

# HOSPITALITY

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

Providing hospitality to the homeless and to those in prison, through Christ's love.  
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 \* 404/874-9652; 874-7964 (FAX)

vol. 14, no. 5

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

May 1995

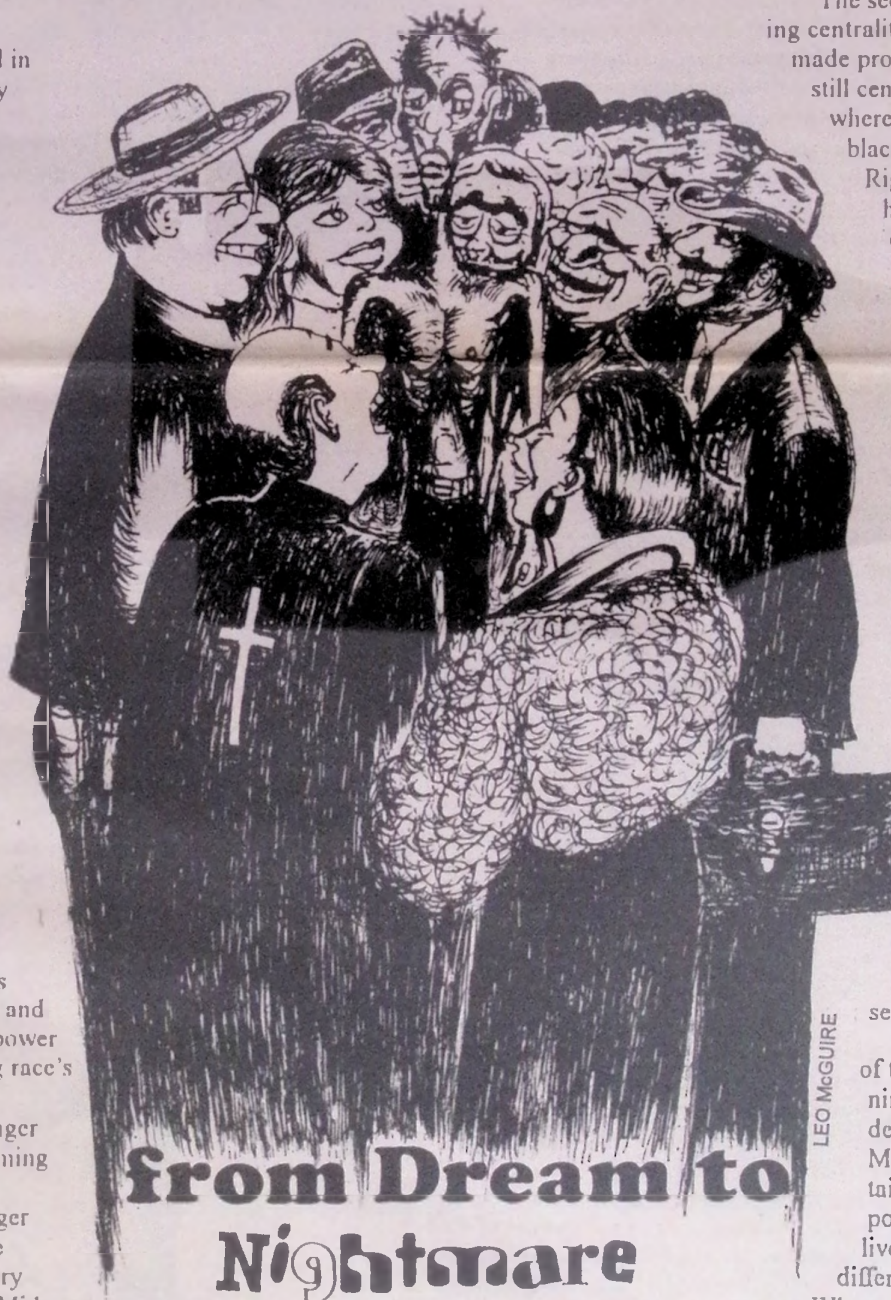
## Reconstruction Today

by Nibs Stroupe

Racism is not dead. It has lived in the hearts of white people in this country for centuries, dormant on some rare occasions, but always ready to break out. An outbreak of rampant racism seems poised to occur as we end the 20th Century. Despite the laws that have been passed to end discrimination based on race, the power of race has continued to live in the hearts of "white" people and in the hearts of people classified as "nonwhite."

Race remains powerful because it is not an outmoded concept from science whose usefulness has diminished. Race lives because it is a social and political construct designed to determine who has access to power and who does not. Despite white protestations to the contrary, the system of race continues to operate in this country as it has always operated. Its purpose is to insure that opportunity and privilege will be guaranteed to one group of people: those who have claimed the name "white." Until this purpose and function of race is acknowledged by all of us, it will continue its cancerous growth on our culture, no matter what laws are passed.

Many white people object strongly whenever we hear this emphasis on race. We feel that we are not racists, and even those who have some sense of the power of race still protest my thesis concerning race's centrality. These protests come on two levels. First, it is said that race is no longer a "black and white" issue. We are becoming a multi-cultural society, and the bipolar categories of black and white are no longer relevant. There is truth to that: there are growing numbers of people in this country categorized as Hispanic, Asian, Indian, Mid-Eastern, and others. Indeed, it is projected that by early next century, people categorized as Hispanic will outnumber those categorized as black. Yet the discussion of race remains focused on black and white. Books like *The Bell Curve* are not about the genetic inferiority of all races in respect to white folks. It is about the inferiority of people of African descent. Until and unless we pass through the crucible of black and white, we will not make much progress on dismantling the system of race.



**from Dream to  
Nightmare**

part 8

The second objection concerning the continuing centrality of race is that black people have made progress. How can I assert that race is still central, when there are no poll taxes, where there are black mayors, black writers, black businesspeople? Since the Civil Rights Movement, there has been a heartening growth of the black middle class, but there are also deeply disturbing trends. Congressional districts in Georgia, Louisiana, and North Carolina have been challenged in court because black people were elected as representatives. The State of Georgia itself is full of depressing stories of the continuing power of race. A black teenager is sentenced to 60 days to the County farm for cussing in his school classroom, all without the benefit of an attorney. Twenty-one black youths are barred from stores in Union Point because they are suspected of shoplifting—no white youths were banned. A state drug law is applied to black people 99 percent of the time, often leading to life sentences. Though these cases took place in Georgia, they are by no means limited to Georgia. Resegregation in public schools is a national trend, with 67% of public school students attending segregated public schools and with the Northeast being the most segregated.

Race has been central to the identity of this nation since its European beginnings. It remains central in our time, despite the gains of the Civil Rights Movement. For those of us still uncertain about its priority, take some time to ponder these questions for our own lives: What percent of people of a different race live in our neighborhood?

What percent of people of a different race are members of our community of faith? Have we ever dated or married a person of a different race? Did we go to schools where our race was the majority? Do our children go to schools where their race is the majority? How many times have we eaten a meal in the house of a person of a different race? If we honestly answer these kinds of questions, we can begin to discern how important race is in our own lives. It has been central. It remains central.

(continued on page 2)

LEO MCGUIRE



# HOSPITALITY



910 Ponce de Leon

*Hospitality* is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta community of Christians called to ministry with the homeless poor and with prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard. For more information about the life and work of the Open Door, please contact any of the following:

Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry  
Ed Loring--Correspondence  
Ed Loring--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator; Guest Ministry  
Dick Rustay--Group Work Project Co-ordinator  
Murphy Davis--Hardwick Prison Trip  
Jeannie Lukkar--Volunteer Co-ordinator

## Newspaper

**Editorial Staff**--Murphy Davis, Ed Loring, Gladys Rustay, Michael Galovic, and Dick Groepper

**Layout**--Gladys Rustay, Michael Galovic, and Dick Groepper

**Copy Editing**--Michael Galovic and Dick Groepper

**Circulation**--Phillip Williams and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests

**Subscriptions or change of address**--Gladys Rustay

(A \$7 donation to the Open Door would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing *Hospitality*.)

(Reconstruction, continued from page 1)

The most difficult problem for our culture in relation to race is that we who have claimed the name "white" are insistent that race has lost its power. We are in denial, much as addicts deny their addiction. We may grudgingly acknowledge that race had power in the past, but we often steadfastly maintain that its power in the present has been severely curtailed.

This denial takes two forms. First, we deny the historical roots of racism. When confronted with the continuing power of race, we often respond by emphasizing that the real problem is prejudice, which is a universal human trait. What we need, then, is an exploration of prejudice rather than an analysis of racism. Indeed, there are a growing number of "prejudice reduction" workshops which seek to address prejudice. While these are commendable, unless they address the continuing problem of racism, they do more harm than good in regard to race. They encourage us to lump racism in with many other prejudices, thus allowing us to underestimate the mammoth power of race in our own lives and in the life of this culture. In this manner the historical roots of racism are denied: the idea of race is the creation of people of European origin who wanted to exploit other people.

The emphasis on prejudice at the expense of racism allows those of us who call ourselves "white" to disavow responsibility for racism. After all, every human is prejudiced, and racism becomes just one item on the laundry list of prejudices which all people share. What we tend to talk about is diversity and not racism, about learning to get along with different kinds of people. On this level, the issue is much the same as the oppression of women. There is a vast difference between a workshop on sexism, and a workshop on diversity which helps men and women learn to get along together. So it is with racism and diversity.

The second form of white denial of the continuing presence of racism echoes themes of post-Reconstruction: if it is demonstrated that black people end up in jail in disproportionate numbers, that a larger percentage are poor, that a huge number are unemployed and homeless, the answer given by white people (and some black people) is that black people are individually and collectively violent, lazy, irresponsible and promiscuous. In other words, what seems to be racism is really the inability or the unwillingness of black people to take advantage of the opportunities that were given to them in the Civil Rights Movement.

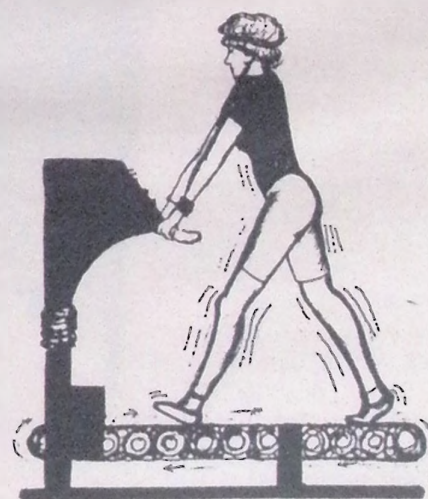
It is the same line of thinking that was at the heart of the resurgence of white power in the 1880's and 1890's. It is a line of thinking that lies at the heart of the Republican surge in the elections of 1994. Terms like "states' rights," "privatization," and "market forces" are intimately connected with the continuing power of racism. When was the last time that you heard a debate about the need to assert the rights of states? From the lips of Orval Faubus and George Wallace and Ross Barnett and Strom Thurmond and many others who used it as a rallying cry for the continued oppression of black people. The State of Virginia closed its public schools rather than integrate them. What kind of view of common life is that?

What do terms like "privatization" and "market forces" mean, except a desire to be left alone, to keep out those who are different from white folks? What does it mean to say that the ultimate forces in life are "market forces"? It means to say that forces like the ideas of equality or community or common life are ultimately powerless in the face of race. It means to say that for 400 years, we have been grappling with the idea of race in this country, and that it continues to have power because we who have taken the name "white" do not, and will not, believe that people of African descent are our equals, our brothers and sisters. It is the continuing American nightmare.

Nibs Stroupe, pastor at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia, is active in the Civil Rights Movement and author of *While We Run This Race: Countering The Power Of Racism*. It will be available soon from Orbis Press. See the next issue of *Hospitality* for Part 9 in this series on Reconstruction.

As this issue of *Hospitality* goes to press, Murphy Davis has been diagnosed with Burkitt's Lymphoma. She would be most appreciative of your prayers, cards and letters, and thanks to those of you who have responded so kindly during these times.

Murphy will be undergoing treatment for which she will have need of a treadmill. Do you have a treadmill to donate?

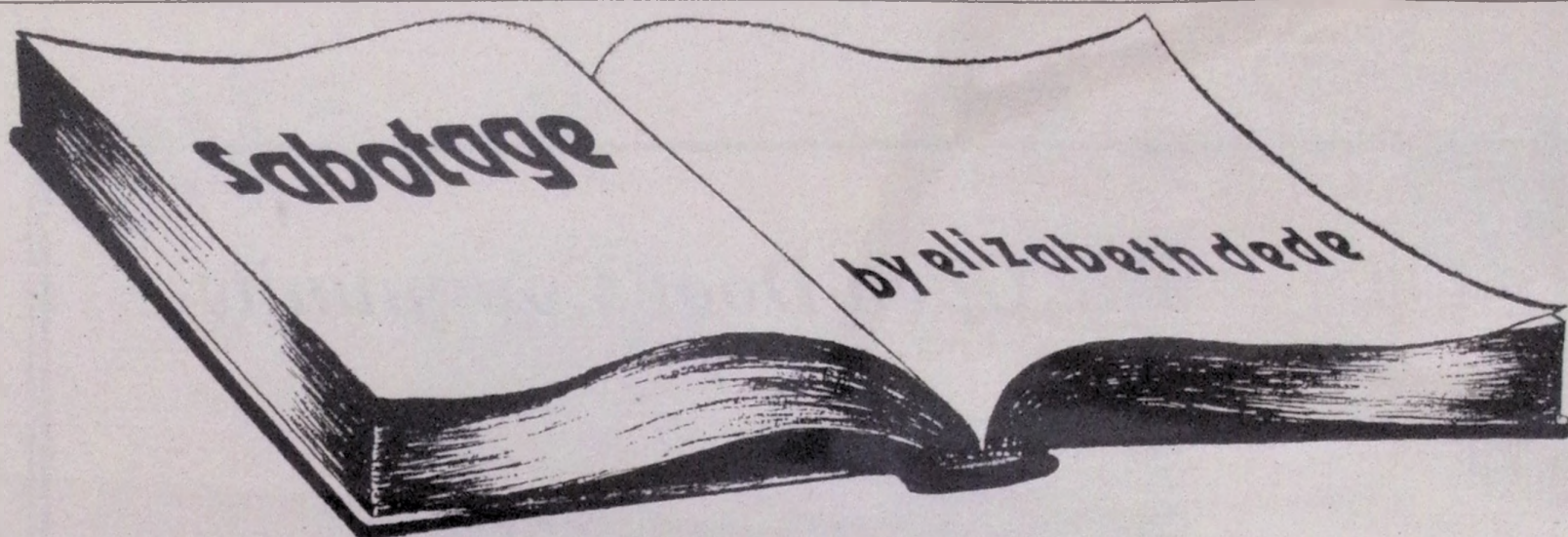


please call Elizabeth at 246-7622









I love words. Vocabulary and word games were a big part of my childhood. And I've always had a habit of getting lost in the dictionary. In my family we made a practice of sharing a new word, or an interesting etymology, with each other. If you came across someone with a dictionary, you never failed to ask, "Watcha lookin' up?" Often I was too embarrassed to say that I could no longer remember the original word for which I had turned to the dictionary. The pages were full of fascinating information, interesting spellings, and endless possibilities for Scrabble games, spelling bees, and conversations.

I try to have a dictionary at hand when I am reading. And then I usually get waylaid and cannot tear myself away from the dictionary. Sometimes this makes reading difficult—just like I often forget the original word that brought me to the dictionary, so I'm also apt to lose my place in the book and forget what was happening at the time of my interruption.

The other Sunday at church we were singing the Sanctus when I realized that wonderful word "Sabaoth" is no longer in the liturgy. It's been replaced by "power and might." When I got home I turned to the dictionary to look up Sabaoth. It was a word I'd grown up with, singing it in the communion liturgy from earliest childhood; but I really didn't know much about it, and wondered if "power and might" were an accurate translation. Sabaoth comes from the Hebrew and is biblical language to mean armies. "Power and might" is more easily sung, and more readily understood, and might be a better poetic image, I suppose.

But then my eye was taken across the page to the word "sabot." I didn't know this word at all, but it was a great Scrabble find. Imagine adding your "s" to a noun to make it plural, and then building down with the word sabot, perhaps even landing your "b" on a triple letter score. A sabot is a wooden shoe, like those we picture the little Dutch boy wearing.

Right below sabot is the word "sabotage." Now that's a word I've been knowing for a long time, but I didn't know that it came from the French, "from damage done to machinery by wooden shoes." This truly was a find.

Well, then my mind was off flying to all the acts of sabotage I could think of, especially those involving feet and shoes.

I read about the suffragettes in England, who kicked policemen in the shins at marches and rallies. Certainly the machinery of male domination was damaged by those women's feet and shoes. Very forcefully, even violently, the 19th Century women of England demanded their equality, justice, and rights. And they won the vote. Shoes are powerful weapons.

Recently we observed and celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Selma march. Think of all those feet and shoes and people who lined up and peace-

fully walked over the Edmund Pettus bridge and continued marching from Selma to Montgomery. They were nonviolent saboteurs. There is no question in my mind that the Selma March was damage done to the machinery of racism by the shoes of all those marchers.

The Selma March led me to observe that sabotage is an organized movement. The factory workers, who destroyed their oppressive employers' machinery by kicking at it with their wooden shoes, banded together to accomplish their acts of sabotage. It wasn't just one disgruntled laborer who kicked out in frustration, like a spoiled child, and happened to destroy some machinery with his wooden shoes. The sabotage, and the change, happened when all the workers got together and said, "Ain't gonna take it no more!" or however that translates in French, Dutch, or German.

From these images of an organized movement, my mind leapt to our shoe closet at the Open Door, which is often such an image of chaos that I'm sure the devil dwells in there, and hell is like the shoe closet. Shoes with holes in their soles occupy the shelves, rather than the garbage, while nearly new pairs are jumbled together on the floor at the back of the closet, inaccessible. Spikey-heeled women's dress shoes, utterly useless, are strewn together with work boots. Left shoes, without right ones, wait forlornly for the day when a one-legged homeless man will hobble into the shower line.

The disarray of the shoe closet caused me to reflect on the lack of organization among the poor and homeless in Atlanta. I imagined this scene: the trash shoes walked into the dumpster, but the good marching shoes laced themselves onto the feet of the 30,000 homeless men, women, and children of Atlanta. Together all those shoes and feet marched down to the new 10-floor city jail. Like the Lord God of Sabaoth with Joshua and the Israelites who marched around Jericho until the walls tumbled down, this organized band of 30,000 saboteurs would march around the city jail, causing, I'm sure, an earthquake, which would tumble the walls, setting free those bound by oppression and injustice.

From there, I imagined the 30,000 would march to City Hall. Mayor Bill Campbell would hear them coming from the city jail, and he'd be shaking in his sabots. Even before they made it to Trinity Street, all 30,000 would have jobs at \$10 per hour, and they'd be living in that Olympic housing at Georgia Tech.

It's said that language shapes our reality. I encourage everyone to embrace the word sabotage, strap on their sabots, and become peaceful, nonviolent saboteurs. The Lord God of Sabaoth will certainly join forces.

*Elizabeth Dede is a partner at the Open Door Community.*



LEO MCGUIRE



Radio Station KFI:

## The Killing Frequency of Intolerance

by Bob Erlenbusch, LA Coalition to End Homelessness

On July 9, 1994, talk show host, Emiliano Limon of KFI, [an AM radio station in Los Angeles], opened his program with an anecdote about a mangy, emaciated dog he had seen on the freeway. As he watched, the dog stepped out into the middle of the road and was immediately run over by a semi-truck. At that moment, Limon said he had a "revelation" on how to solve the problem of homelessness—put all homeless people to sleep. This mangy dog had had more sense than most homeless people, he went on, as the dog knew it was unloved and unwanted, and would be better off dead than to continue living under such circumstances.

"If homeless people cannot survive on their own," Limon asked, "why shouldn't they be put to sleep?" "They're just playing on our sympathy. They should have their family take care of them." The homeless refuse to take responsibility for their plight," said Limon. "If you rely on strangers to get you out of your situation, you are the lowest of the low."

Throughout the broadcast, Limon kept repeating, "Why shouldn't we put the homeless to sleep? I say, why not?" Whenever a caller questioned Limon about his calling for mass murder he would respond, "Do you have a better solution?" When challenged by a caller that he was only making these inflammatory comments to get ratings, Limon responded, "No, this is what I believe."

One caller opened his remarks with "Seig heil...let's start building the ovens" to which Limon responded, "Mach schnell...right away."

After repeated attempts to reach Mr. Limon and KFI General Manager Howard Neal, members of the LA Coalition to End Homelessness finally met with Mr. Neal on September 28, 1994. At one point during the meeting, Mr. Neal said, that he would not intervene in what a talk show host says "as long as he/she can rationally defend it." When we challenged him to "rationally defend the wholesale killing of homeless people," Mr. Neal answered, "This is not a matter of right or wrong; this is a matter of ratings."

The LA Coalition to End Homelessness reaffirms Mr. Limon's right to state his opinion, however horrifying. The real issue is that we feel very strongly that the limits of free speech have clearly been violated when KFI management does not allow equal time to an alternative viewpoint on the issue of homelessness. We have been asking for a formal apology from Mr. Limon, for KFI management to disassociate themselves from his viewpoint and to provide equal time. To date, there has been no response from KFI.

If you want to give Howard Neal (General Manager) your opinion on this issue, he can be contacted at KFI, 610 S. Ardmore, Los Angeles, CA 90005 (213-251-3103 or fax: 213-385-7076).

## A KEEPER OF THE WORD

### *Selected Writings of William Stringfellow*

edited by Bill Wylie Kellermann

When Karl Barth met William Stringfellow on a panel discussion at the University of Chicago in 1962, he turned to the audience after a particularly insightful exchange with this young, "nonacademic" theologian and pronounced candidly, "You should listen to this man!" Many did just that.

William Stringfellow—Harlem street lawyer, social activist, and commentator—saw a great deal of social injustice while working in East Harlem. His activism in response to those injustices as well as his writings had a great impact on the intellectual set of the 1960's. Today his work is enjoying a revival among a new generation of Christians.

*Keeper of the Word* is a collection of Stringfellow's most important works, including material never before published. This collection nicely demonstrates the wide range of his thoughts and passions.

Bill Wylie Kellermann, a friend of William Stringfellow during the last decade of his life, is a United Methodist pastor teaching at Whitaker School of Theology, Ferndale, Michigan. He is a contributing editor of *Sojourners* and the author of the book *Seasons of Faith and Conscience*.

paper/ 448 pages/ \$24.99  
Eerdmans Publishing Co.  
1-800-253-7521



GLADYS RUSTAY

Evergene Ivey-Allen joined us recently as a Resident Volunteer.

## *The Open Door Community Needs Resident Volunteers!*

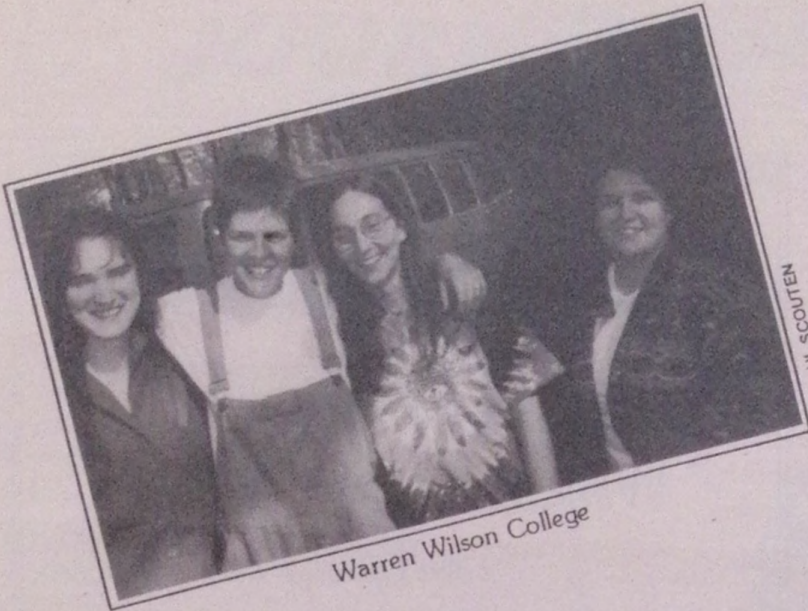
*Spend 6 to 12 months as a Resident Volunteer*

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

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



## VISITS BY SCHOOLS



Warren Wilson College

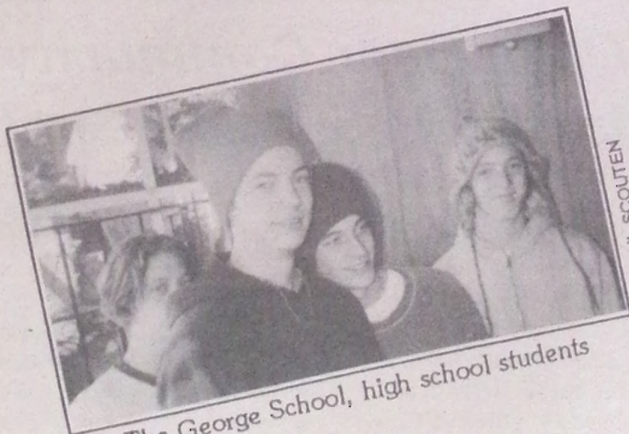
PAUL SCOUTEN

# UPDATES



Eastern Illinois University with some folks from the Community

PAUL SCOUTEN



The George School, high school students

PAUL SCOUTEN



Professor Jurgen Moltmann

PAUL SCOUTEN



## VISITS BY ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

# UPDATES



Barbara Asher

GLADYS RUSTAY



Verne McCarty

PAUL SCOUTEN



Michael Bond

PAUL SCOUTEN



Debi Starnes

GLADYS RUSTAY

## PUBLIC TOILETS "STALLED" BY CITY

Update: People For Urban Justice

by Houston Wheeler and Michael Galovic

In the February 1995 issue of *Hospitality*, we reported to you the People For Urban Justice Proclamation of Justice to the Atlanta City Council for its announcing the upcoming construction of 25 public toilets in Atlanta. Soon after this event, the agreement for public toilets was stalled by the City. The primary reason for the stalling is set forth below.

The agreement was set up so that the toilets would be provided free to the city. In return, the contractor, who would be providing the toilets, was to control use of and receive revenue from the rental of advertising space located on kiosks which are located on local right-of-ways such as sidewalks. City attorneys cited a state law prohibiting advertising on this type of public property.

This action by City attorneys set off a series of revisions to the original agreement between the City and the contractor. As of this update, proposed terms include a 20 year lease with an option to renew, and the original promise of 25 toilets has been reduced to 15.

A committee chaired by Rev. Ted Wardlaw, pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, and including CM Sherman, Ed Loring and Houston Wheeler of the Open Door and People For Urban Justice; Rev. Rex Kaney of Trinity United Methodist Church; and Rev. John Adamski of Immaculate Conception Church, has been in consultation with City Council President Marvin Arrington regarding details of implementation, (i.e., location of toilets, distribution of free tokens to the homeless, and use of toilet revenue for which the City has agreed to use for rental assistance for homeless people).

We are moving towards a day when homeless people can pee for free with dignity!



# JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

## MATTHEW 2:1-12; 16-18

BY ED LORING

*Editor's note: This piece serves as a reminder that the seasons in Christian life are not meant to be experienced then forgotten. It is only through constant reflection upon the whole of Christian life that we can truly be enriched by the significance of the present.*

"Then they returned to their country by another road since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod."

When we meet Jesus we return by another road. This road is a symbol and fact of a new loyalty, one rooted in disobedience to the powers of political oppression and fear, and founded upon the joyful obedience to the will of God.

Herod had told the Magi to return to him with the information locating the long expected leader of the Jews. In a secret meeting (v.7), Herod plotted to find his rival and then he told a terrible lie. He who would murder this rumored Prince of Peace cloaked his means and ends in the sanctity of religion and worship: "...when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him." (v.8b)

The Magi did find Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea. They were filled with joy and awe, they knelt and worshipped and gave him gifts. These Gentiles from the East encountered the living God. The baby was prophecy, promise, and the beginning of fulfillment. We cannot face God and be the same—as our friend Jurgen Moltmann writes:

"Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the good of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present."

The changed Magi "returned to their country by another road" (v.12) as God had told them to do. We cannot know Jesus and return to Herod. We cannot meet the Christ child and cooperate with the aims and purposes of a fear-filled system which wounds the lives of children and makes widows and orphans of the poor. We cannot take the road to power and prestige that locks up African-American men as a social policy, and allows God's good friends to sleep under bridges and work out of labor pools. When we follow the road of discipleship we cannot return to Herod though there will be many crossroads—where we meet, and the love of God for the dispossessed will be manifested even in Herod's chambers.

The consequences of joyful obedience to Yahweh are harsh and dreadful. And this story of the Magi is among the most revealing in all of scripture of the demonic forces in a fear-filled political order. Here, as in much of our politics today, the policies of government are for the attainment of power even at the expense of children and the poor. Even in our obedience to God, we must be contrite for our participation in an order of violence, greed, and death.

When we are obedient to God's call in our lives, when we take another road toward God's gracious gift of The Beloved Community and the old rugged cross—Herod finds out. Herod learned that the Magi had taken another road and he was furious. Political fury is obscene and death-dealing. In our day it is the fury of over-achievers toward the dispossessed that produces a minimum death wage of \$4.25 per hour. Pay as punishment. The scriptures say, writing from Herod's point of view, that the Magi tricked him (v.16); they did not. They simply changed loyalties; they had a new authority in their lives. This new God is often in conflict with Herod and his successors. When God gave the loving demand, "return by another road," they did so. To obey this wonderful God whose child is born in a manger because there is no room for him, was to disappoint and disobey Herod. Years later Peter would say it well: "We must obey God, not human leaders" (Acts 5:29).

Herod's fear of a new leader and a new power being set loose in the world on Christmas morn made him furious. Since he could not identify Jesus, he gave orders that all boys 2 years old and younger be killed. Had the Magi returned to Herod, refusing obedience to Yahweh and staying on the old road, perhaps only Jesus would have died. Certainly there would not have been such a pogrom.

Joyful obedience to God, taking another road, is often filled with dire consequences. For the barn-born babe away in the manger to enter our lives, Herod instituted another incidence of the slaughter of the innocents. Their blood is on our hands.

The same God has called us at the Open Door Community to live at 910 Ponce de Leon in a wonderful old house made possible by thousands of folk who follow another road to Jesus and justice and who love us deeply. However, I cannot enter or depart my home without stepping over a child of God who lives on our porches or in our yard. Yahweh has given us a house and is building us a home. Yet, in the midst of our joyful obedience and our struggle to journey on another road, we keep others out of our house. As a Presbyterian leader said a couple of years ago, "the locks on the Open Door's door prove that they do not welcome all the homeless into their lives." He was and is correct. In our

joyful obedience, thanking God for our shared lives and good food, our wonderful house and high-mileage cars, we watch and wait as homeless friends die in our midst.

(continued on page 9)





*(Journey, continued from page 8)*

We have been given an extra-ordinary gift at the Open Door. We have a tattered and demented woman who sleeps on our back ramp every night. Most nights she is quiet, but once every few weeks she yells and screams, she curses and moans, and not one person who does House Duty can comfort her. On those nights particularly, I turn in my warm bed and hug Murphy and confess my sin:

"A sound is heard in Ramah, the sound of bitter weeping.

Rachel is crying for her children; she refuses to be comforted, for they are dead." (v.18)

Come, thou long-expected Jesus. Come!

Post Script:

"All this was a long time ago, I remember,

And I would do it again, but set down

This set down

This: were we led all that way for

Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,

We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,

But had thought they were different; this Birth was

Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death."

T. S. Eliot, "Journey of the Magi"

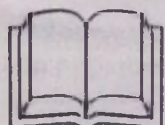
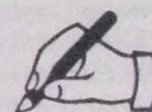
*Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door.*



DIANA BOWER

*You are invited...*

*to a Book Signing*



*with author* **Nibs Stroupe**

## **While We Run This Race:**

### **COUNTERING THE POWER OF RACISM**

*- Refreshments and snacks will be served -*

*- Books will be available for purchase -*

In a book that is challenging, illuminating, and ultimately hopeful, Nibs Stroupe, the white pastor of the multi-cultural Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia, grapples with this question: why, after the Civil Rights movement has become part of American history, does racism still pervade society? What can be done to change this? As Stroupe unflinchingly examines racism in the United States, adding her voice is Inez Fleming, a black elder at Oakhurst, who tells the story of tears and laughter within the congregation as blacks and whites struggle together, creating an extraordinary church family.

Stroupe shows how and why race continues to entrap all Americans in its grip. He steadfastly maintains that acknowledging the power of the system of race throughout society—in our schools, courts, prisons, and housing—is the necessary first step to dismantling it. Using themes from gospel music, Stroupe convinces us that we cannot give in, or give up. This is also the story of Oakhurst, once a prosperous white church, that became a church in crisis with its membership down to 80. Yet because of a deep commitment to multi-culturalism, the church again thrives and its large congregation, almost equally black and white, actively reaches out into the surrounding inner-city community of Decatur. How did they do it? As Stroupe says, "by risking to trust one another." This inspiring book demonstrates clearly that, although racism is powerful, it is not inexorable: it can be overcome.

*Date: May 19, 1995*

*Time: 5:30pm - 8:00pm*

*Place: Open Door Community  
910 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Northeast  
Atlanta*

*Call for directions: 404-874-9652*

NIBS STROUPE has been an activist for the homeless and prison reform, as well as pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church.

Inez Fleming has worked closely with Pastor Stroupe in developing and leading workshops that promote multi-racial leadership and understanding.



# RV's

# in

# the

# RV



GLADYS RUSTAY

*We get some strange requests at the Open Door but this one caught our notice. Did we have enough space in our back yard for a 36 foot long RV and could we hook it up for electricity and water? The request was coming from Evelyn and Ralph Williams of Rapid City, South Dakota. They were exploring the possibility of coming to the Open Door as Resident Volunteers, (RVs), for two months under the Presbyterian Volunteers in Mission program.*

*As you can see from the picture, they made it. Evelyn has been filling in with cooking, washing dishes, etc., while Ralph has gone over every appliance we have and repaired them--refrigerators, solar heat system--got a problem?--get Ralph to fix it!*

*Evelyn feels her opinion of homeless people has changed. She also has adjusted well to cooking for large groups instead of just a few. Ralph appreciates the chance to sit down with someone at dinner who is willing to share at a deep level. He hasn't known what the experience of living in prison is like.*

*We feel blessed that Evelyn and Ralph have shared part of their retirement with us.*

- Gladys Rustay



LEO MCGUIRE

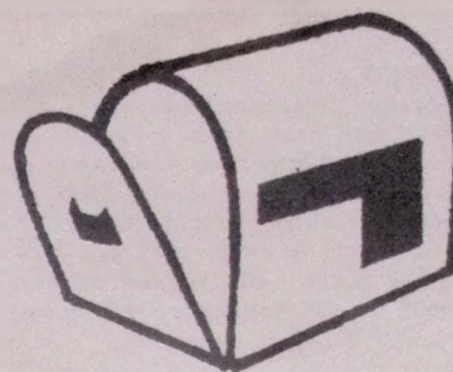
## Memorial Day Meal

Memorial Day is our largest meal of the year--most soup kitchens are closed. In 1994 we served over 700 people a "hamburger feast."

To be prepared, we need over 320 pounds of ground beef, along with adequate amounts of buns, cabbage and beans.



# Grace and Peaces of Mail



Dear Brother Loring,

You probably don't remember my presence at the Open Door, which is just as well, since I intend this to be *my* memory of you. I helped out with lunch and Butler Street as a part of "Empty the Shelters" almost two years ago. Since leaving Atlanta that summer and graduating from college the next year, I have ended up here at Harvard Divinity School, testing out the possibility of teaching in academia.

While one might think that I'm headed for a life of books and egos, I'm not so sure. You see, I still think and feel a lot about a question you asked me in my time in Atlanta: "Thomas," you said one day, "are you going up or down in life?" "Up, I think," I replied, too honestly, too quickly. That question runs through many of my days, and I think I am just beginning to get the full flavor of it. Whether or not you fully intended it, I think you've hit on one of those spiritual paradoxes that we see clearly when we stand on the mountain top, where intellectual certainty slopes down one side, and fathomless instability on the other. For to pick either direction is to pick the other simultaneously. Going up in this world means pushing away the pain, the torture, the ecstasy of thinking critically about the truth and keeping one's heart free from denial and open to the world; the very core of living is pushed down along with ourselves. At the same time, deciding to live in such a real way means turning one's ladder of success at the altar, not climbing up it.

In any event, I thank you first of all for that piece of insight. As I tread amongst the intellects here, as they flex and pose like steroid-wary hulks of men, I often look into people's eyes to see if what's there is as well developed. Mostly I get nervous hums and defensive coughs; other truth suffers.

You and the members of the Open Door were always right there, meeting me at that point: "Yes, we're here; what, are you surprised? Stay with us, and you won't be."

One of the prisoners who wrote *Hospitality* talked about role models of young black males. The cruellest irony is that when it comes to living a life that ties together joy and pain as closely as they are in reality, it is the young *white* male, the paradigm of success, normality, balance, and rationality, who is left wondering, "Where are my guiding examples?" Who feels the pain, who rides that wave cresting on madness and rising from the ocean of spirit? Who tells the truth as I see it, when my mind convulses and my soul yearns for expression? Who takes responsibility for their historical position?

You do, Brother Loring. Thank you.

Upon reflection, I remember one morning when you talked to a man with the most incoherent sequence of words I had ever heard. You turned to me and said that in order to stay sane, make sense out of an absurd social picture, one had to be able to dwell in insanity. After eighteen straight years of schooling and an increasing vision of how the system operates, I remember that comment every day. As I meet people in the streets and shelters of Boston, and argue with students in the asylum someone named Harvard founded, I can only go deeper within myself, listen more closely, receive every event, feel more completely, grasp all stories in their *sense*, especially the *insane* ones like my own.

As I read the letter from "A Friend In Prison," I thought of my Greek exam, in which I will translate the book of Philemon. "A prisoner of Christ," Paul calls himself. I wonder of what I am a prisoner; I must be in a cruel, yet soothing jail, for I only sometimes see the bars.

Thank you, Brother Loring, for your passionate truth-telling, your driving spirit, and most of all your example to others like myself, whether in a question or a cajole—you teach us about being a prisoner of Christ, in Christ, and for Christ, in this Central Jail where we dwell.

I wish you the best on your way down in life (if that's how you want to look at it).

Peace,

Thomas Arnold  
Boston, MA

Dear Murphy,

Thanks for your reasoned piece, "When Is One More Jail Too Many?" (*Hospitality*, March 1995). The construction of more jails without thinking about or acting for alternatives is both pointless and wrong.

I find the new DeKalb County Jail monstrous, a depressing sight of backward aims and achievements.

Yours,

Elizabeth Stevenson  
Decatur, GA

Dear Friends,

Thank you for printing Dr. Clinton Marsh's thoughts in *Hospitality*. His recollections need to be heard by everyone who cares about peace and justice!

And thank you for your caring work.

Sincerely,

Ruth Maier  
Haworth, NJ



with  
**Elise Witt**  
and  
**Joyce Brookshire**

Friday, May 12, 8pm  
Central Congregational Church  
2676 Clairmont Road, Atlanta  
\$5 cover charge to benefit  
Southern Ministry Network  
Rev. Houston Wheeler  
(404) 624-9079



### 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 lunch break from noon 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

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

**WEEKEND RETREATS**—Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), July 7-9.

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

### Open Door Community Needs

JEANS  
T-Shirts  
Men's Work Shirts  
Men's Underwear  
Quick Grits  
Cheese  
Coffee  
Multi-Vitamins  
MARTA Tokens  
Postage Stamps  
Men's Large Shoes (12-14)  
Disposable Razors  
Toothbrushes  
Vaseline  
Socks  
Shampoo  
Men's Belts  
Washcloths  
Sandwiches  
Wednesday Soup Kitchen Volunteers\*  
Butler St. Breakfast Volunteers\*

\* please contact Jeannie Lukkar, Volunteer Coordinator, at 874-2120.

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!**

### Open Door Community Worship

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

*Please join us!*

May 7                  Worship at 910; Rev. Gayraud Wilmore, preaching

May 14                Worship at 910

May 21                Worship at 910

May 28                Worship at 910



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

\_\_\_\_\_ Please ADD to the Hospitality mailing list.

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

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### 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!*