



# HOSPITALITY

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## There is Enough For Everyone

by Jürgen Moltmann

*Editor's note: Jürgen Moltmann lives in Tübingen, Germany. He preached the following sermon at The Open Door on April 17.*

"And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with rejoicing.

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which they possessed was their own, but they had everything in common.

And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need." (Acts 4: 31-35)

There is enough for everyone: that is the incredible message of the first Pentecost story. We are not being told some story about "the golden age" of the first Christians long ago. This is the announcement to us today about real, possible ways of living in the superfluity of the creative Spirit. It is a message through which we ourselves can arrive at a new experience: the experience of the community of the Spirit.

There is enough for everyone: but 10% of the people in my own country are living beneath subsistence level. That is the poverty existing in the affluent society of West Germany. How do these things fit together?

There is enough for everyone: but millions of men and women are unable to find work. Mineral resources are getting scarcer and scarcer. Sources of energy are drying up. Prices are rising. Debts are increasing. Want is spreading in all areas of life. What a contradiction!

How can there be enough for everyone, when we know that from the very beginning humankind has lived with want, with empty stomachs and thirsty throats, with anxiety in their hearts and fear at their backs? There has never been enough, there still isn't enough, and there never will be enough: surely that has to be our indignant answer. But are we right? Were the first Christians really just talking nonsense? What is the truth?

The Pentecost story talks about an experience of God. It is the experience of the Spirit who descends on men and women, permeates them through and through, soul and body, and brings them to a new community and fellowship with one another. In this experience people discover that they are filled with new energies they had never imagined existed, and find the courage for a new style of living. That is why this Spirit is called the creative Spirit, the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of the resurrection—in fact the Holy Spirit.

It is a remarkable thing, but whenever people in the New Testament talk about this experience of God in the creative Spirit, they become intoxicated and fall into superlatives. They talk about the "abundance" of the Spirit, the "overflowing exuberance" of the Spirit, about the boundless "riches of life." "In every way you are enriched, so that you are not lacking in any gift," Paul told the little group of Christians among the dockworkers in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:6). People later called the Christian community in Jerusalem "the poor;" but in our text we are told that "there was not a needy person among them" (Acts 4:34). Everybody has enough, more than enough, and there is no want anymore, not in any way. This is the unanimous experience of life in the Spirit, in

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Sally Garrett © 1986



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the creative—the life-giving—the Holy Spirit.

How does it happen? Is it realistic, or just a kind of religious ecstasy? Is it a possibility we can actually experience—something we can really put into practice? Or is it nothing more than the expression of a religious longing?

We find three factors in our story for the fulness of life and the overcoming of every want:

1. "And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." That is the first thing, for that is the beginning of everything else. It is the resurrection of the crucified Christ from death that opens up the fulness of life—of eternally living life. Death's power has been taken away. The menaces of death have already ceased to be effective. Immortal life and life's indestructible joys are already present, here and now. Everyone can enjoy "eternal life and blessedness." Everyone can have them both, for nothing—through grace. The risen Christ gives the divine life to everybody who enters into the community of Christ's people and believes.

To be in want means being shut out from the pleasures of life. To be in want means not having enough to eat and drink. To be in want means being sick and lonely. In the ultimate resort, to suffer want means losing life itself. The greatest want of all, the absolute deprivation, is death. All the other wants we experience and suffer from in life are connected with death. They are all something death steals from life. Because we know we have to die, we can't get enough of living.

But if Christ is risen, then this means the spread of hope for the life that is immortal, a life no death can kill, a life of which there is always enough, more than enough, not just for those of us who are still alive, but for the dead as well. Both in our lives and in our deaths we partake of this indestructible resurrection life which has become manifest through Christ. "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8).

Pentecost has Easter as its premise. The experience of the creative and therefore immortal spirit of life in us is nothing other than the experience of the whole of life in the light of the resurrection. For this experience of the Spirit is the feast of a life that no longer knows any want. It is the feast of the rapturous, overflowing divine joy of living.

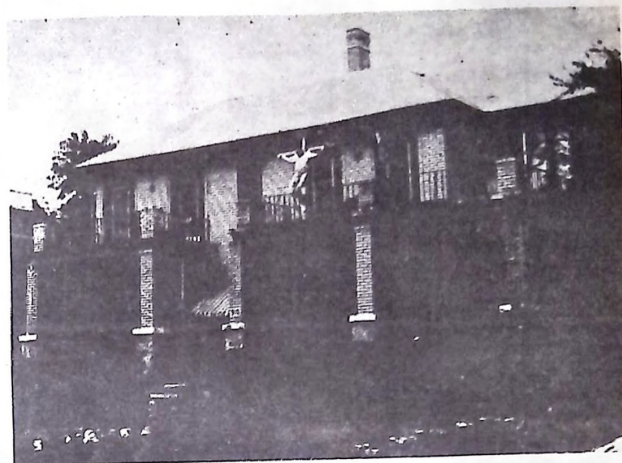
2. "Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul." That is the second factor and it takes us a step further. An unknown company of men and women become believers, and these people are at once "of one heart and soul." This is what the experience of the Spirit of fellowship means. The Spirit of fellowship is the God among us. In God the divisions between people, and our enmity towards one another, are overcome. The oppression of people by other people stops. The humiliation of people by other people comes to an end. The estrangement of one person from another is swept away. Masters and servants become sisters and brothers. Men and women become friends. Privileges and discriminations disappear from human society. We become "of one heart and soul."

Wherever this happens we experience God: the God among us, the God who is community and fellowship, the Holy Spirit.

How is this possible? The secret is very simple. Whenever God, the fountain and source of life and all

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

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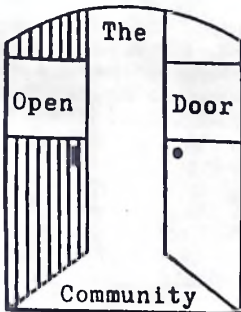
Circulation—Tim Wyse and a multitude of earthly hosts  
and guests.



THOSE WHO TAKE THE MEAT FROM THE TABLE TEACH CONTENTMENT...  
THOSE FOR WHOM THE TAXES ARE DESTINED DEMAND SACRIFICE...  
THOSE WHO EAT THEIR FILL SPEAK TO THE HUNGRY OF WONDERFUL  
TIMES TO COME.  
THOSE WHO LEAD THE COUNTRY INTO THE ABYSS, CALL RULING  
TOO DIFFICULT FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE.

—BERTOLT BRECHT—





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SPRING APPEAL

Dear Friends,

On the fourth Sunday of Easter we celebrated Good Shepherd Sunday with a reading of the traditional and well-loved twenty-third Psalm: "Lord, you are our Shepherd. We have everything we need." That first verse is a very powerful statement of faith.

In our big family and household, our experience of daily life is that of constant need. We need people to do the work. Folk come to our door and need food, clothes, a place to stay. Our house is in need of repair. We need a new van because the old one stalls thirteen times each morning as we carry breakfast to our hungry friends downtown. Our friends in prison need love and support. And the list of needs goes on forever.

Yet the faithful response to our list of needs is to turn to God and say, "We have everything we need." God has blessed us through your gifts of time, clothes, food, and money. So as we are in need again; we know, with faithful hearts, that we can turn to you for support, and all our needs will be provided.

May you be richly blessed by our Shepherd God.

Love and Peace from All of Us at The Open Door Community—

*Edna Williams*  
*Murphy Davis*  
*Pat Ford*  
*James Bar*  
*Willie Duke*  
*Ralph Hyl*  
*Bill Veazey*  
*Willie L. London*  
*John Hatten*  
*Willie D*  
*Joe Bottoms*  
*Robert Burd*  
*James B. Brown*  
*Daniel M. Brown*  
*Ronald Rude*  
*Carl Barker*  
*Betty Smith*  
*Jim Hays*  
*Rob Johnson*



goodly powers, ceases to be a God far away in heaven and becomes present among us, then there is no longer any want anymore. But where there is no longer any want, there is no longer any struggle for power either, and there is no more rivalry. And where there is no struggle for power and no rivalry, the age-old fears of one another we have built up simply fall away, and so do our desperately bottled-up aggressions. We step out into free life. Our fears and our aggressions simply become ludicrous, because there is enough for everyone there. God is there. God lives among us and invites us through God's spirit of fellowship to become "of one heart and soul."

3. "No one said that any of the things which they possessed was their own, but they had everything in common." This is the third point, and everything else comes down to this. In the resurrection hope and in the experience of the God of community and fellowship, no one needs to cling to their possessions any longer. Anyone who has found the assurance of eternal life simply doesn't need the ambiguous security that their possessions give them anymore. So all their possessions are there to be used by the people who need them. That is why "they had everything in common" and that is why there wasn't "a needy person among them." They brought everything they had to the apostles and gave "to each as any had need."

This first Pentecost congregation had enough to satisfy life's elemental needs—more than enough. The community of Christ always has enough to satisfy life's elemental needs—more than enough. The emperor Julian the Apostate said about the community of Christians in Rome three hundred years after the first Pentecost: "These Christians do not merely feed their own poor; they feed the poor of the whole city as well." None of these people were rich, and yet they lived in superfluity.

Why does the Pentecost community always have "more than enough?" Because the power of the resurrection and the Spirit of fellowship have liberated them from the fear of death and from anxiety about life. If God is for us, if God is in our midst, between each and all of us, then there is no longer any want, in any sector of life. People share everything and share in everything, divide and confide all that they have. That is the message of the Pentecost community in Jerusalem, which made so many rich. And that is their message to us as well.

Some smart people are critical of this story. They say: "Oh well, yes, of course—that was primitive Christian communism, but it didn't work out in the long run. Human beings just are wicked by nature. They need property because they're egoists. So let's stick to healthy egoism." They don't realise how banal—how literally lacking in spirit their criticism is.

It is of course true that when we look at our world we can see that exactly the opposite principle dominates our lives, our thinking, our economy and our politics. In all these sectors of life the slogan is "never enough!" Our economy is based on wants. We assume that there are wants everywhere, wants which can only be met by work and still more work, by stepping up production, and by more and more mass products. For everyone who has to run an economy knows that they have to meet increasing demands with a scarcity of goods. And they know, too, that the race between growing demand and never-quite-adequate supply is a race they can never win.

There is never enough for everybody: that's why we have the struggle for oil, the struggle for raw materials, the struggle for world markets, the struggle for educational opportunities and jobs, the permanent hunt after money and pleasure.

Of course there are natural, basic wants which have to be satisfied if people want to live, and if they are to live in decent and human conditions. But our economy has left these basic needs far behind. It is not these natural requirements which dominate our lives and provide the driving power for our economy; it demands that have been artificially stimulated and heightened. These additional desires are in principle limitless. They can be stepped up beyond any possible fulfillment. Why? In our modern society human beings have apparently been turned into voracious monsters. They are tormented by an unquenchable thirst for life. They are possessed by an insatiable hunger for power. The more they have, the more they want, so their appetite is endless and can never be appeased.

Why have people in our modern world become so distorted? Because both consciously and unconsciously they are dominated by the fear of death. For a person's greed for life is really their fear of death; and their fear of death finds expression in an unbridled hunger for power. "You only live once!" we're told. You might miss out on something! This hunger for pleasure, for possessions, for power—this is the sin of modern men and women. This is their godlessness and their Godforsakenness. The person who loses God makes a god out of himself. "The one who lost what you lost stops at nothing," said Nietzsche. And so human beings have turned into proud and unhappy mini-gods.

There is never enough for everyone. So reach out now and help yourself! This is what death tells us—death which will swallow us up after we have swallowed up everything else. Our modern economy based on want, our modern ideology of growth and compulsion to expand are pacts with death: they are deadly games with human anxiety. They are bets placed on the craving for life; and they are sucking people dry.

There isn't enough for everybody. That's why we have competition and rivalry—in our schools for the best marks, in our universities for the courses that promise the most lucrative careers, in our working lives for secure jobs and rising incomes. We even compete with one another for the most attractive places in which to spend our vacations.

There isn't enough for everyone: this motto shatters every human community and rouses one nation against another, one class against another, one sex against the other; and in the end everybody against everybody else, and everyone against their own self. It's a slogan of fear that makes people lonely and leads them into a world which is, in principle, hostile. "Every person for himself!" people say. If you don't push, if you go to the back of the line, that's your own fault! Everyone's their own best friend. And so we have a world that really is "without heart and soul."

Finally, this deadly craving for life and this struggle of each against everyone is the very state of affairs we find ourselves in today, when 10% of my own people are living in poverty, 450 million people in the world are hungry, and the nations of the Third World are falling deeper and deeper into debt. This is really no wonder. And it isn't a natural disaster either. These poor nations are "under-developed" because they have been "de-developed"—dragged down—by the wealthy nations of the world. They are hungry because they are being starved. They are getting poorer because they are being forced into debt. They are not suffering because of some deficiency of nature. They are suffering from the injustice of other people, the unequal distribution of goods, and the inequality of opportunity in life. One can live in poverty, one can live with poverty. When poverty is shared, it is bearable. It is only injustice that



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turns want into a torment, and being deprived of one's rights that makes poverty into a hell.

If we want to find true life, and to escape the universal death of the world—if we want to gain the true riches of life and escape from poverty and want—then we must turn around and begin at the point where the severest loss of all begins: with God. Godlessness leads to the feeling of Godforsakenness. Godforsakenness lets the fear of death and the devouring lust for life well up in us; and then there is never enough. But if God isn't far off—if God is near—if God is present among us in the Spirit—then we find a new, indescribable joy in living. We are in safe-keeping; we are at home; we are trusted and can trust ourselves and other people. Our profoundest want, the want of God, has been remedied. Our yearning for happiness has been fulfilled. We are blissful and content.



Curt Treska

God is present in the Spirit. We have to understand this as meaning that God is present in our lives as the living God. Our limited, vulnerable and mortal lives are encompassed and penetrated through and through by God's life, which is unlimited, glorious and eternal. With all the perceptions of our minds and spirits, with all the impulses of our souls, and all the needs and urges of our bodies we participate in, we are drawn into the eternal divine life. In our existence we sense God's existence; in our suffering we feel God's pain; in our happiness we meet the assent of God's bliss. God is present in the Spirit. "In God we live and move and have our being." Everyone who experiences and realizes this, discovers how calm and relaxed they become, because they cease to be afraid.

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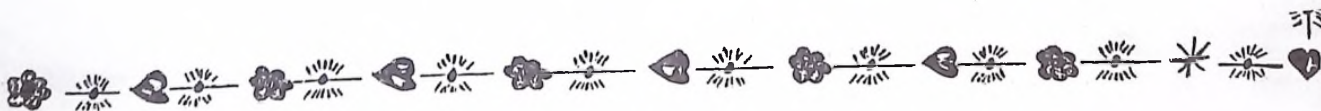
When the fear of death leaves us, the destructive craving for life leaves us too. We can then restrict our desires and our demands to our natural requirements. The dreams of power and happiness and luxury and far-off places which are used to create artificial wants no longer entice us. They have become ludicrous. So we shall only use what we really need, and shall no longer be prepared to go along with the lunacy of extravagance and waste. For this we don't even need solemn appeals for saving and moderation, for life itself is glorious and here joy in existence can be had for nothing.

This means that the best thing we can do is to build up communities, and to strengthen our sense of the common life we share with one another and for one another. The ideology of "there's never enough for everyone" makes people lonely. It isolates them and robs them of relationships. But in community we become rich—rich in friends, in neighbors, in colleagues, in comrades, in brothers and sisters. Together, as a community, we can help ourselves in most of our difficulties. For after all, there are enough people and enough ideas, capacities and energies to be had. They are only lying fallow, or are stunted and suppressed. So let us discover our wealth, let us discover our solidarity, let us build up communities. Let us take our lives into our own hands, and at long last out of the hands of the people who want to dominate and exploit us.

All really helpful projects or campaigns grew up out of spontaneous grass-roots communities, not from above: neighborly help, help for the poor and the sick, and the handicapped. The community of Christians can become the source of imaginative social service and continually new initiatives for life and living. It hasn't always been this source, unfortunately; but it can be—provided that it is a Pentecost community. In the great bureaucratic organizations of society—the state and the churches—there is always want. But in the voluntary coming together of men and women at the grass-roots level, life's true wealth is experienced. Once all the nations have been given the freedom to provide for themselves, before they produce for the major world market, then there will be enough for everyone to be satisfied.

There is enough for everybody when the justice of God is added to the fullness of life, to the abundance of life's powers and to the adequacy of the means of living. It is this divine justice that ensures that everyone receives "as each has any need"—no less, and no more. The fact that economic growth is up against its "limits" isn't the problem. The problem is the growth itself, and the fact that it is not really in our common interests. The divine righteousness and justice in spirit and life satisfies everyone. Then there is no more talk about "growth" because there is no longer any want.

But the fullness of the divine life makes us hungry, insatiably hungry in a different way. And in a different way it makes us thirsty, unquenchably thirsty: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." This is the sector where our tasks for the future are to be found. In the growth and spread of social righteousness and justice in our nations, and among the poor and the rich peoples in the world. The poor are crying out for justice, not for prosperity; and we ourselves are perishing from the injustice, even if we are leading pleasant, comfortable lives. The hunger for justice is a holy hunger; the thirst for justice is a sacred thirst. It is the hunger and thirst of the Holy Spirit. May the Spirit fill us through and through. ☐





# Capital Punishment: Legalized Murder

by Joseph E. Lowery

*Editor's note: On May 10, 1972, Dr. Joseph E. Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference stated the case against the death penalty in hearings before a subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee of the US House of Representatives. We reprint here the second half of his testimony:*

It is crystal clear that no one has the right to take another's life. This is the principle which capital punishment is asserted to defend, but it is also the principle which capital punishment corrupts.

I feel that no group of American citizens knows this better than does its black citizens, for, as we have been the chief victims of the crime of capital punishment, we have also been the chief victims of the crimes sought to be capitalily punished. How often has a black rapist learned the practice from seeing his poor mother forcibly defiled by some stalwart of the white community, acts which never made it into the uniform crime report statistics? And how many acts called rape were not rape at all? For every homicide of a black man listed in the reports, there exist many more such murders known only to the waters of some swamp or the limb of some tree.

And, as I feel that God has suffered our people to endure these indignities and bring from the experience a well of redemptive love and salvation to our tormentors, I feel that possibly SCLC has been appointed to suffer an extra share so as to say to you what we are saying today.

No one knew the desire for vengeance more than we did on Bloody Sunday in Birmingham, Alabama when four little Sunday School classmates were blown to pieces by some racists' bomb. But we know that hate was the cause of that tragedy and cannot, therefore, be its remedy; and, while we think it hypocritical that their murderers have not been brought before the bar, we are not displeased that they are alive today. We knew anger in Selma, Alabama when within days we lost Jimmy Lee Jackson, Reverend James Reeb and Mrs. Viola Liuzzo at the hands of a sick society, yet we want not their killers' blood. Sorrow wracked our souls as the search for James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman yielded not only their bodies but those of many of our brethren murdered by those same people who now call for the state to do their dirty work.

The pain and sorrow have left some fresh scars, too, Mr. Chairman, for, within the past eleven months, we have had to bury two fine, young, beautiful, black women: Jo Etah Collier, murdered as she was proudly graduated from her high school in Drew, Mississippi, and Margaret Ann Knott, run over in Choctaw County, Alabama by a racist's automobile while she demonstrated nonviolently for his, as well as her own, rights.

Yes, we have thirsted for the vinegar of vengeance; we have tasted the bitter herb of hate; we have known them well. I cannot begin to tell you what went through us as our first President and Founder, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot down in Memphis, Tennessee. But I can tell you this; those negative feelings did not last in us nor are they the cry of our people. If Dr. King's life or that of any of those beautiful souls is to have meant anything, it is that love must overcome hate, that justice must be more than balance, that each killer of these beautiful people must be redeemed by confronting in his own conscience the suffering he has inflicted and not by his own death. We rest assured that all of these murderers will meet their God but pray that it be at such time and in such manner as God appoints.

No, Mr. Chairman, we have come to forgive James Earl Ray as we forgive the Nation in whose stead he pulled the trigger. We forgive him and the countless others whose identity may never be sought, much less known, and pray continuously that they may confront the evil of their deeds, see the redemptive love of those upon whom they inflicted such suffering, and be born anew. We pray no less for our Nation as it confronts its conscience and its deeds in this regard. □





# The Cry of Dereliction

by Ed Loring

## "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

are words which have a long history and profound meaning in the Old Testament and throughout the entire experience of Israel. We, too, live in the days of dereliction. We live in the days of abandonment.

Often "derelict" refers to old, forgotten, alcoholic men on our streets, but the epithet also points toward a profound existential place in our own lives when we see and hear how our society is relentlessly pursuing the abandonment of the poor, the abandonment of civil rights, the abandonment of affirmative action. As we abandon our sense of history—the common purse in Christian Communities, the Bible as God's radical word on behalf of the poor, the stigmata of the poor in our servanthood, and protests—we participate in the power of death named dereliction.

We members of the family of faith need to remember that a fundamental responsibility of the spiritual life is to listen to the cry of dereliction and then to pronounce it to the powers of this world. We must so position our lives that as we serve, read the newspaper, study scripture and poetry, as we dance and have babies, we are shaped in our bowels by the experiences of homeless and hungry derelicts. The cry of dereliction then becomes our own cry. We engraft that cry into our lives, into our hearts, into our wallets, into all our choices.

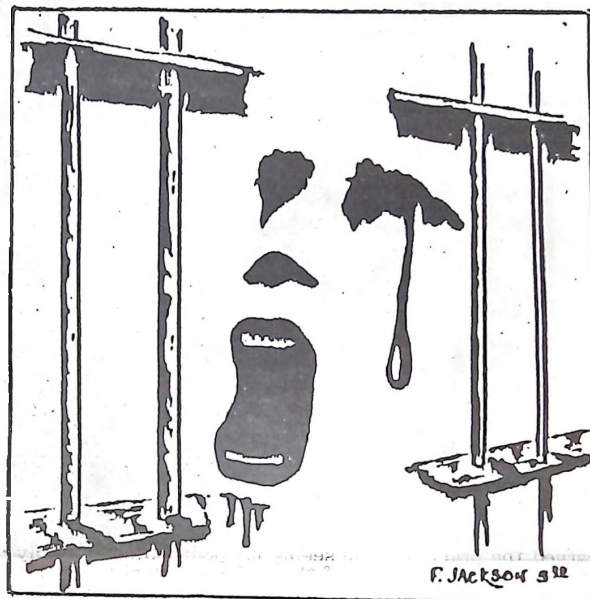
## "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

Why is there dereliction and abandonment in our days? Dereliction is a very important perspective from which we are called to live our lives.

In addition to hearing the cry of dereliction among the hungry and homeless upon our streets, our little family named the Open Door Community also listens to and visits among prisoners. We have a particular focus upon those under the sentence of death. Tonight 120 men and women sit in the shadow of death by electrocution in the name of all the citizens of Georgia: a sentence upheld by the American Constitution although a pagan rite of bloodfest and revenge is outlawed in almost every society that finds its cultural and spiritual roots in the Judeo-Christian heritage. Most of our friends are guilty of terrible crimes, several are innocent (as were Jerry Banks and Earl Charles), all are poor, neglected by friends and Christians, and they are human beings created in God's likeness.

As we have learned to sit in prison and listen to those daily dying in iron cages encased in concrete slabs, we have discovered that homelessness, too, is a death sentence.

Homelessness, like the sentence of death, is abandonment, dereliction. Our society through laws and lawyers, courts and judges, has evolved and maintained structures for legally keeping and killing the poor. This is the explicit—and among many—the righteous way to control, frighten and obliterate those we wish did not exist. Homelessness, on the other hand, is society's implicit decision to abandon hundreds of thousands of people to die on the streets.



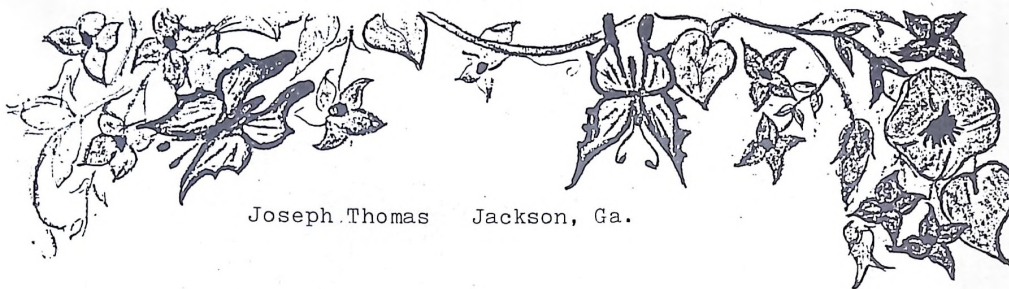
Homelessness is a sentence of death. The fundamental bond between Death Row and the streets is abandonment: poverty is death.

As the streets are the places of residence for increasing numbers of American citizens, jails and prisons are houses for hundreds of thousands of other poor and minority folk. The high income housing for the poor are prisons, and in an almost direct proportion over the last six or seven years, as low income housing funds have become less available, the allocation for new jails and prisons have sky rocketed. We have a new city jail in Atlanta, and Fulton County plans to open its new home for the homeless and poor—the Fulton County Jail—in a few months. Of course, with the largest city shelter having closed on April 1 due to warmer weather, and with the Democrats on the way to town this summer, every jail cell, iron cage, holding center and detention facility will be filled to over-flowing. Is the Democratic Convention simply a practice period for the city to prepare for the grand opening of Underground Atlanta? Let us listen to the cries of dereliction for the answer. The cries of the poor are the cries of Christ.

## "MY GOD, MY GOD WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

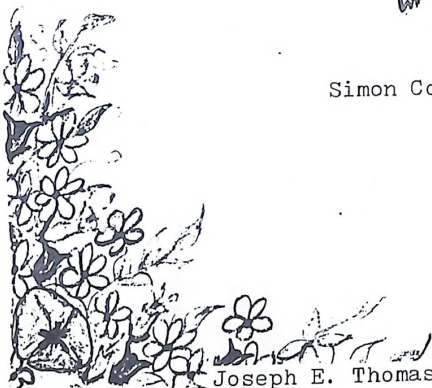
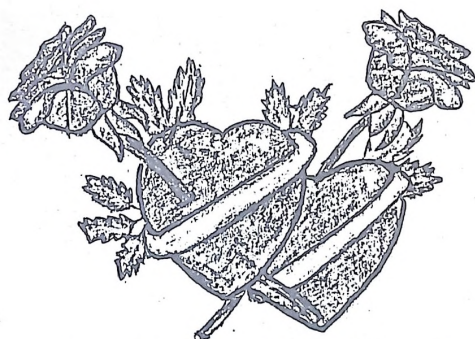
"I have not forsaken you, my child. I am in the flesh of Henry, walking your abandoned streets. I am in the body of Annie Ruth, sitting on death row. Why won't you listen? Come, follow me." □





## Envelope Art

Many of our friends in prison send us letters in beautifully decorated envelopes. Here are just a few of the hundreds of designs we have received. The artwork on the bottom of page five is also envelope art by John Westbrook.





# Base Communities

9

by Steve Rhodes

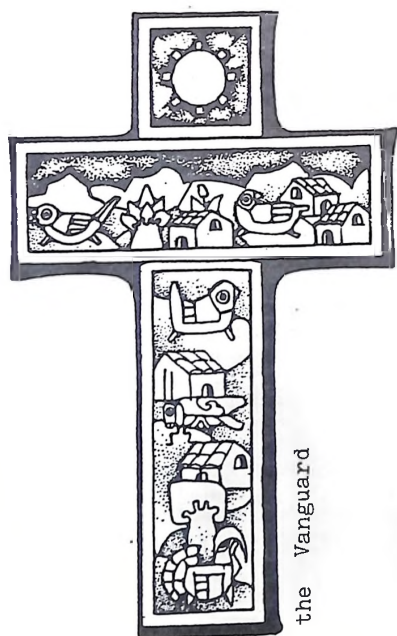
*Editor's note: Steve Rhodes is a friend of The Open Door who has just finished doctoral work at Emory.*

Some time ago, Ed Loring asked me to write about how I thought Christians in this country might learn from the base communities of Latin America—cell groups which are multiplying by the thousands across Latin America as poor people attempt to build a new society more reflective of the values of the kingdom of God. Here are my thoughts:

1. We must discover the Bible as a crucial tool for understanding society and empowering salvation. Many members of base communities have learned to **think biblically** and to **act biblically**. Reading about Moses and Pharaoh and Jesus and Pilate, for example, has given them courage to resist evil and to work for a society more expressive of justice and love. In contemporary North American Christianity, many of us have either given up on the Bible as being **truly** relevant or we have surrendered it to those who see the Bible as something which keeps the poor and the rich in their respective places and protects us against breaking out of our alienation and loneliness.

2. We need to learn to read our current situation and the Bible from the standpoint of the poor. Base communities are distinctive because they are made up of the poor, and because they seek to overcome poverty. Little could be so powerful and faith-producing in this country as a genuine encounter of wealthy and middle-income people with the poor around the Word of God in worship and action.

3. We need to learn faith by living faithfully. The base communities often follow a repeated cycle of seeing, judging, and acting in the development of their faith. We cannot grow in faith without all three. Taking Christian action, in particular, becomes crucial in learning how to discover God's will and analyze our situation. The disciples came to know Jesus, we remember, only by following Jesus.



Rita Carbin

Four suggestions call for a different approach in our country:

4. One possible shortcoming in the base communities is a tendency to speak of the work of the Kingdom as "our" work. The fact that God brings in the Kingdom as a gift of grace is not always in the forefront, for a variety of reasons. On occasion, optimism has replaced faith, and brutal repression or even seeming success has brought about despair or disenchantment. In the US, where optimism is claimed as a national philosophy and salvation seems a largely human work, we, too, need to remember in whose hands the Kingdom rests.

5. Nevertheless, we will have to choose to be the church in order to emulate the strengths of the base communities. In Latin America, the base communities have not only been a creative Christian option in society, they have also been a necessity. The poor have had to rely on themselves to find a way to survive in a worsening environment. In our country, there is little sense that we need the church for our very survival. Therefore, in the US, communities of faith must choose to work for the Kingdom with a different motivation in mind—a more subtle understanding of survival. Why would people choose to do so? Because. . .

6. We need to rediscover true personal spirituality. We live in an age characterized by either false piety or skepticism towards faith. No genuine spiritual revolution can occur in the US until we learn to pray again with our hands and with critical consciousness, as well as with our hearts. The base communities need to learn that real revolution requires God's constant counsel and our individual friendship with God—a shortcoming in the movement, as I see it. We North Americans, on the other hand, need to learn not to "quench the Spirit" when God calls us to walk bravely into the suffering of the poor both here and abroad. Only then can we discover true and lasting joy.

7. Finally, base communities do not and can not exist without the institutional church. In fact, of course, they are becoming a new institution themselves. The lesson for us to learn is to resist sectarian efforts to "start from scratch" (which is impossible) and to work and pray for the leavening of the whole body of Christ, which, as a base community member in Managua once told me, is *todos el mundo*—everyone! ☐



3 / 15 / 88

by Delbert Tibbs

Editor's note: Delbert Tibbs is a poet who lives in Chicago. From 1975 until the latter part of 1976 he was on Florida's death row for a crime he did not commit. While there, he came to know Willie J. Darden. When Willie was executed on March 15, Delbert wrote this poem and wanted to share it with the readers of *Hospitality*.



He is free today, 3/15/88, free at last as he was free at First

Black as the Bluemen of the Nubian Desert  
Teeth snow white and not a one missing at  
60 years old

A smile as broad as Satchamo's and  
A deep inner Strength that allowed the younger  
Ones to look to

Shango  
The African name that Willie Jasper Darden  
Claimed

The name of the Electric Lord of the Storm  
Known far and around as a Poet/writer  
Somebody to draw flowers and hearts and Dragons  
On a letter to you girl

In his youth, he was a fighter for prizes, too  
In the ring

Such a body, such hands, indeed  
Are dangerous and knock men dumb  
Smart ones on the row and cons at large  
Gave this old man respect

He said that he had lived well: home, wife, children, car  
Before he came to hell

The Death House, Florida State Prison  
He said that he did not do the crime  
Time and time and time again, he asked for a  
Friend. . . (of the court?) he cried  
Innocence, he cried foul but the minions of  
Death

Howl and howled for his blood and screamed for  
his Life

and now he is free at last as he was free at first  
and the worst is yet to come.

The Bible says that the Jasper stone is precious  
and Beautiful, too.

## Grace and peaces of mail

Time: 2:15am

March, 1988

Dear Friends,

Prison has hurt me. I am not afraid to admit that death row has hurt me badly, shattered my confidence, pushed me out of focus. But why should I deny that? How can anyone expect people to be locked in a cage for 11 years, 6 months and 9 days, deprived of contact with persons of the opposite sex, ripped away from children, family, community, nature, sexuality, and the opportunity of expressing even the smallest anger toward the system without bitter reprisals, and not be badly shaken up by that experience? I have been damaged by prison, and I am aware that I need help.

Well, I'll close this letter for now. . .

Until—take care and pray for me as I of you.

Sincerely yours,

Name withheld  
(a friend on death row)

Dear Friends,

For the past two years it has been my privilege to bring soup, cookies and clothing to your shelter. My 10-year-old son, Matthew, and his friend Brent organized a drive to collect winter clothes, canned food and fruit. It was a wonderful experience for them, and we will continue in our efforts.

I realize that whatever we do is a "drop in the bucket," but if everyone in the human community did just one thing, we'd have a "lake of love" and the homeless situation as it exists today would be history.

Thank you for sending us your newsletter. We read it every month and look forward to each issue.

For your readers I would like to contribute this interpretation of Heaven and Hell:

Having arrived in Hell, I observed a wonderful soup kitchen with long wooden tables and many people seated there with large bowls containing the most wonderful and aromatic stew. However, each had a wooden spoon with a handle as long as a broom and try as they might, they could not get the spoon to their mouth. Everyone was slowly starving.

Upon arriving in Heaven, I encountered a similar scene; however, each person, seated across from each other, was using their spoon to feed the person across the table and all were healthy and happy and very well fed.

With light and love,

Marilyn Francis



# JOIN THE OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY

a North-American Base community

SPEND SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS AS A RESIDENT VOLUNTEER

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



Beryl Bond - Dietrich Gerstner

OR

VISIT THE OPEN DOOR, for one week or several months for servanthood work, joyful worship, with room and board, in a city where Christian love is so needed.

Contact: Ed Loring, 910 Ponce de Leon N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30306

## Open Door Community Worship

*We gather for worship and Eucharist from  
5:00--6:30pm on Sunday evenings  
followed by supper together.  
Join us!*



*Every sixth Sunday the Community has a full  
day retreat outside the city. This replaces  
our evening worship at 910 Ponce de Leon.*

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| May 1   | Worship at 910  |
| May 15  | Worship at 910  |
| May 22  | Worship at 910<br>Pentecost Celebration<br>Tim McDonald Preaching                     |
| May 29  | Worship at 910<br>5:00-5:30 Eucharist<br>5:30-6:30 Joyce Brookshire<br>singing for us |
| June 5  | Worship at 910  |
| June 12 | Community Retreat<br>Dayspring Farm   |
| June 19 | Worship at 910  |
| June 26 | Worship at 910  |



## Open Door Schedule

### WE ARE OPEN...

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

### OUR MINISTRY...

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

BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST--Monday--Friday, 7:15am. SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES--Cancelled for the month of May.

USE OF PHONE--Monday--Saturday, 9am-4pm.

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

BIBLE STUDY--Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30-9:00pm (call for schedule.)

WEEKEND RETREATS--Every sixth weekend (for our household & volunteers/supporters)--June 10, 11, 12.

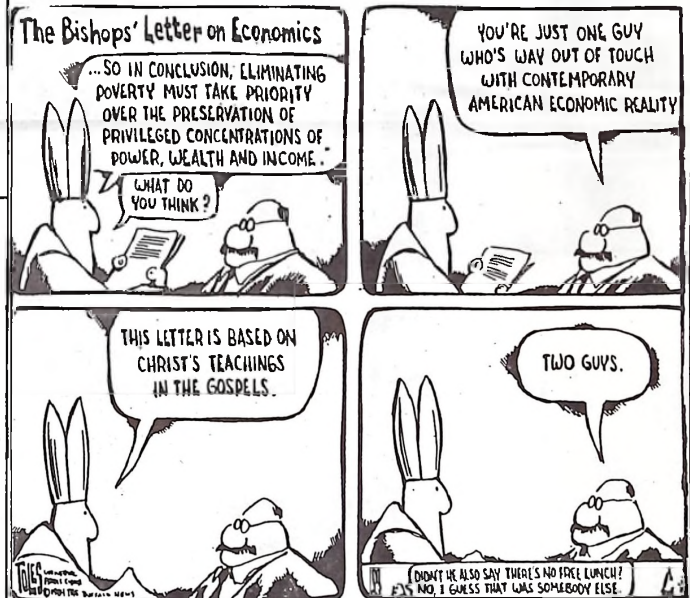


## NEEDS

RUGS	HAMS AND TURKEYS
HEAVY DUTY VACUUM CLEANERS	EASY CHAIRS
SHOVELS AND RAKES	CHEESE
LOTS OF GRITS!!!	MEN'S UNDERWEAR
SOFTBALL EQUIPMENT	COMPACT CAR
SHRUBS, SMALL TREES, PLANTINGS FOR THE BACK YARD	

*Please bear with us...*

From 11am - 1pm Monday- Saturday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11:00 or after 1:00, it would be helpful. Thanks.



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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

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