The Open Door Community

HOSPITALITY

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March 1998

The Legacy of Gandhi and King in a Violent Society

by Peter R. Gathje

(Editor's note: Pete Gathje is a professor of Christian Ethics and Peace Studies at the Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, and is a faithful friend of the Open Door Community. He is the author of the Open Door Community's history: Christ Comes in a Stranger's Guise.

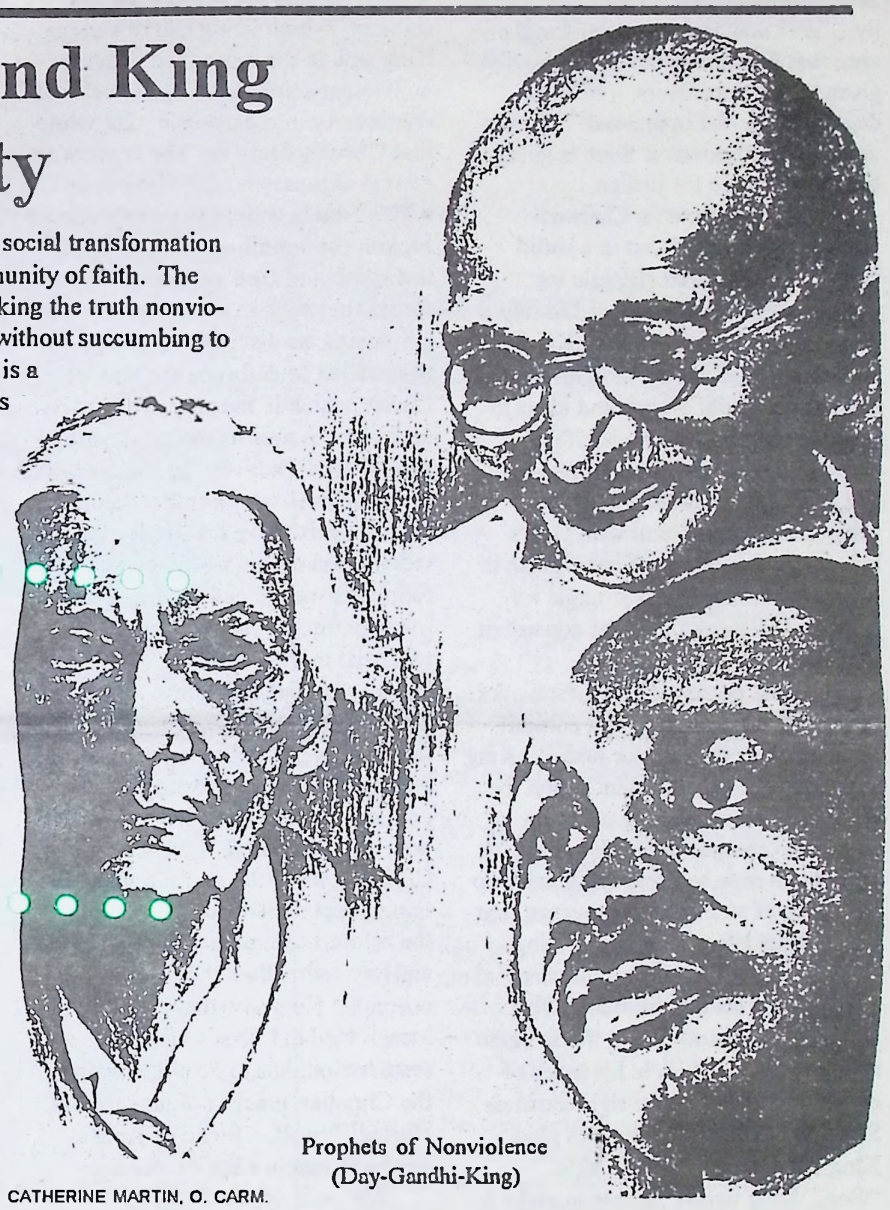
As we approach April 4th, the 30th anniversary of Dr. King's assasination, we are pleased to share this article from a presentation made at the Open Door.)

What is the legacy of Gandhi and King in our violent society? What may workers for justice inherit from Gandhi and King as we seek to live in this nation, which King identified as the greatest purveyor of violence in the world?

We certainly live in different times than Gandhi, who was killed in 1948, and King, who was killed in 1968. Both were leaders in great liberation movements which had clearly defined goals: in Gandhi's case, independence for India, and in King's case, the end of legalized segregation and the enactment of civil rights. In our time we need to ask, do we have a sense of participating in a movement which has clearly defined goals?

Yet I don't want to emphasize the differences between our time and the times of Gandhi and King too much. When Gandhi and King were killed, they were both engaged in perhaps less well-defined and broader justice struggles within their respective societies. Gandhi was struggling against the injustices associated with the impending partition of India due to tensions between Hindus and Moslems. King was in Memphis offering support for a sanitation workers' strike as part of his larger organizing for a movement to push for economic justice in the United States. The great movements with the clear victories were over before their deaths, and yet they struggled on for justice, for human dignity, for peace.

So what may we inherit from Gandhi and King? What might their lives and their teachings offer us who are struggling now to bring justice and peace into our lives and the lives of all people in our society and in our world? I am going to suggest four beliefs and practices drawn from Gandhi and King which may help us in our continuing efforts to seek peace and justice in this violent society. There are certainly others, but these four can serve as a starting point for reflection and discussion. The first is a long-haul commitment to work for social transformation grounded in faith and a community of faith. The second is the practice of speaking the truth nonviolently; that is, seeking justice without succumbing to self-righteousness. The third is a commitment to nonviolence as a method for social change which honestly recognizes there will not be change without suffering which comes from confronting the powers that oppress. The fourth is a refusal to despair, or more positively, a commitment to hope.



CATHERINE MARTIN, O. CARM.

Prophets of Nonviolence
(Day-Gandhi-King)

1. The need for faith and a community of faith in the struggle for peace and justice.

Both Gandhi and King came to nonviolence through their faith, received from faith communities. Further, both had their commitment to and practice of nonviolent social change deepened through the practical experience of working with others who shared their vision of a more just and peaceful world.

For Martin Luther King, Jr., it was the Black Baptist church faith that was the source of his biblically grounded faith in God's activity in the world. It was within the Black church that King received his most consistent support. From this church King came to see God's work in the world as a steadfast and loving quest for justice. King's biblical faith led him to believe, as James Cone has written, "that the God of the Exodus, the prophets, and Jesus did not condone the mistreatment they [Blacks] received from whites.... All races of men and women were created to live together on this planet as brothers and sisters and as children of God. Therefore, color and other physical features were secondary to our universal humanity grounded in God's creation and redeemed in Jesus, suffering on the cross."

King emphasized that God's loving activity in history was directed toward the redemption of all from sin, both personal and social. God's loving activity aims to create the beloved community. In this beloved community justice and peace structure human relations consistent with God's creative intent for human life from the beginning. King argued that since God created humans for life together as brothers and sisters, and since God remains actively involved in history to bring that creative intent to fulfillment, people who work for racial and economic justice participate in God's loving work for justice in the world. King wrote,

> *Segregation has been the Negro's burden and America's shame ... Today we know with certainty that segregation is dead .... When in future generations [people] look back upon these turbulent, tension-packed days through which we are passing, they will see God working through history for the salvation of [humanity]. They will know that God was working through those ... who had the vision to perceive that no nation could survive half slave and half free. God is able to conquer the evils of history.*

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

King's faith in the transformative power of love engaged in work for justice did not lead him into a liberal optimism about human nature. Rather, his biblical faith recognized that because of sin, "[people] are not easily moved from their mental ruts or purged of their prejudiced and irrational feelings .... the nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor. Privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily.... We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressors, it must be demanded by the oppressed." Power must confront power if there is going to be social change for justice.

King rejected a Christian realism which urged that in a sinful world a love-inspired struggle for justice might sometimes need to rely upon violent power. Instead, King combined insights from his Christian faith with Gandhi's work and ideas to urge that nonviolent love itself is a powerful means for creating justice, and that violence is antithetical to justice. Love consistent with God's love for human beings, King argued, is expressed in nonviolent struggle for justice. The means must be consistent with the end.

The power of love first works to change those who in faith commit themselves to struggle for justice. King saw that faithful nonviolent action for justice has an immediate effect on those who commit themselves to it: "It gives them new self-respect; it calls up resources of strength and courage that they did not know they had." King himself testified how his faith was deepened by his involvement in this struggle. He found that in the struggle he heard God tell him in his times of despair to "Stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice." This is a God, King often stated, "who is able." "God," King wrote, "is able to make a way out of no way." God empowers a person to continue in the struggle for justice. "When you know God," King proclaimed, "you can stand up amid the agonies and burdens of life, and not despair. ...When you know God, you have on some shoes that can help you walk through any muddy place."

As a Christian, King found this God who acts for justice in seeking to create the beloved community revealed in Jesus Christ. Central to a living faith in Christ, King proclaimed, is embracing Christ's cross. King saw in the cross God's loving nonviolent action to bring the beloved community into existence. He wrote that Christ's death on "the cross is an eternal expression of the length to which God is willing to go to restore broken communities. The resurrection is a symbol of God's triumph over all forces that seek to block community." Christians, as disciples of Christ, are thus called to embrace the way of Christ, which is the way of the cross, and in the power of the cross participate in God's activity for the creation of the beloved community. Said King, "Jesus Christ gave his life for the redemption of this world, and as his followers we are called to give our lives continuing the reconciling work of Christ in *this* world."

In connecting love and faith with action for justice, King saw that the cross is present today when people engage in nonviolent struggle for political and economic justice for the poor and oppressed. Like Christ, the Christian seeks the moral transformation of opponents and the creation of the beloved community through sacrificial love rather than through violent coercion. King saw that this faithful love, rooted in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, has to be at the heart of the Christian practice of nonviolence. Harold Dewolf, a friend of King's, observed that in King's theology,

> *The way of the cross by which we are saved is no mere accepting of certain beliefs nor is salvation only for another world. To walk in the way of the cross is to give oneself for love and justice, to account one's life as expendable for the sake of fulfilling the need of others, to suffer violence and never to return it.*

Faith for King, then, was never merely a set of beliefs, nor was faith private or otherworldly. Rather, faith empowers people in the nonviolent struggle for justice even in the face of great odds and suffering. Faith must be lived, the talk must be walked. Faith is practical. Faith must be expressed in action for justice. For King it was clear that "the gospel at its best deals with the whole [person], not only soul but body, not only [their] spiritual well-being, but material well-being. Any religion that professes to be concerned about the souls of [people] and is not concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a spiritually moribund religion awaiting burial." Faith is power to create the beloved community.

What about Gandhi's faith? Though he was not deeply religious as a young man, Gandhi was led into a deeper faith by persons who encouraged him to better know his Hindu faith. While in law school in England, Gandhi began to seriously study the Bhagavad Gita for the first time. He also began to read the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures and was especially attracted to Jesus' sermon on the mount. As he later wrote, "It was the New Testament which really awakened me to the rightness of Passive Resistance. When I read in the Sermon on the Mount such passages as ... 'love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be [children] of your Father[/Mother] in heaven,' I was simply overjoyed."

Still, Gandhi drew much of his understanding and practice of nonviolence from his Hindu faith in which he saw an intertwining of truth and nonviolence. Hinduism, Gandhi noted, emphasizes the truth of the unity of all being. He later wrote of how this truth is connected with God, "The word 'Satya' (Truth) is derived from 'Sat,' which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why 'Sat' or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God." In this faith, truth is what is most real, most powerful. If we stand in the Truth and speak out of Truth, we stand with what most truly *IS*—namely, the unity of all in God. Violence denies the truth of the unity of all being as it attempts to gain some advantage by harming another. Gandhi recalled a line from a poem he had learned in grammar school, "But the truly noble know all [people] as one/And return with gladness good for evil done."

As with King, Gandhi's faith was practical. Gandhi did not put any emphasis upon religious knowledge for its own sake. He stressed that faith is that "which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within, and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression, and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the maker and itself." As we have already seen, this truth known in faith is the unity of all existence in God. Thus, the key to human liberation, as Gandhi read in the Bhagavad Gita, is to move beyond attraction to and addiction to that which separates one from the essential truth that all is one, that all persons exist within the unity of Being.

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HOSPITALITY

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Murphy Davis–Southern Prison Ministry

KATRINA GUETTLER/ JOHN SWEET

Open Door Community

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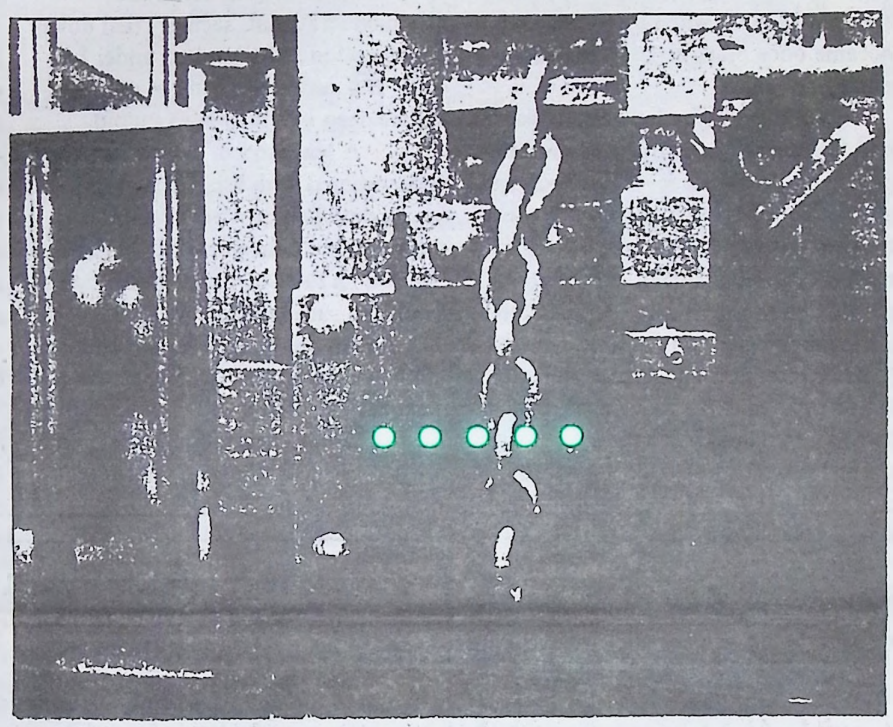
NAILING THE COFFIN SHUT

by John Cole Vodicka

(Editor's note: In February, the Georgia legislature approved a measure which will allow the voters to decide this November whether or not to abolish parole in our state. Late last year, the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles announced that anyone sentenced after January 1, 1998 for certain crimes would not be considered for parole anymore. And, as Georgia's gubernatorial campaign goes into full gear, practically every announced candidate—Democrat and Republican alike—has vowed to do away with parole. If parole is abandoned, Georgia's prison population will mushroom astronomically, costing the taxpayers billions upon billions of additional dollars in the years to come. And then there is the human cost...

This article is reprinted from "Freedomways," (January/February 1998), the newsletter of the Prison & Jail Project in Americus, Georgia, where John Cole Vodicka serves as Director. He and Dee along with their sons Gabe, Luke, and Sam are former Resident Volunteers of the Open Door Community.)



If parole is abolished in Georgia, a last nail will be pounded into the coffin that will bury any possibility that this state's criminal justice system might one day treat Black and white offenders equally. Doing away with parole will result in the further institutionalization of the racist policies that have historically governed Georgia's criminal justice and prison systems. In Georgia, the politics of crime are the politics of race.

Let me share a few first-hand observations with you.

I was sitting in the Randolph County, Georgia, courtroom one day just before Christmas. Next to me was the sister of a middle-aged African-American man I've been regularly visiting at the jail for more than a year. I was there to lend what little moral support I could to Robert, and to be a friendly face to Delois. It's something I often do while monitoring rural southwest Georgia criminal court proceedings: walking with those who find themselves caught in the region's criminal justice web.

Just before Robert's case was called, a young white man was brought before the judge. This defendant had retained one of south Georgia's better criminal defense attorneys. The defendant's family and supporters, numbering close to a dozen, were in the gallery. The lawyer entered a plea of guilty on behalf of his client and then made an impassioned speech to the judge, asking that the court consider treatment for the drug-addicted young man. "Prison will be of no help," the lawyer said. "My client is willing to undergo an intensive stay in a proven therapeutic program." For fifteen minutes this defense attorney advocated this alternative to incarceration and ultimately convinced a skeptical judge to opt for the treatment program. The judge even gave the defendant 48 hours to report to the program, allowing the convicted felon to go home to be with his family for a couple of days.

My friend Robert's was the next case called. Robert was represented by a lawyer appointed to him by the court. Prior to this December courtroom appearance, Robert had seen the attorney one time during the nearly 10 months he'd been in jail. Robert is mildly retarded. He is functionally illiterate. He's an alcoholic with some serious medical problems.

Robert's attorney convinced him to plead guilty to violating the terms of his lengthy probationary sentence, in order to avoid what she told him would be a "long, long time in prison." After entering the plea Robert's attorney said nothing on his behalf, nor did the judge ask Robert to speak. No one mentioned Robert's mental health needs. No one talked about his addiction to alcohol. The court heard nothing about Robert's inability to read or write, or the fact that he has a heart condition which is potentially fatal. Instead, the judge glared down at this broken Black man and promptly sentenced Robert to 12 years in prison, to serve 7. So my friend Robert—unlike the white defendant who had just minutes earlier preceded him to the bench—was handcuffed and led back to the Randolph County Jail. As I write this, Robert sits in a Georgia prison cell, a long, long time from coming home.

What happened to Robert is not an aberration but sadly is typical of what I witness in my travels across southwest Georgia. Criminal defendants—80% of whom are Black, nearly all poor, some mentally ill or retarded, the majority addicted to drugs or alcohol, mostly all school drop-outs, lots with no skills or enough work experience to obtain a decent paying job—are routinely hounded by law enforcement, then crunched by a judicial system intent on locking them up forever and ever.

I've heard a judge tell a 16-year-old Black convicted of attempted robbery he had "no business being on the face of this earth," and then sentence the youngster to 20 years in the penitentiary. Another judge sent a teenage African American off to prison for two years (for receiving stolen property) and then, as if that weren't enough, lashed out at the defendant's mama blaming her for her son's delinquent behavior. "I'm sending your boy to prison because you aren't fit to be a parent," the judge told the sobbing woman sitting by my side in an open courtroom. "Prison will teach him to be responsible, since you obviously can't."

I've witnessed district attorneys make racially disparaging remarks and openly gloat when defendants are sentenced to lengthy prison terms. I've watched defense attorneys come into court on the day of their client's hearing unable to recognize the person they supposedly represent. I've even on one astounding occasion watched attorneys flip a coin to determine which of them would wind up defending an indigent prisoner! I see Black men go off to prison while whites get probation for the same crimes.

Black men and women are considered a dispensable and disposable commodity by this state's criminal justice system. Georgia's prison industrial complex has been—for more than a century—nurtured, fed, sustained and maintained on the blood and bodies of African-American men and women. Today nearly three out of every four prisoners in this state's prisons and jails are Black. In some jails I visit in southwest Georgia, it is unusual for me ever to see a white prisoner. I am convinced that if 75% of the 65,000 persons incarcerated in Georgia were white, not only would parole remain a viable and often-utilized alternative to imprisonment, but most of our elected officials would be clamoring for changes that would greatly reduce the need for prison cells in our state.

The politicians know that abolishing parole won't make things safer for you and me on the streets of Atlanta or Americus. But that's really of little concern to someone whose moral compass is guided by little else than public opinion around election time. Sounding tough on crime and criminals—especially Black offenders—promises massive returns for politicians on the make.

There are thousands upon thousands of prisoners in Georgia's growing gulag who don't belong in prison at all. But because of their skin color, or economic status, or addiction, or plain bad luck, they have been condemned to live in a cage. We need to get them out of these prison cells and into the community. We need to keep others like them free from the clutches of cops and prosecutors and judges whose primary intention is to disrupt, demonize and destroy poor people and people of color.

The abolition of parole in Georgia will mean that we, as a society, have sold another piece of our collective humanity in a stupid and totally futile effort to buy public safety.

Inch by Inch

a column by Murphy Davis

by Murphy Davis

Dr. Christine Wilton was our next-door neighbor in Greenville, North Carolina for most of my growing up and also, a friend and curiosity in my life. For most of her years in the modest one-story brick house she lived alone. But when her father died, her mother moved from Arkansas to take up residence there with her. Unlike the diminutive Dr. Wilton, her mother was a tall, thin, imposing looking woman whose quiet kindly manner continued to surprise me. She crocheted and did beautiful Swedish embroidery. I do wish I could remember her death. But, I only remember that the time came that she was gone and Dr. Wilton was alone again. Not that she was any less solitary a figure during the years her mother was there.

She taught biology at the college and I knew for a fact, in that clear and certain way children perceive adults, that she was more entertained by plants than life in its human forms. She scoured remote fields and roadsides for any wildflower not yet in her backyard garden. And once found, she would pry it tenderly from its place and nestle it with great care in the lush spot that straddled the ditch running through our backyards. (The ditch became, much to my delight a wonderful creek after heavy rains. It would sometimes overwhelm me with sadness when it ran dry and became once more just an old sandy ditch.)

Anyway, the time came that I had to do a science project for whatever elementary school class I was in at the time. My mother was the one to point out what a rich resource lived right on the other side of our porch. (In her own way, I suppose she had in mind that it would do Dr. Wilton—or "Miss Christine", as we sometimes called her—and me both good to be forced into a little more than the normal proximity.) So, off I went to ask for help with my project.

She was willing and we set a date for the following Saturday morning to set off to begin the project. There were several such excursions, and mostly I remember the sight of this shy middle-aged woman in her rimless spectacles mucking about in swampy bogs now long-ago paved over and built upon. She wore roomy khaki pants and tall black rubber boots and looked curious in her broad-brimmed straw hat, securely tied down with a cotton scarf knotted under her chin. But curious-looking or not, she led me deep into mysteries untold.

A teaspoon of the swamp water teemed with life that spun nearly out of control under the microscope. A mere drop, really, that she plopped on the well of the slide, with a cover slip sucked down to tame it. (My cousin Sandy created the best show ever in the world of our basement. Where I kept the microscope left by Santa Claus. When he deposited a dropper-full of vinegar onto a little pile of bicarbonate of soda, we watched a berserk show through the lens. But really, watching my Uncle Murph describe the event, with his arms flailing, and mouth churning, was almost better than the real show.)

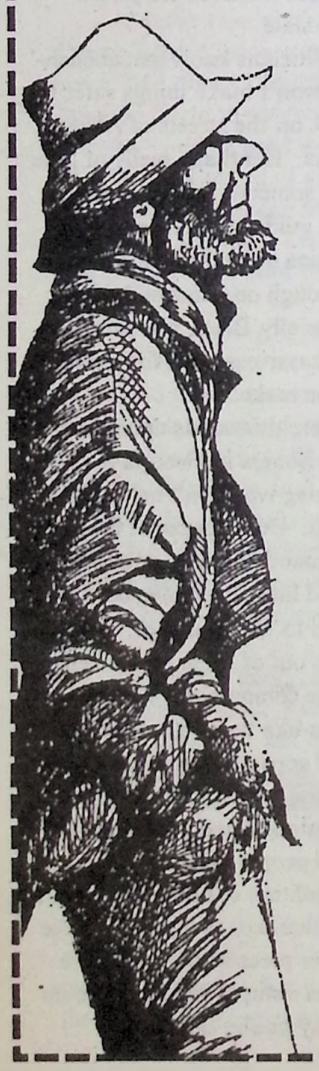
But, back to Dr. Wilton's world. She took me down to those bogs for other forays and showed me how to look for plant and animal life barely visible to the naked eye. I did not become a botanist in her footsteps, but am grateful forever for the certainty that emerged: that life's energy runs much deeper than the surface of things. And that even when we think we know what we are seeing, even beneath the seemingly still surface of nature, life teems and swirls. In a still tiny drop of pond water, it all threatens to burst its bounds with exuberance.

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door.

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.

Services of Worship,
(Apr. 5 - 12)

PALM SUNDAY	Open Door Community, 5pm
MONDAY	Grady Hospital, Butler St., 5pm
TUESDAY	City Jail, Peachtree St., SW, 5pm
WEDNESDAY	Woodruff Park, 5pm
MAUNDY THURSDAY	(with celebration of the Eucharist) City Hall, Trinity Ave., 5pm
GOOD FRIDAY	State Capitol, Washington St., 5pm
HOLY SATURDAY	City Shelter, Jefferson St., 5pm
EASTER MORNING	23 Butler St., 6:30am

Worship of the Resurrected Lord
Followed by a ham and eggs breakfast

The Open Door Community

The most recent available Census Bureau statistics tell a compelling story

1993 Median Household Net Worth	
White	$45,740
African American	4,418
Hispanic	4,656
Female Head-of-Household	13,294

Blood is to the human body as capital is to the economic system. It must circulate and flow throughout the whole body. If it does not circulate fully, clots form. Clots cause strokes. If the wealth and capital are all held by a select, isolated few, the economy will suffer.

Courtesy of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, 1/9/98.

Open House
at the
Open Door Community

Come celebrate with us! Come see our new basement, dining room, and kitchen

Sunday, March 29th
4 p.m. Open House and Tours
5 p.m. Service of Worship and Dedication
6 p.m. Supper

Please join us!

Just the Facts

- 41 Federal prisons were constructed from 1900-1980. Between 1990 and 1995, 45 federal and 168 new state prisons were constructed. Despite the increase in the number of prisoners, the rate of violent crime continues to increase. *(Prison Legal News)*

- On July 15, 1997, the Arizona Supreme court declared as unconstitutional, a legislatively created group whose main role had been to find ways to violate the rights of state prisoners. *(Prison Legal News)*

- Over 96 billion pounds of good food are thrown out in the U.S. each year. Cities spend over $1billion each year to dump this food. *(U.S.Dept of Agriculture)*

- It is estimated that over 240,000 people could be fed for one year on the amount of food Americans waste in one day. *(Harpers Index, Oct.97)*

- The 12 states without the death penalty have far lower murder rates than those with the death penalty. *(Boston Globe 10-28-97)*

God Is With Us

by Harold McCallister

A prison van just pulled up in front of the building where I live. It has that thick familiar wire over all the windows except for the front compartment. The driver is a short, chubby, Black man in his late 20's or early 30's. He has on the familiar blue plastic uniform all prison officers must wear while on duty, which they say is too hot during the summer months.

He gets out and goes to the back of the vehicle, his eyes inspecting it for signs of concern. On the back of this vehicle is one of those lifts we see on the back of large delivery trunks.

The officer places his hand against a button on the side of the van, causing the lift to unfold like a Murphy bed and come down. After he lowers it to the ground, he steps to the gate of the prison and presses another button at its entrance. He says something into a small box-shaped speaker, then returns to the van.

Reaching up, he steps up on the lift, which is folded out like a platform, and unlocks the back doors of the van. Immediately a prisoner in a wheelchair rolls himself out onto the lift and down to the streets. Three more prisoners in wheelchairs follow him.

With them are several other prisoners not confined to wheelchairs. They unload themselves laughing, smiling, and talking to each other. Mechanically they fan out behind each man in a wheelchair, grabbing the handles like one would the steering wheel of a car, pushing them through the narrow gate. They are going to Catholic Mass to receive the communion of Christ's broken and bloody body, which is not much unlike their own. They are going deep within this type of steel and cement hell to receive the life Jesus has promised to us all.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! People on the other side call this sort of activity chain-gang or jail-house religion. To them this experience of Christ is more situational than genuine. Many believe those prisoners claiming now to know God are only doing it because it may help them make parole. They are sure this supposed conversion of some prisoners is purely a charade, some con-game to get what they want then to discard. With the same criminal, calculated intent, these men, many from society believe, embrace religion.

"There's no way the arm of God can reach some of them animals."

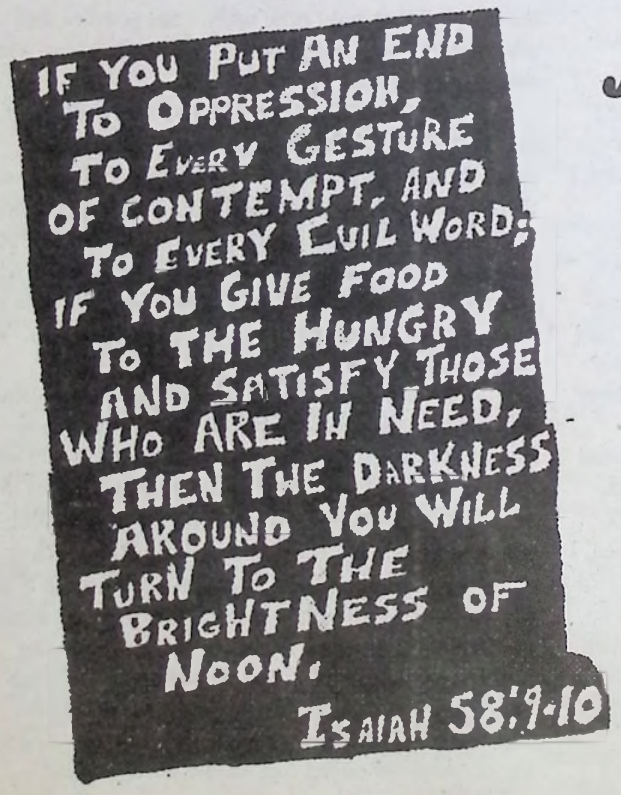
"What some of them have done not even the blood of Jesus can't wash away."

"Any God that can forgive what that criminal did to my loved one ain't my God!"

The time is now about 6:10 p.m. I can hear the chants and the prayers of the incarcerated supplicants in the chapel below. Whether these cries are sincere or not concerns the Lord Jesus more than me. He is their judge. I am called to love only as he loves, because he first loved all. Love so great God sent the only begotten child off to die. Love so great Jesus gave willingly his life on a tree. Love so powerful the Holy Spirit came down from heaven to comfort and share heaven with those who most needed love but did not deserve love. And, in the process of all this loving, a multitude of sins were covered and forgotten beneath a sea of precious blood.

Shortly, the prisoners at the Catholic Mass, some of whom came in wheelchairs, will be leaving and returning to their assigned institution. They will not leave the way they came. Because I have faith in Jesus, I will not return the way I came either. God is with us, and we are with God. Amen.

(Editor's note: Harold McCallister is a prisoner in Georgia and a friend of the Open Door Community.)



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Carrie Echols: A Massage for the Heart

with Elizabeth Dede

Carrie Echols is a long-time friend of the Open Door Community. She has been a passenger on our Hardwick Trip since its very beginning. During all that time, she has visited faithfully her grandson Marlon.

Carrie has a warm smile, a quick wit, and a wonderful sense of humor. Laughter always rolls from the van she's riding in.

Whenever I have a new driver on the trip, I ask Carrie to ride along. I know that she can give good directions, answer all the questions, and teach the novice about what it's like to be the family member of a person in prison. I know that she is well-loved and appreciated by many.

One morning in January, she came to the Open Door Community to share her story with me. Her 77 years on this earth have been rich and full, and I was greatly blessed to listen as she told of the pain and hardships of her childhood and youth. But the hard times did not overwhelm Carrie, or make her bitter. Instead, she is filled with joy, gratitude, and a deep faith. Her life, even with all its trials, has been a blessing, and she is full of thanksgiving to God.

Carrie readily admits that she's a comic, and believes that laughter, joy, and a sense of humor make life worth living. The joy of the Lord is her strength, and she is always ready to help others laugh. According to Carrie, laughter is a massage of the heart, and I am grateful that she brings the gift of joy to my life each month on the Hardwick Trip. Truly she did my heart today, and I am glad to share the joy with you.

I was born in Athens, Georgia, Clarke County. My father was a railroad man, and he was transferred to Atlanta, which was called the "Eleven Lights City." There weren't but eleven lights here in Atlanta. I was two years old. We came in on a mule and wagon, so I was told. We first lived on Auburn Avenue, right behind Big Bethel Church. Later on we moved to different places.

I was the oldest child, and it was just me at that time. Mother had two more right after we got here, and then there were four more on down the line, and I still was the oldest. My father worked very hard. He didn't allow my mother to work because she had the children. My grandmother lived with us because Daddy was an only child. She helped my mother raise us. Grandmother worked and Daddy worked, and Mother stayed home and took care of us and kept house.

I started school at seven years old. My father was a smart man. My mother didn't have no education, but my father did. He went to fourth grade in school. During that time, when my father went to school, they stayed all day, and they were smart people. He taught me a lot about my lessons; he learned me a lot.

Mother wouldn't even knew her name if she saw it because she couldn't read and write. Her mother had fourteen children, and she was the oldest just like I was, so she had to take care of all those kids. She couldn't go to school. My father was fortunate because he was an only child, and he had a chance to go as far as the fourth grade.

He took sick in 1931. He called me to the bed, and he say, "I'm gonna leave you." But I was only ten years old, and I didn't know what he was talking about. He said, "You won't be able to go to school." I was standing by the bedside and he had hold of me, and he said, "I'll tell you what. You try to get whatever you can. Maybe nobody will make a fool out of you. Do the best you can with it because I'm gonna leave you." But I didn't know what he meant.

I went on in school for a little while longer, but my mother kept me out most of the time because when Daddy died, my grandmother was the only

MURPHY DAVIS

Carrie Echols, laughing during the Hardwick Trip's lunch at the First Presbyterian Church in Milledgeville, Georgia.

supporter of the family, and Mother had to go out and go to work. So I had to stay home and see about these kids. I didn't have a chance to go to school much. I graduated from the grammar school sixth grade but I didn't go all through the seventh grade. There ain't but one thing I hate—that I didn't finish school. The only thing in my life that I hate.

Having to stay home and see about the children, I cried, and I hated my mother for a long, long time after my daddy died. I loved school, and I couldn't go, and I didn't understand it. But after I got older, I talked to her and forgave her for it. Actually, I learnt by myself. I had a good head on me, and I liked to read. My daddy used to tell me all the time, "When you see a word that you lack, and you can't spell it, you look at it real good, and close your eyes." He said, "You can see that word real good." He was a big help to me. Mother didn't seem to care about me going to school because she didn't know anything about it.

I always wanted to be a nurse, and I wanted to go to school so bad. I used to go out in the backyard and just cry because I wanted to go to school. My daddy told me I was very smart. When he died, I think I was in about the fourth grade maybe. He told me, he said, "You're doin' real good. Just keep it up. Just keep it up. You'll make it. But you won't finish school. You won't be able to finish school because I won't be here." After I got older, I thought about it, and looked into that, and thought about it, and I stopped hating my mother for it because she didn't know. But I just wished I could have gone to school. I loved school, and I still love school.

I didn't have no problems with my growing up. My life wasn't so bad. We was poor. We didn't have anything. But we lived. I remember one thing that was really funny when I was young; I think about this, and I laugh about it right now. My father was sick, and he was in bed. He had bronchitis. We was getting very short of food. We didn't have anything much to eat. At that time Hoover was the president, and everybody around there was going to the soup line on Edgewood Avenue. I asked my mother, "Mama, can I go to the soup line with all the other kids? They going to get some food to eat, and we ain't got nothing too much to eat. Can I go?" She said, "Your daddy'll have a fit," because Daddy still had his pride. But she said, "Go ahead on. But come back in the back door." She put on our coats, got us buckets to get the soup in, and let us out the back door. We children not knowing, we came back in the front door. We didn't have but three rooms, and my daddy was layin' there. We come home and just bust right in the house. He looked up. He said, "Where y'all been?" We said, "We went to the soup house." He called Mama in there, he said, "Why did you let these kids go to the soup house?" Mama said, "Isaac, our food is getting low. We don't have none, and the kids wanted to go." He said, "Throw it away. Throw all of it away." We had to take a bucket to put the soup in. It wasn't nothin' but just water with what looked like cabbage chopped up in it. And they gave us some milk and a loaf of bread. During that time things wasn't organized like it is now with cartons and things. We usually carried buckets. Daddy said, "Throw it away. Just throw it away. Throw the soup away. Just throw it away." So Mama said, "Yes, Isaac, the kids went and got it. Let 'em have it. They wanted to go, and they wanted to have it." He said, "I don't want 'em to have it. Throw it out." Mama didn't do it, though. She didn't throw it out. He was in bed and couldn't get out anyway. She let us eat it and have the milk and the bread. It was better than nothing at that time. We didn't know no better. If we had a known better, we'd a came in through the back door. But we came in the front door where he could see us. We didn't think about that. I think about that right now when I see peoples that need food to eat. Be grateful. We never know what we gonna come to.

My life wasn't too bad as I was comin' up. I don't remember a whole lot about it because our parents didn't talk to us about life like people talk with children now about what's goin' on. They kept things very secret. Children didn't know anything. We was actually dumb. I look at kids today, and they can tell you the whole history of their family life. We didn't know nothin'—no more than our parents told us. We didn't do no talkin'.

When I was comin' up, we went to all-Black schools and all-Black churches. Didn't know anything about whites. The Klansmen used to roam our neighborhood at night time. They didn't allow us to sit on the porch at night. We couldn't sit on the porch. We could hear 'em coming down the street. They rode horses. When the Klansmen would come down through our neighborhood, wasn't no ni - - ers allowed on the street. We had to get in. We sittin' on the porch, I remember one time Mama sayin', "I hear 'em comin'. Put the children in the oven." Other than that, they didn't ever bother us, say anything to us, because we never was on the porch. I just

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remember Mama talkin' about it. But we went to our school, and they went to theirs. They stayed in their neighborhood. And we stayed in ours. It just wasn't that confusing.

I worked for white folks. I worked in their home, and I lived in their home. They used to teach me my lessons. They was just as good to me. I never had no problems with none of 'em. I worked with a lady named Mrs. Commager. She was a sweet person. She used to often tell me, "Is this all the lesson you have? They don't give you no more lesson than this?" I said, "No, ma'am. That's all." She would make me stay some nights when I worked late, and she'd make me lay right down beside the bed. I laid on the floor right down beside her bed. She was good to me. She bought clothes for me and helped me out. She used to give me stuff left over to bring home.

I had a good life, though. It really wasn't too bad. It was hard. When I came along it was horses. Wasn't no cars and things. They rode horses. See, we came in from Athens on a wagon. The police used to ride horses. Where we lived they had a trough—long like a bathtub. On the end of it had a horse's head. They would step on it and fill this trough with water, let the horses drink from it. I used to stand and watch. I thought that was so much fun.

I'll tell you one thing that I did. My grandmother moved out from us. Mother was working, and she started going out. But she didn't know about going out because she was a country girl. My grandmother didn't like it, so she moved away from us and left us. So Mother went to work, and that made me really have to do all the washing, the ironing, seeing after the kids. I just had everything to do. So when I was 14 years old, I married. I was secretly married. I was going with a guy, who was older than I was. By me being treated as an adult, I just felt that I needed to get away. I couldn't go to picnics; I couldn't go to church; I couldn't go to Sunday School; I just couldn't do anything anymore. He just swept me off, and it was a way for me to get out.

A preacher married us in his house. He got the license because he was four years older than I was. I stayed home. I was scared. I told him, "I have to stay at home because my mama will kill me." He said, "You done married now." But I said, "I can't leave mama right now because she'll kill me." I went on in school a little while longer and got pregnant at 14 years old. I was in school asleep, and the teacher wrote my mama a note and told her that I was in school asleep. My mama asked me why. I said, "Well, Mama, you know I work so hard, and I stay up so late." I didn't want to tell her I was pregnant. I didn't even really know it myself. She started asking me questions and took me to Gradys to see what's wrong. And then she found out I was pregnant.

She said, "Well, you're pregnant," and told the teacher. And I was sent out of school. At that time they didn't allow kids to go to school if you got pregnant. So Mama say, "You can't go to school anymore. They turned you out of school because you're pregnant. Do you know who you got pregnant with?" I said, "No'm." I was scared, actually scared to death. She kept questioning me, and finally I told her, "Mama, I didn't want to tell you because I was scared. And I know I had to stay here and help you with the children. But I done got married. I was just tired of staying here. I had to see after the children. Can't never go on picnics; can't go to Sunday School. I can't do anything. I couldn't help it." Mama said, "I don't know what I'm gonna do." She went and got my husband and brought him over. We talked it over. I was shaking. I was actually scared. Mama said, "I need help, and she all I got." My husband said, "I won't take her away from you. I'll let her stay here with you."

By him being so much older, he knew how to do things better than me. I was like a country girl. I was dumb as an ox. When children was coming along when I was growing up, they was afraid to say anything to their parents. They did not say nothing to their parents. Whatever their parents say, went. And you didn't sit like kids do today and look at your parents while they talking. Even if they cooking, or whatever they doing; you got to be somewhere else. You never, never, never took the conversation away from your parents. We wasn't allowed to do it. I was actually scared of my mother until my first child was born, and I was still scared of her. We were raised up that way. That's the way it was. We didn't give 'em no back talk.

After I had one child, I stayed with Mama for quite a while until I got pregnant again with my second child. Then I still stayed with her. My husband was much older, and I was young, and I thought it was the thing to do. He wasn't good to me after that. He started runnin' around and drinkin', bein' ugly. So I finally divorced him.

When I was eleven years old, I was working part-time. Just around, cleaning white people's yard, carrying out the garbage, cleaning the bathrooms. I'd been working so, so long, and I knew how to do all of that because Mama brought me up doing all that: I knew how to iron, to wash, and clean up. I was just like Cinderella. I knew everything to do about a house. After the divorce I went to work full time to raise my two boys.

It was hard. When you have kids, and you don't have nobody to help you, it's hard. It's not easy. I tell you what. I grew up in a poor neighborhood, and we was poor. But at that time everything was cheap. You could get a nickle-worth of lard, a nickle-worth of meal, a nickle-worth of sugar, a nickle-worth of flour, dime-worth of bacon. Everything was cheap. The living was good. The rent was cheap. Probably you could live for ten, 'leven dollars maybe in an old house. Whole lot of houses. They was easy to get.

I had some hard times along the line, trying to raise my two boys by myself. I schooled both of my boys. Because I been working. I mean I work hard. I have worked day and night. My youngest son died in 1992. He was 54 years old. He died with cancer in the spine. He was a painter. He could draw beautiful. My oldest son is 61 now. He is a supervisor of maintenance at Grady Hospital and has been there quite a while.

My youngest son had ten childrens. My oldest son had ten childrens. I got twenty grandchildrens, and nine great-grandchildrens. I had two boys, and I have multiplied. Some of my grandchildren I don't even know. I don't know where they are. My oldest son been married ten times. He loved to be married. But I think he settled down now. He told me he had a wonderful life.

I remarried, but we didn't stay together. He was in the service. Had six years in the service. The two children that I had wasn't his, but he was just as good to me with those. I would never let him support my two boys. He supported me. I had to leave him because he started drinking and didn't want me to go nowhere, didn't want me to work. He was getting mean to me. I always feel like if you got something causing you to be down, can't work, can't do anything, you need to get rid of it. That's what I do whenever anything's around me I can't do anything with it, I get rid of it. You see, life is too short. And I don't think the Lord has brought me this far to leave me. And I'm not gonna let anything turn me around.

I live by myself, I stay by myself. There's still so many things I love to read, and the more I read, the more I learn. I learn a lot by myself. The neighborhood that I'm in now was mother's neighborhood. It wasn't mine. She willed me that house in 1983. She said, "This is all I can give you." I didn't want her to do it. I had two more sisters. Mother came to live with me first when the doctor said that she couldn't stay alone. The three of us got together. My youngest sister said, "Well, Carrie, you know I'm buying my house. I can't keep Mama." My sister in between—Elizabeth—she said, "I can't keep Mama. Mama'll just hold me back." So I went ahead on and kept her. They wanted me to do that anyway since I was the oldest, and I always had control. I bossed them. I raised them. So Mama came to live with me in 1973. She was happy in her house.

I started doing companion nursing in 1982 and took up flower arrangement after that. I'm always in to something. That's the reason I feel that I'm as well as I am now. I keep moving. I keep doing something. I just don't let my education that I didn't get interfere with my life because sometimes you can just be an educated fool. If you just put your life to what you want to do, and make yourself do something, just because you don't finish school, that don't mean you don't have no sense. My mother used to say all the time, "God gave you five senses. And you gotta have mother wit." So I've been doing pretty good with myself and my life. It hasn't been too bad.

Now I have travelled with the Open Door to Hardwick, Georgia, ever since the trip to the prisons there began. We used to meet downtown at the MARTA station on Broad and Alabama Street. It was fun to do that because we would go over and get a pile of food, and we'd have a lot to eat on the way. We was holding up the traffic at the station, and MARTA ran us away from there. We used to have to go all the way around the block and come back and pick up them that was there. Then more folks would come, so we'd go around and come back again and pick up them. So finally we moved it to the other station.

I tell you what. I have never enjoyed anything more than I've enjoyed going to Hardwick. I've met so many friends. If it hadn't a been for the trip I couldn't go to visit my grandson Marlon because, you see, I don't drive. I don't have nobody taking me anyplace. One day he called me and he said, "Grandmama, guess what? I got a way for you to come." And he gave me the number of the Open Door. And you know what? If I had silver and gold I believe I'd give it to the Open Door.

There's two things in my life now that has really been a help to me: the Open Door and the H.J.C. Borton Facility for Senior Citizens. Oh, I have enjoyed that just as much as I look forward to going on this trip to Hardwick. I look forward to going two days a week to go to the center and get in the pool. Mine is not aerobics. It's Arthritis Plus. We started out for about three months in the Beginners, and then we got promoted, and now I'm in Arthritis II. I wish you could come out and see us doing our exercises. We old womens, jumpin' up and down! Havin' a good time! I start Line Dancing next Thursday. My sister told me the other day, "Why you doin' that?" I say, "I do everything I can." I can walk the tread for twenty minutes; I can do the bicycle for fifteen minutes; I can lift 50 pounds of weight. I'm pretty good to be an old woman. I enjoy life, and I'm gonna try to enjoy life until I leave. The God that I serve has done that for me. God has been good to me. I get worried sometimes, but the Lord'll fix a way for me. I leave it up to God.

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The Legacy of Gandhi and King in a Violent Society

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Gandhi's faith in the unity of all in God led him to see that God is active in the world on behalf of truth and justice. Gandhi wrote that "to the poor ... God dare not appear except in the form of bread and the promise of work. Grinding poverty cannot lead to anything else than moral degradation. Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed [themselves]." But just as the unity of all in one requires justice for all, so too this unity requires nonviolence. Since it is God, Being, who secures truth and thus justice, Gandhi argued, true justice cannot come through violence. Violence asserts that one human being or one human group possesses the fullness of truth, and therefore can rightfully seek to violently coerce others to conform to their view of the truth. To engage in violence is to deny the truth of the unity of all beings and instead advance the claim that one's own truth warrants the destruction of another. Yet Gandhi also saw that to submit without protest or resistance to violence and injustice is a denial of Truth. Truth empowers one to resist the untruth of violence and oppression. I'll say more about this later.

As with King, Gandhi's faith was deepened in the course of action for social change. Like King, Gandhi's entrance into the struggle for justice developed in the context of a people oppressed. After receiving his law degree, Gandhi briefly practiced in India and then went to South Africa. Gandhi assumed that he would be treated as a subject of the British empire, that is as a British citizen in South Africa. However, upon arriving in South Africa, he quickly encountered the force of the apartheid laws in effect there. Despite the fact that Gandhi had a first-class ticket, he was thrown off of a train when a white passenger objected to traveling with a colored man. This experience was a turning point for Gandhi as he later wrote, "My active nonviolence began from that date." Soon he was working with others to resist apartheid laws.

A final note about Gandhi's faith and work for justice within the context of a community of faith, is that his base for nonviolent struggle for liberation in India was his ashram: a community of work and prayer. This ashram provided a communal context in which Gandhi experimented with the social change he was advocating for all of India. Here Gandhi put into practice his vision of unity, justice, economics for the sake of people, and the quest for truth which were at the heart of each of his nonviolent campaigns. Like King, whose organizational base remained the faith based Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Gandhi remained grounded in a faith community even beyond the struggle for independence.

2. Speaking the Truth Nonviolently; Seeking Justice Without Succumbing to Self-Righteousness.

Since both Gandhi and King grounded their commitment to liberation and justice in a faithful vision of the truth about human life, they both had to contend with learning how to speak that truth without violence, and thus to seek justice without succumbing to self-righteousness.

We have seen that Gandhi's faith in a God who is Truth, and who as Truth transcends all partial human truths, is central to the practice of nonviolence which he termed "Satyagraha." In Satyagraha, Gandhi brought together his faith in God as Truth with nonviolent resistance to injustice. To practice satyagraha is to speak the truth. Gandhi said Satyagraha "is nothing but the introduction of truth and gentleness in the political, that is, the national life." To speak the truth is to challenge the lies which deny the unity of human life, the lies which place some humans over others in relations of oppression.

Gandhi saw that a strong commitment to Truth empowers persons to act for justice without giving them a spirit of self-righteousness. Because of his connection of Truth with God, Gandhi saw that Truth can be understood in two ways. First, there is Truth with a capital "T"—absolute Truth—Truth as goal for all of life. This is the Truth Gandhi identified with God: "Truth is God; that is, Absolute or Ultimate Reality." This Absolute Truth, Gandhi saw, cannot be fully comprehended by human knowing. In addition to Absolute Truth, there is truth with a small "t"—relative truth. Though humans can have some knowledge of Truth, it is never complete, never final. For this reason, truth as we know it in this life is always open to development, correction, experimentation. As Gandhi wrote of his own pursuit and practice of truth, "I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found God, but I am seeking after God. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest .... But as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it." It is the recognition of our inability to know the fullness of Truth that requires us to remain open to those who differ with us. Gandhi wrote that the "pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy" since "what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other." At the same time, it is our conviction that there is Truth which commits us to taking seriously the truth that we do have, and so to struggle for justice consistent with that vision of truth. Gandhi wrote, "It is not given to [humans] to know the whole truth. [Human] duty lies in living up to the truth as [one] sees it and, in doing so, to resort to the purest means, i.e., to nonviolence."

Gandhi made two further connections between truth and nonviolent action for social change which commit persons to seek truth without self-righteousness and its inevitable companion, violence. First, since we do not possess Absolute Truth, we need others to help us in our search for Truth. We might think here of Truth as the whole puzzle of existence, while each of us is a puzzle piece. We need each other, in all of our unique differences as pieces, to fit together to create the wholeness of Truth—the complete puzzle. Gandhi believed that we are built as human beings to seek truth with one another. We are interdependent, social creatures, and so we need each other's insight, experience, reasoning to help us come to fuller and fuller approximations of Truth. Ahimsa (nonviolence) is therefore consistent with the basic law of our being that we need each other in the pursuit of Truth, while violence in denying our need for each other is a denial of this basic law of our being.

Second, since our knowledge of truth emerges from our ability to reason, to engage in rational discussion with one another, we can only come to truth through argument, dialogue, engagement with each other as human beings. Violence ends such dialogue and proclaims that might makes right, or at the very least that right must be protected by might. Gandhi wrote, "Sword-force is brute force. Killing people requires no intelligence. ... one animal subdues another by its physical might. Its world is ruled by that law, but not so the human world. The law which is most in harmony with human nature is that of winning over another by the power of love—by soul-force."

That not all are committed to Truth, and that some will attempt to enforce their own particular views of truth, means that there will be injustice and violence. Some people will attempt through violence to impose a particular view of the truth as Absolute Truth. Thus a commitment to Truth and Ahimsa will inevitably lead to suffering, which is the third part of Satyagraha. We will return to talk about this in connection with nonviolent resistance.

But what about King and this principle of speaking truth and seeking justice without violence? King saw that nonviolence emerges from commitment to and participation in the truth of God's creative and redeeming love. Empowered by God's love, nonviolent resisters seek to act consistent with that love in the struggle to create the beloved community. Convinced that God is working to create this beloved community, nonviolent resisters will only use means that are consistent with the end. And since the beloved community is one in which persons are respected, only means that respect the opponent can be used.

Further, convinced that human beings are children of God, the activist comes to see the struggle as being not against persons, but against a system or social structure. King wrote that nonviolence takes aim at "the forces of evil rather than against persons who are caught in those forces." Nonviolence "seeks to attack the evil system rather than individuals ... caught up in the system." The social change desired, King argued, would be liberating not only for the oppressed, but for the oppressor as well.

King's approach reflects a traditional Christian distinction between the sinner and the sin, and the adage that we should love the sinner but hate the sin. Behind this view is the conviction that human beings are created to live in a certain way, as Gandhi would put it, "the truth of their being." To act contrary to God's creative intent for human life results in personal and social destruction. Consistent with this view, King was convinced that the evil of racism was destructive of human good, not only for Blacks, but also for whites. Whites cannot flourish as human beings as long as their lives are distorted by hatred, fear, and violence. Racism deadens the souls of whites because it requires whites to deny the truth of their own being—that they are, with all others, brothers and sisters of a common parent, God. Racism requires whites to deny the good impulses of their hearts given in creation and reaffirmed in redemption.

Thus King, even though he saw the power of sin in human life, remained convinced that there is a more basic truth about human beings, "that there is within human nature an amazing potential for goodness. There is within human nature something that can respond to goodness." It is this fundamental truth about the goodness in human nature grounded in God's creation and redemption that nonviolence appeals to in its practice of self-suffering love. King's commitment to nonviolence thus reflects both a realism about human sin in that justice will not come without struggle and suffering, but also a hope for human transformation grounded in the creative and redemptive power of God's creative and redemptive love within human life.

In sum, for both Gandhi and King the sense that in the struggle for justice there is a transcendent standard not fully graspable by human beings serves two purposes. First, it gave them the

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confidence to struggle for justice which is grounded in Truth and Love. Second, it provided a safeguard against self-righteousness and the temptation to use violence to enforce one's view of the truth. For Gandhi this safeguard came primarily in his distinction between Absolute Truth and truth. For King it came primarily in the traditional distinction between sin and sinner. Both saw that the truth and justice they were struggling for was greater than their own work, visions, and organizations.

3. A commitment to nonviolence as a method for social change which honestly, yet hopefully, recognizes there will not be change without suffering.

Because humans attempt to identify their particular truths with the Truth, as Gandhi would put it, or because humans attempt to live contrary to the creative and redemptive love of God, as King would put it, there is injustice, oppression, and violence. Given that injustice and oppression are backed by violence, those who nonviolently work for justice will encounter suffering. Both Gandhi and King honestly face this fact and yet offer hopeful responses to this suffering.

Gandhi's recognition of the suffering involved in nonviolent struggle came out in part in his emphasis that Satyagraha was not for the weak and cowardly. This stress on the need for courage in nonviolent resistance was also evident in King. Gandhi wrote that Satyagraha involves more courage than that which is required for a soldier because it involves the possibility of being killed without inflicting physical harm or death on one's opponent. Anyone can strike back in retaliation, but only the truly brave and powerful can withstand suffering without seeking vengeance.

It is important to stress that for Gandhi and for King, nonviolence is not submission. One should never submit to being humiliated, to being treated with disrespect. Gandhi wrote, "The first principle of nonviolent action is that of non-cooperation with everything humiliating." King likewise wrote, "nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist .... For while non-violent resisters are passive in the sense that [they are] not physically aggressive toward [their] opponents, [their] minds and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade [their] opponents that [they are] wrong .... It is not passive nonresistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil."

Gandhi and King honestly admit that in the practice of nonviolent resistance to evil there will be suffering. But, Gandhi argued, it is through this type of suffering freely embraced in nonviolent struggle that the resister may come to bring oppressors to a fuller appreciation of Truth, and thus to justice. And, as we shall see, King argued in a similar manner that suffering, freely accepted in the struggle for justice, can be redemptive, can bring liberation.

Gandhi urged that suffering voluntarily undertaken in the struggle for justice can bring beneficial transformation to both the resister and the oppressor. The effect on the resister is that suffering brings moral purification and more moral power, since one will endure suffering only for a true and just cause. In accepting suffering in the nonviolent struggle for justice, one's own commitment to the truthfulness and rightness of one's cause is tested; suffering tests one's moral sincerity. On the other hand, the effect on the oppressors is that the suffering of others who stand against the injustice, the oppression, may lead them to reexamine their position, as they are moved by the suffering of other people and compassion is awakened.

We have seen that King's commitment to justice and to nonviolence are both rooted in his faith in a God who is able; that is, a God who is powerfully active in the world, bringing it to fulfillment in the beloved community. King thus urged the practice of a biblical love expressed in "understanding good will" for another. This love was not grounded in a liberal view of the goodness of all humans or "some sentimental emotion" dependent upon human good will. Rather, this biblical love was grounded in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It is, therefore, a love that seeks through suffering to promote the good even of one's enemies. The cross of Christ shows that God deals with God's enemies through sacrificial love. The nonviolent person, in imitation of Christ, practices this love through nonviolent resistant actions that draw out and absorb the hatred and violence of the opponent, even to the point of death. In this process, King argued, evil is defeated and persons are healed, not because of some natural process, but rather through the power of God's love active in history; the same love shown in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

King's deep belief that "unmerited suffering is redemptive," like Gandhi's confidence that suffering can transform both the sufferer and the one causing the suffering, was grounded in the faith that God is on the side of truth and justice. Like Gandhi, King did not urge suffering for its own sake, nor encourage people to be passive in accepting the suffering imposed upon them. Rather he sought to give people confidence in the midst of suffering which came as a consequence of commitment to nonviolent struggle for justice. This type of suffering can defeat injustice; it can be redemptive, because God in, siding with Truth and love, subverts the attempt to use suffering to enforce injustice. For King the central symbol of this subversion was the cross and resurrection; or, as Gandhi put it, "Truth alone triumphs. Truth always wins."

4. A Refusal to Despair or A Commitment to Hope

This brings me to a fourth and final lesson which we may draw from Gandhi and King: a refusal to despair or a commitment to hope. Gandhi emphasized that there is a moral order in existence and this moral order expresses the truth of our being. This truthful structure of being, the unity of all people as one, cannot be defeated. "Truth," Gandhi wrote, "ever triumphs." Nonviolent struggle for justice, King likewise consistently stressed, is based upon the conviction that the universe bends toward justice. There is, King argued, a moral order in the universe, and it is on the side of justice. He wrote, "It is this deep faith in the future that causes the nonviolent resister to accept suffering without retaliation." Nonviolent resisters know that in their struggle for justice, in their suffering as they confront injustice, they have "cosmic companionship."

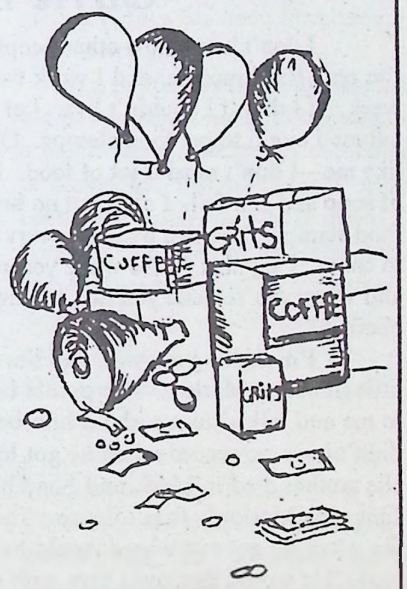
This faithful confidence in God's companionship is to spur action. It is not an idle waiting for God to act. King wrote that God needs humans to join with God in the creation of the beloved community.

Human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of [people] willing to be co-workers with God, and without their hard work, time itself becomes an ally of stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood[and sisterhood]. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

It is finally, King's conviction that "the universe bends toward justice" that brings together his faith in God as creator and redeemer, and his conviction that nonviolent love can not only resist evil and injustice but bring social transformation and thus create the beloved community. In responding to God's creative call placed within our hearts, in accepting the empowering love of God given in Christ, humans can act in the nonviolent power of love to create in history with God the beloved community. This is the path to human flourishing, even though it goes through the dark valley of suffering. To go "the way of acquiescence," King wrote, "leads to moral and spiritual suicide." On the other hand, "The way of violence leads to bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers. But the way of nonviolence leads to redemption and the creation of the beloved community." As Gandhi consistently argued, it is only in accepting and living out the truth of our natures as human beings made for oneness with each other that we can be fulfilled. He wrote, "I swear by nonviolence because I know that it alone conduces to the highest good of [humankind], not merely in the next world but in this also. I object to violence, because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent; and permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence." Thus Gandhi encourages us that "Whatever difficulties we encounter, whatever apparent reverses we sustain, we should not lose faith but should ever repeat one mantra, 'Truth exists, it alone exists. It is the only God and there is but one way of realizing it; there is but one means that is ahimsa [nonviolent love]. I will never give it up. May the God that is Truth, in whose name I have taken this pledge, give me the strength to keep it.'"

(While Gandhi and Dr. King used the language of their day, we felt it was necessary to adapt their statements to inclusive language.)

Easter Needs



Each Easter, the Open Door Community gathers at sunrise with the homeless in our city, amidst flowers and balloons, to share in worship and a ham and eggs breakfast.

We need and appreciate your help in providing this Easter meal which is served to some 200 - 300 folks. Our needs include:

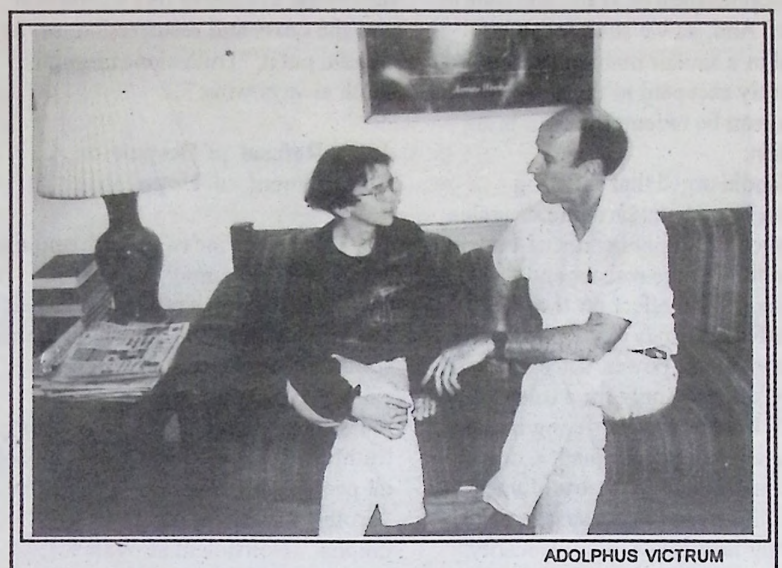
Ham, Eggs, Grits, Sweet Rolls, Coffee, Money, Flowers, Balloons, and Volunteers!

Blue Jeans and Meditation

by Tamara Puffer, with Michael Galovic

While serving at the Open Door, I would sometimes hurry to answer the door to give some of our homeless friends an aspirin or some socks. Sometimes I would be downstairs cutting up oranges and grating cheese for the Butler Street Breakfast, where I would see a 50-ish man in blue jeans doing some painting or getting on a ladder. Other times he would be walking the halls with a tool belt on his hips. Once when I was having difficulty emptying the mop bucket, Frank walked by and asked if I needed a hand.

I began to want to know more about him. Finally one day, I asked him if we could sit down and talk. What I discovered about this contractor surprised me.



ADOLPHUS VICTRUM

Tamara and Frank chatting in the Open Door living room.

Frank was born into an Irish Catholic family. He went to Maryknoll Seminary in 1964 for three years planning to be a foreign missionary. When he left the Seminary, he became an agnostic. He went on and received a degree in philosophy from the University of Scranton in 1968.

When he was a senior in college he was very opposed to the Vietnam War. He did a lot of research and he came to the surprising conclusion that only two churches, the Quakers and the Church of the Brethren, opposed the war. Consequently, he attended his first Friends' Meeting in 1967.

In 1975 he received a Masters in Humanistic Psychology from the University of West Georgia.

Frank has two children, a twenty-four-year-old son and a seventeen-year-old daughter. His connection to the Open Door began just after his divorce in 1988, when he came as a volunteer to help prepare a Thanksgiving meal. Also around that time, he met Ed and Murphy (Partners at the Open Door) through his daughter's friendship with Hannah (both girls attended the Horizon School). Then in 1988, Frank met Jim Hinshaw (Novice at the Open Door) at a Life Training workshop.

For the past fifteen years, Frank has worked as a small, commercial contractor in Atlanta. He did an estimate on some painting for the Open Door. He also did a small plumbing job. The Open Door is now the main focus of his contracting work.

After his divorce, he re-awakened spiritually. He began reading the Christian Scriptures and in addition, he became devoted to the teaching of Satya Sai Baba, a spiritual leader in India. His interest in this teacher took him to India in 1988 and then again in 1992.

Frank recognizes the importance of helping others, and this theme is present in his own family. He has three brothers, one a priest in Tulsa, Oklahoma, one a lawyer in Longview, Washington, and one who is severely mentally challenged and lives in a group home close to the Open Door. (It is interesting to note that according to the Task Force for the Homeless, 40% of our homeless friends are mentally challenged.)

So if you are at the Open Door and you see a man with a tool belt on his hips, stop and say "hi" to him. Perhaps you would like to talk about Satya Sai Baba or about meditation, or about the richness that prayer, contemplation, painting, plumbing, and wearing blue jeans may bring to life.

Tamara Puffer is a Volunteer Presbyterian Pastor at the Open Door.

"Carrie Echols...," *(continued from page 7)*

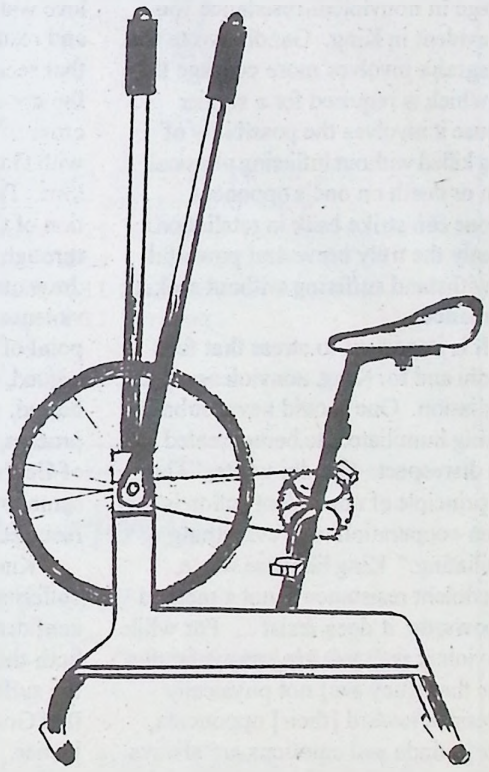
I don't know how other people do, but I'm on a fixed income, and I work two days a week. If I didn't I couldn't live. Lot of people tell me I ought to get food stamps. Old person like me—I don't need a lot of food. I eat a can of soup and I'm full. I ain't got no business on food stamps. You can live, but every penny got to count. I say this, "Live while you're living, and when you're dead you don't know anything about it."

I'm making my will, and I'm willing this little house to Marlon. The parole board came to me and talked to me about him because he didn't have no record when he got locked up. His mother died in 1969, and I had him with me. This was Marlon's first offense. They asked me when he got out where would he live, and I said, "He would live right here with me." Marlon was convicted in 1980, so he's had 18 years. He will come up for parole in October again.

I have a good life now. And everybody I meet is my friend. I work for Mrs. Hughes, and I've been with her for 27 years. I just retired from another job, waiting on a lady's mother, doing companion nursing. She ran three other nurses away, but she didn't run me away. She always said that my mother was blessed to have me. This is the way I feel: Anything you do, I think you ought to do it right. If you ain't gonna do it right, just leave it alone. I have patience. That's what it takes, and love. Love is the important thing in anybody's life. If you not loved, then you don't have no life. I've always been loved. I've been so blessed. Honestly, honestly, I don't think I've had no really hard time. I won't ever have much money. But I'm just living to time. You can't call back time. And I'm just living the best I can until my time comes.

I pray my time won't come before Marlon gets out of prison. I often pray that. He doesn't have anybody else. His father said he didn't put him in there, and so he doesn't go to see him. He gets mad with me and says, "You still goin' down that road?" But I'm not gonna stop seein' Marlon. I have served my time in prison: I went to prison 18 years to visit my brother; 18 years with Marlon. I think the Parole Board needs to turn me a-loose. If they put Marlon out of there, they'll be through with me. I hope and pray, and I pray all the time. I need Marlon. I need help. I'm tryin' so hard by myself. You know, Marlon's graduated from high school since he's been in prison, and he done took up two trades: electrician and air-conditioning. I have a prayer list, and I read my Bible. I ask the Lord all the time to let me live to see Marlon get out. I told Marlon, "When I get 90 years old, I'm gonna lay down and go." He says, "Don't say that, Grandmama." I say, "Well, I ain't 90 yet." I just hope and pray. And you know, God answer prayer.

I'm a very comical person, but when it comes down to the real thing, I get right to prayer. I read where it said, anytime you make a person laugh you massage their heart. I say that all the time: "I have did your heart today."



We could use an exercise bike in the Community. If you have one you could donate, please call Brenda Smith at 404-874-9652.

Thank you!

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Catholic Worker:

Peace! It is with great pleasure that I inform you that the Catholic Worker Movement has been selected by the Center for Peace and Justice Education of Villanova University as the 1997 recipient of the Adela Dwyer/St. Thomas of Villanova Peace Award.

The Peace Award is presented to individuals and organizations "in recognition for their outstanding contributions to the understanding of the meaning and conditions of justice and peace in human communities." Past recipients include Jon Sobrino, Habitat for Humanity, Native American Rights Fund, Eileen Egan, John McNamee, Jim Wallis, and Helen Prejean.

The Award includes both a plaque and a check for $1,000 and will be given at a ceremony on Tuesday, March 31, 1998 at 7:30 p.m. in the DeLeon Room of the University's St. Augustine Center. All are invited to attend. While the Award is for the entire Catholic Worker Movement, for practical reasons the plaque and check will be presented to the members of the House of Grace, a Catholic Worker house in Kensington, Pennsylvania. The University and the Center have a close relationship with the House of Grace and felt this approach to be appropriate.

Congratulations and may God bless you and your work.

Sincerely,

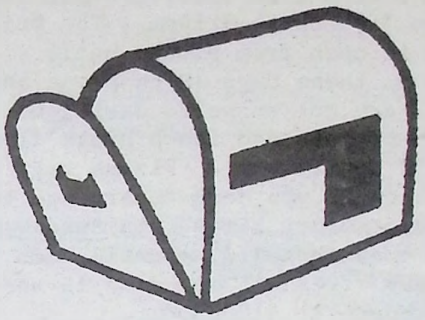
Robert H. DeFina, Director
Center for Peace and Justice Education
Villanova University
Villanova, PA

Dear Open Door Community,

I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for all that you do. Last year I visited your community with a group from Mars Hill College in North Carolina. During that short weekend, I witnessed you truly living out Christ's call to serve "the least of these." My life has not been the same since that weekend last November. I am no longer satisfied with my comfort. God calls me beyond that. Thank you for living the love of Christ and thank you for empowering others to do the same. You are in my prayers. May God's grace and peace be with you during the holidays.

Peace in Christ,

Missy Harris
Sylva, NC



Dear Murphy:

I don't know how you, Ed, and all the rest, do it. I keep saying to myself, "they can't keep it up," but somehow or other, *Hospitality* continues to be first rate. And, your article on Dorothy Day (January 1998) amazed me. Before I read it I saw it was long, and I wondered, will it hold my interest? It did. And how wonderful to join with that remarkable woman.

My memory is not reliable, but it seems to me Dorothy Day, at one time, was a syndicated columnist whose articles appeared in newspapers. And, back in the 1930's my mother read her articles, talked about them at dinner (dinner was always a time the family talked about issues beyond our home), and I knew there surely was something special about this woman. I have since discovered what it was.

Again thanks so much for what you are doing—you and Ed remain an inspiration to so many of us.

With much love,

John Ball
Decatur, GA

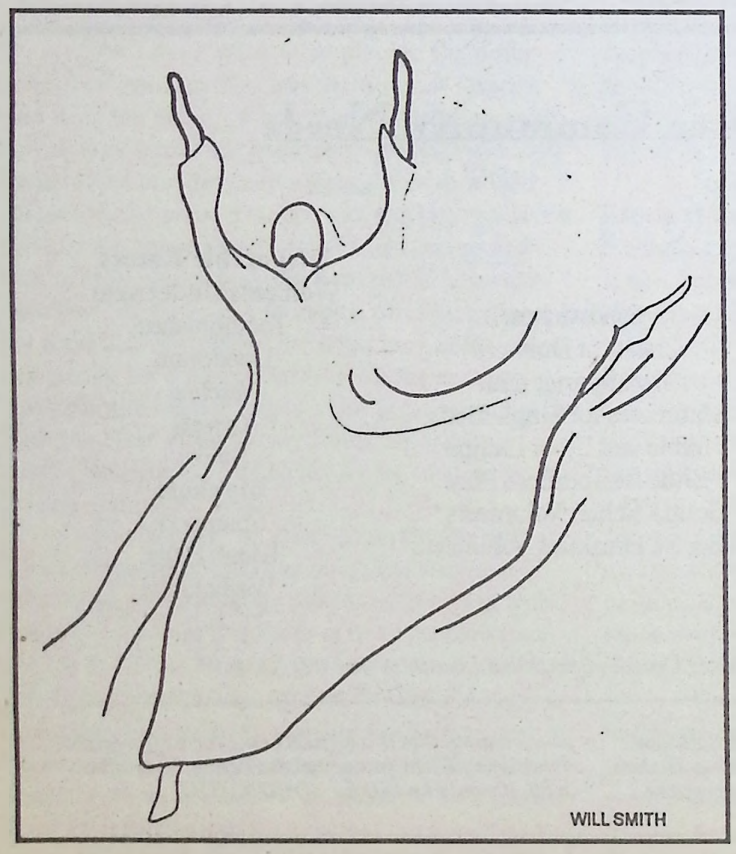
Dear Murphy,

I loved your piece on Dorothy Day in the January issue of *Hospitality*. And I was heartened by the mile of good news in your "Inch by Inch" column.

Maybe 1998 will be the year our paths cross after so long an absence.

Much love,

Ellen Clarke
Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice
Asheville, NC



Dear Friends at the Open Door:

We are remembering you this week with thankfulness. The November (1997) issue of *Hospitality* was so encouraging. I loved Murphy's article on the history of the Hardwick Trip. "We can do that.".

Blessings on your community.

Love,

Bob and Phoebe Smith
Daytona Beach, FL

Children Living Under Occupation

by JoAnne Lingle

(Editor's note: JoAnne Lingle is a regular at the Open Door Community worship, and she will be joining us as a Resident Volunteer in early April. Presently she is serving as part of the Christian Peacemaking Team (CPT) in Hebron in the Palistinian West Bank. CPT Hebron has maintained a violence reduction presence in Hebron since June of 1995 at the invitation of the Hebron Municipality.)

After dinner, the Palestinian father took his five children to the market to get some sweets. To get back to their home, they had to cross Shuhada Street.

They were stopped by Israeli soldiers who told the father he could not go that way. "But how will I get home?" he asked. One of the soldiers said, "I don't know. Why don't you ask God? He will tell you."

When Cliff [another member of the Christian Peacemaking Teams] and I heard that a Palestinian was being detained near Shuhada Street, we went to see what was happening. We recognized the father as a neighbor and a friend. The children had left and there were loud words between the soldiers and our friend. Soon the Israeli police arrived. In the past, police have become upset with soldiers when they have unnecessarily detained Palestinians. The police began arguing with the soldiers. What bedlam!

The children returned and after what seemed to be a very long time, our friend was allowed to leave and go home with his children. He said when the soldiers stopped him, one of them grabbed him by his shirt and his children were trembling with fear.

I looked into the children's faces as their father spoke. They were trying to smile in a brave sort of way; however, tears began to well up in their eyes. As I put my arm around the little girl standing next to me, I could feel her trembling once more and she began to sob. What a sad thing it is to be a child living in such fear and knowing that even your father cannot protect you.

WE ARE OPEN. . .

Monday through Saturday: telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 2:00 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 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 7:00am 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, 2:00pm-5pm
CLARIFICATION MEETINGS: Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm.
WEEKEND RETREATS: Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), next retreat is our Spring retreat, April 24 - 26.

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

Open Door Community Worship

We gather for worship and Eucharist on Sunday evenings followed by supper together. Please join us!

February		March	
February 1	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Readings in Black History	March 1	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Marsha Snulligan-Haney, preaching
February 8	5 p.m. Worship at 910; 5:45 p.m., Lewis and Mary Sinclair: The Story of the Highlander Center	March 8	5 p.m. Eucharist 5:45 p.m. Music Night
February 15	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Markell Hutchins, preaching	March 15	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Nibs Stroupe, preaching
February 22	5 p.m. Worship at 910; John Cole Vodicka, preaching	March 22	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Ed Loring, preaching
		March 29	5 p.m. Worship at 910; Dedication of our New Dining Room and Kitchen (see p. 4)

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!

Wanted

Soup Kitchen Volunteers for Friday from 9 a.m. - 12:30

If you can help, please call our Volunteer Coordinator, Brenda, at 404-874-9652.

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

Tuesday, March 3 7:30 p.m.
Lynn Thogerson, "Health Care: a Privilege or a Right."

Tuesday, March 17 6 p.m.
Seder Meal

Tuesday, April 21 7:30 p.m.
Reflection, Holy Week and Easter on the Streets

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_____

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City_____ St____ Zip_____ +_____

Phone_____

Open Door Community Needs

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

Sandwiches
Chests of Drawers
Box Springs and Mattresses for Single Beds
Table and Floor Lamps
Slide for Toddler's Play
Soup Kitchen Volunteers*
Butler St. Breakfast Volunteers*

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

** contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Brenda Smith at 404-874-9652*

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!