that is primarily inhabited from people who have come from off the streets or out of prisons. In addition to being the youngest resident here, I also have the dubious distinction of being the most ignorant about street life. Most of my life has been spent in upper-middle class suburbs, and my few brushes with relative poverty have been by choice. Always, if things threatened to become too much for me, I had the option to return home or back to college.



Last December I graduated from Warren Wilson College with a major in sociology and a GPA that pretty much assures me a spot in most grad schools. Even though I have chosen to live and work with the homeless, there are daily reminders that as a white, young male with a college education, I have brought my middle-class backround with me. It is to the credit of the people here and the friends that I have made that this has not been held against me, as this same class of people has traditionally shown apathy or contempt for the oppressed of this society.

When I first was preparing to come to the Open Door, it was with a somewhat naive and idealistic image of myself smashing through the barriers that keep us all ignorant of each others' lives. The reality of the situation hit me as soon as I entered 910 Ponce de Leon and took a good look around me. These barriers were further emphasized when I first went to Butler Street breakfast

and tried to interact with the homeless who had just spent the night outside, in the freezing cold, as if we had all come from the same place. The rules of "social etiquette" that I assumed were universal are most definitely not, and to ignore the backgrounds of those I have chosen to work and live with is to presume that those rules are insignificant, which they are not, and that we are living equally, which we are not. It has been very difficult to reconcile this truth with my desire to belong, and to share my life with others as they share theirs with me. And I see this conflict repeated every time a member of the "privileged class" comes in to help for a day or two or to observe. I greatly admire these people, because in addition to helping out in the obvious ways (serving food to the homeless, helping with dishes, etc.) they are daring to open their eyes and see a new reality. Once this has been done, you can never return to your old perspective. "The blindness men and women wish for" has been lost, and replaced with a sense of guilt that extravagant luxuries have been taken for basic rights, and that we, as privileged Americans, have bought into the stereotypes that our government pushes so hard. Just a few minutes of talking with Carl Barker, listening to C.M. Sherman's insightful sermons, or just spending a few minutes with Willie Dee quickly shatters those pre-conceptions of who the homeless are or how they became that way, and of their value to this society. I'm afraid that the Open Door Community has given me far more than I will ever be able to return to them, and I am grateful that I have had this opportunity to share and to grow.

Georgia Death Penalty Abolitionists

A new organization is growing state-wide in Georgia with the ultimate goal of abolishing the death penalty. The group will promote public education on capital punishment, monitor the death penalty, and assist individuals facing execution and their families. Georgia Death Penalty Abolitionists is a culturally diverse organization of individuals and groups committed to the affirmation of life and the abolition of the death penalty in Georgia.

For more information please fill out and mail the following coupon to:

Moriba Karamoko
G.D.P.A.
PO Box 17852
Atlanta, GA 30316

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Georgia Death Penalty Abolitionists * Box 17852 * Atlanta, GA 30316

(continued from page 3)

And that attitude is the foundation stone for the willy-nilly violation of the basic human rights for a growing number of people in our city and around the world. The segregation of the poor, the deepening racist shadow in individual attitudes and broad public policy, and officially sanctioned violence that stretches from the projects and poor neighborhoods, to the streets of the city, to the execution chambers of our land--all are signs of an official policy that crushes the poor.

Our society deeply hates and despises the poor, especially the African American poor. We hate with a public policy that tears down low-income housing all over the city while homelessness increases 2, 5, 10 times in just a few years.

We hate with a public policy that creates the situation and then sits silently and passively by as the fastest growing group of homeless people in Atlanta are children under six.

We hate every time we do not challenge the myth of the lazy poor while almost half of the people who live in shelters in this city work but still cannot afford to rent or buy their own home.

We hate every time we send people off to spend 20-40 days in jail for the crime of public urination in a city that has no public toilets.

We hate when we are passive in the face of business and government leaders in the city who are creating the odious Vagrant Free Zone in downtown Atlanta.

We hate through our state legislature as they allocate hundreds of millions of dollars for new prison construction while they say we cannot afford good schools or health care. And it goes on even while we in Georgia already lock up a higher percentage of our people than any jurisdiction in the world including South Africa.

Only a blinding hatred and fear would let us increase our prison population in the USA 100% during the 1980's. At the same time crime increased 7%.

During the Reagan/Bush years, prison population **doubled**, and you and I both know what that means in terms of race and class.

We hate every time a public official speaks for us saying the death penalty is an answer. If we just kill a few more poor people and African American people (called CRIMINALS, of course), then we will all be safer and happier.

We never set out to be hateful. And we don't **mean** to be even now. But when greed gets hold of us and the body politic, when the privilege of a few is more important than the well-being of all, then we create a social policy of hatred and segregation. And once we're on that path it takes a loud wake-up call and a life of discipline in community to move in any other direction.

It was too late for Dives and Mary Jones by the time they figured out the peril of

separating themselves from the poor. Abraham points out to them that there were plenty of opportunities. After all they had the Bible; they had heard the story. . . .

What was it that kept them from responding? What is it that keeps us from responding? It all seems so harsh. Why, in fact, is it called "Good News" anyway?

We'll find the answer to these questions only if we can join in.

Jesus invites us to a feast, and there we sit with people who are not like us. At the feast we have to lay aside our political hard line; at the feast we have to **want** to be forgiven and to forgive. We need to hunger and thirst for God's promised justice. We need to sit at God's table because we know we need to depend on the mercy of Jesus Christ which makes us kinfolk with all these brothers and sisters.

And that is **very** different from pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps.

Jesus has invited us to a party--a magnificent feast and it's free. If we're not too preoccupied with our social position and property values we'll go in and enjoy it. And our isolation, our hatred, our fear can melt away like snow under the morning sunshine.

The invitation to the Body of Christ--a community of diversity and mercy and love and forgiveness--is ours.

Jesus is throwing a party.

It's time to enjoy.



A Note On Donations

We appreciate all your donations that keep us going. Please help us by bringing them only to our front door. We suggest you park in our side driveway, lock your car and come ring our doorbell. We will get folks inside to help you bring your gifts in.

Donations left at our back door usually do not get to us. Folks in our front yard may offer to help, but this causes problems for us, so we ask you to ring the bell and let us help instead.

Many thanks!

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Open Door Community,
We have started a club called the 'Super Helpers'. In this club we raise money that we would like for you to have. We earned this money by selling hot chocolate and auctioning off a decorated, house-shaped cake. We're sending you a sum of \$26.70. We hope that you will put some of this money into working with the homeless.

Super Helper Club
Koinonia Partners
Route 2 Box 329
Americus, Georgia 31709

Sincerely,
Super Helpers
Club-

Annis Steiner
Naomi Steiner
Abbey Lee

Valerie Buonside P.S. We hope to send you more money in the future.

Dear Friends,

With gratitude and great respect for your difficult work in our city, St. Andrews celebrates your tenth anniversary with you. Please accept this small token of our support for your work of compassion with our homeless sisters and brothers, and your prophetic ministry for justice to the entire metropolitan area. We hope that 1992 finds you filled with energy and hope as we continue to pray and labor together that the impoverished and oppressed of our community might attain their basic rights to food, shelter and medical care.

Thank you again for all that you do.

Peace,

Jeffrey C. Clayton
Associate Pastor
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
Tucker, GA

Dear Hospitality ,

I always appreciate the quality of your newspaper but I've been especially touched by the stories of Warren McClesky. Thank you for allowing his witness to ripple out. . .

So many individual parts of the stories I could comment on. I am challenged by Warren's faith as described by Murphy. Wow! To stay centered!

I wept with Ed Loring and Fred Taylor, both people of happy memory from the '90 DP March into Atlanta.

Do you have extra copies of this paper? Please send me five to ten, if you do. And I'm enclosing the name and address of a man I've journeyed with the last two and a half years (who) has just gone home after 12 years in prison. I've shared Hospitality with him in the past. Please put him on your list.

I'm grateful for your believing through the "Ows" and "Wows" of life.

Peace to you,

Sister Therese Bangert
Topeka, KS

Thank you so much for the wonderful newsletter about Warren McClesky. What a beautiful blessing for those left here to fight the good fight.

Carole B. Bedsole
Clarkston, GA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We received the January issue of Hospitality yesterday and read through it this morning at the breakfast table. We were so moved by Warren's testimony to the power of Jesus to give us victory over evil's deepest, darkest side. For us, these were words of encouragement to continue to abide in Christ and to continue the struggle against forces of evil in our society such as racism and the death penalty.

Too often we look to the politicians to bring hope and justice to the society we live in and we are only disappointed. Thanks to all of you who work diligently to let the stories of men and women such as Warren be heard. They remind us to look to Jesus for our hope. Please keep us on your mailing list!

In Christ,

Erik and Leanne Yoder
Tucson, AZ

Editor's note: We have had 2,000 extra copies made of our issue on Warren due to the large number of requests for extra copies. If you can use extras call us at 874-9652 or drop us a note. We'll be glad to send them.

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 and 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, 7:15am

SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES--Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 2-4pm
(Be sure to call; schedule varies)

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

SHELTER REQUESTS--Wednesday-Friday, 9am-noon

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

WEEKEND RETREATS--Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters),
May 1-3.

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
Quick Grits
Cheese
Mayonnaise
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Men's Large Shoes (12-14)
Coffee
Non-Aerosol Deodorant

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.

Open Door Community Worship

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

Join us!

March 1	1:30 Worship at 910 3:00 Benefit Concert by Elise Witt at High Museum
March 8	Worship at 910 Marty Collier and Carter Garber, speaking
March 15	Worship at 910 Rev. Steve Rhodes, speaking
March 22	Worship at 910 Rev. Will Coleman, speaking
March 29	Worship at 910 Rev. Ed Loring, speaking

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



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 _____