

HOSPITALITY

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Providing hospitality to the homeless and to those in prison, through Christ's love.
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

May 1996

PARTY IN WOODRUFF PARK

On March 18th we celebrated Ed Loring's birthday with a picnic in Woodruff Park! 300 friends--homeless and housed--gathered for lunch and birthday cake.

It was a beautiful celebration of community and diversity on this piece of common ground in the center of our city: homeless people and downtown workers sat on the grass and ate lunch together; we sang and danced; college students played frisbee with the poor; friends greeted each other and new friends were made; music was everywhere; artists decorated the space; we passed out helium balloons; we laughed a lot.

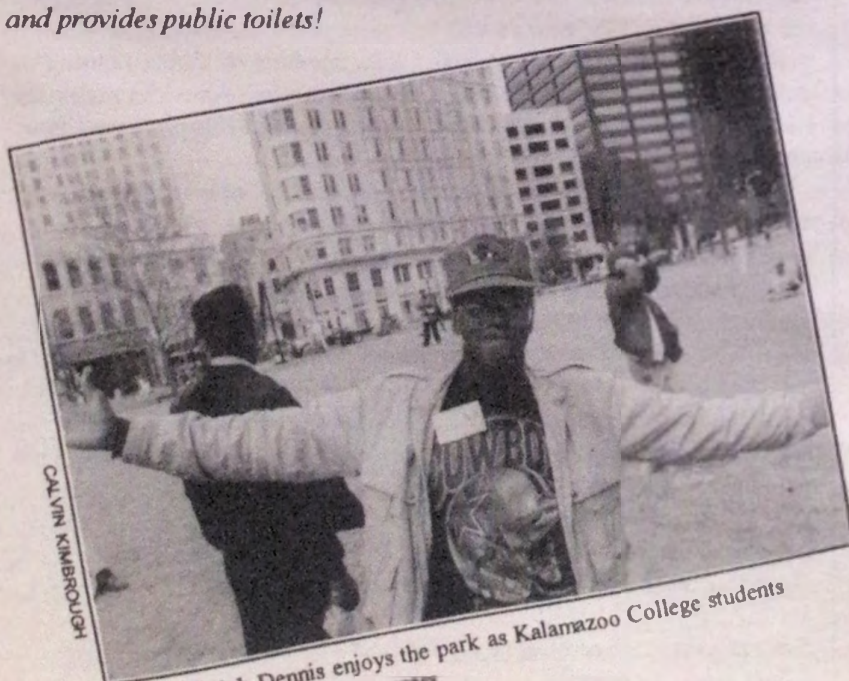
Just think how much more welcoming the park will be for all the people of Atlanta when the city replaces the drinking fountain (lost in the redesign of the park) and provides public toilets!



Ron Jackson and Ed Loring share the celebration.



Adolphus Vietrum prepares to serve lunch.



Ralph Dennis enjoys the park as Kalamazoo College students play frisbee on the grass.



Gerard McHugh, Robert McGlasson, Sye Pressley, and Murphy Davis.

HOSPITALITY



MICHAEL SCHWARZ

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

Elizabeth Dede—Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator; Guest Ministry

Dick Rustay—Group Work Project Co-ordinator

Elizabeth Dede—Hardwick Prison Trip

Newspaper

Editorial Staff—Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede, Ed Loring, Gladys Rustay, Michael Galovic, and Dick Groepper

Layout—Michael Galovic

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

Memorial Day Meal

Memorial Day is our largest meal of the year--most soup kitchens are closed. We need to be prepared, and so we need over 320 pounds of ground beef, along with adequate amounts of hamburger buns, cabbage and baked beans.

Boys II Men in Atlanta

by Chuck Campbell

(Editor's note: Chuck Campbell teaches preaching and worship at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. This article is the first in a six-part series in which he reflects on experiences he had while working with the Open Door Community during his recent sabbatical.)

"Where have I seen his face before?" "That man acts just like somebody I know, but who?" After several Thursday mornings serving at the Butler Street breakfast last summer, questions like these began to run through my mind. I began to notice men that I had seen before, but I couldn't really place them; I had been with them—or someone like them—but I couldn't be sure where. *Deja vu*.

I was also having the same experience on Wednesday evenings as I worked with Urban Training Organization of Atlanta at meetings of The Brotherhood, an anti-gang club of boys and young men who live at the Herndon Homes housing project. Located on Northside Drive, Herndon Homes sits in the shadow of the Coca Cola complex and the Georgia Dome and is just down the street from the new housing for Olympic athletes. During the summer, The Brotherhood met in a sweltering hot community center, which is located in the section of Herndon Homes that has been condemned because of lead poisoning in the ground. ("Don't drink out of the water fountain! You'll get the lead poisoning!" is a regular warning issued to new kids who come to the club.) In this context on Wednesday evenings, I was having the same experience of *deja vu* that I was going through in the basement of the Butler Street C.M.E. Church on Thursday mornings.

After wrestling with this experience for several weeks, I finally made the connection. I discovered the link between Herndon Homes and Butler Street. The men's faces that I recognized on Thursday mornings were the faces of young boys with whom I was meeting on Wednesday evenings. The men's faces were older, more tired, and dirtier than those of the boys, but they were recognizable nevertheless. Even some of the personalities were similar. Among the homeless men standing in the grit line or eating their breakfast were adult versions of Sidney and Tony and Eric—young African-American boys with whom I had played the evening before. And on Wednesday evenings, it was the same: at Herndon Homes I found younger, more energetic, less disillusioned embodiments of many of the men I would serve the next morning at Butler Street.

This recurring rhythm—Wednesday evening in the housing project with young African-American boys and Thursday mornings at Butler Street with homeless African-American men—became a powerful lesson about the way our society deals with poor African-Americans, particularly males. We have two forms of "public housing." Poor African-American women and children are placed in housing projects. Poor African-American men are "housed" in the shelters and prisons, or else they remain on the streets. And the "powers that be" seem just to be waiting for the young boys in the projects to transfer from one form of "public housing" to another when they become adults. For poor African-American males, the movement from boys to men is all too often a predictable movement from one form of "public housing" to another.

Every Thursday morning I saw the "future" of many of the young boys with whom I had worked on Wednesday evening. And the experience was increasingly painful. After several weeks, I broke down and wept. I had known about racism in my head for a long time (I am, after all, from Little Rock, Arkansas), but, much to my shame, I now cried for the first time—cried over what our society has done and continues to do to a race of people. Moreover, I came to realize that this weeping was the most important theological work I did during my sabbatical. I came to understand that white, middle class people like myself will begin to live in the new order inaugurated by Jesus Christ only when we have wept—grieved—over the old order in which we enjoy such privilege. For us, such weeping is a necessary precursor to confession and resistance (Christine Smith, *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance*).

See the next issue of *Hospitality* for part two in this six-part series from Chuck Campbell.

A Man With A Past, Discusses Beliefs Of His Present

by Hannah Loring-Davis

Simon Sye Pressley, a lean, bearded sixty-three year old, picks up his saxophone, and begins to play with his ensemble. His gig is now the Open Door Community, but it once was with Jimi Hendrix and world renowned jazz recorders. In his former life, the kufe-clad Pressley was a Black Panther.

Mr. Pressley continues to live out the values and beliefs he had as a member of the Panther Party. Pressley now lives and works at the Open Door Community, an intentional Christian community, in Atlanta. One of the values Mr. Pressley still retains from his Panther days is he does not hate white people; rather he "hates what white people stand for," said Mr. Pressley. According to Mr. Pressley, white people stand for values of "capitalism, racism, oppression, degradation, humiliation, greed, deceit, and most of all, an egotistical self-righteous maniacal attitude. I don't think that all white people are like that. I do know that those in control are definitely that way. If you don't believe me, when you finish studying black history, read your own (white) history," Pressley said.

Before his alliance with the Black Panther Party, Mr. Pressley was a Muslim follower, going by the name Sahib Bey El-Rashid. In 1968, he left the Mosque, but Mr. Pressley, to this day, still acknowledges his connection with the Muslim culture, as he normally wears an authentic Muslim hat called a kufe. The step that Mr. Pressley took in joining the Panther Party was one of the most positive decisions of his life.

"The Panthers changed my thinking and my knowledge. For once in my life I was part of the solution instead of part of the problem," Mr. Pressley said. The Black Panther Party was much more than the militant organization that some people remember; the party was a community action group. "We established free breakfast programs for kids going to school. This insured the children a hot breakfast before school, because you can't study on an empty stomach. We also started day care centers, sickle cell anemia testing and literacy programs. Most importantly we established an awareness of their community," Mr. Pressley said.

When a person first became a Panther, they became a "soldier." Mr. Pressley worked up the ranks to Captain and then to Field Marshall. His job as a Field Marshall was to "take young soldiers and train them in hand to hand combat."

Mr. Pressley clearly remembers a time his Panther involvement called for action. There was a time when approximately sixty Panthers were in Sing-Sing prison in New York. They began to see problems with the way inmates were being treated, and "decided to have a silent hunger strike. What they were feeding the inmates, I wouldn't feed to a pig. Everybody who could, went to the commissary (prison store), and bought all the food they could purchase at the time. We had enough food to feed the population for at least two days. Early in the morning as each man came into the mess hall, he picked up a spoon, and went straight to his seat, sat and said nothing. When the mess hall was full, it was beautiful, you could hear a rat p— on cotton at a hundred yards. The majority of the guards, the white ones, began to sweat and tremble. Each man had only one thing to say when a guard approached him. The guard would say 'How come you're not eating,' and each reply was the same, 'Sorry, sir, I'm not hungry this morning,'" Mr. Pressley recalls.

Afterwards, all of the men were let out of the yard to do their different details. At break time, "it was beautiful because we ate, we all ate," Mr. Pressley said.

That Saturday, there was a baseball team coming to play the prison team. Before the game started, the imprisoned Black Panthers marched onto the field from all different directions. "We encircled the field, and stood in silence for five minutes. Then Brother Omar said, 'Attention!' and with that we raised our hands in salute, and then marched off the field in the directions from which we had come," Mr. Pressley said.

Presently, Pressley is involved in several issues that are very important to him. He identifies with people who are oppressed by issues of racism,

discrimination, sexism, and homelessness. Pressley also identifies strongly with people in prison, as he has spent many years behind bars himself.

One consistent thing Pressley has had his entire life is music. From the time he was old enough to play in the band at school to the present, he has been playing different instruments. He is most well trained in the saxophone, and though he has been without an instrument for a while, he has just gotten a new one, and has started playing again.

Mr. Pressley also spends time with his woman friend and visits his family. Family is very important to him, especially children. Education of the younger generation was very important to the Black Panthers. Panthers

"felt that if the younger generation are to be the leaders of tomorrow, which many of us will not see, they must be educated within the system as well as outside of the system," said Mr. Pressley.

"Today the problems for blacks are as bad as ever, and getting worse. The loss of homes, unemployment, and the flooding of drugs into the black community, are just some of the problems," Mr. Pressley said.

Hannah Loring-Davis is a junior at Grady High School and a founding member of the Open Door Community. This piece was originally published in Grady High School's newspaper, "The Southerner," vol. XLIX, no. 5, March 15, 1996.



Sye Pressley

SPRING APPEAL APRIL 1996

Dear Friends,

We do not know what the coming months are about to bring for us and our homeless friends. As Atlanta spins toward Olympic hysteria, our homeless friends hunker down with considerable anxiety for their safety and well-being.

Before the games begin, 10,000 troops will be dispatched to Atlanta by the Pentagon. Considerable military hardware will be put into place and readied for action. Atlanta's law enforcement will be federalized, city streets will be closed, and the way will be cleared for the world's elite to come and play.

And what about Atlanta's own—the homeless? Where will they go? Where will they be welcomed? Who will control the space they normally inhabit? Rumors abound but none of us really know.

What we do know is that this summer will be difficult. We are making preparations to have "all hands on deck" to keep the food ready, to keep our yard open to harbor those who need to find safe space, to respond as we are needed, and to take whatever stand is required for the safety and dignity of homeless people in this city.

Surely in the midst of the excess and hoopla we can share space and welcome for those who have only the streets, the cat holes, and the underside of bridges to call home. Most of the emergency shelters will be closed (as they are in the warm summer months).

We are grateful to God and to you for your support, and we continue to beg for your friendship and prayers. May we remain together in the struggle for the Beloved Community.

In the name of the One who comes to us in the guise of the stranger,

The Leadership Team for the Open Door Community,
Phillip Williams, Gladys Rustay, Dick Rustay, Ed Loring, Ron Jackson, Elizabeth Dede, and Murphy Davis

Standing in the Butler St. Breakfast Line with Jesus

The Butler St. Breakfast, part 4

by Ed Loring

You cannot be a slave to two masters. You will hate one and love the other. You will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. This is why I tell you: do not be worried about food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes? Look at the birds. They do not plant seeds, gather in a harvest and put it in barns. Yet your Holy Parent in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth much more than birds? Can any of you live a bit longer by worrying about it? And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow. They do not work, or make clothes for themselves, but I tell you that not even King Solomon, with all of his wealth, had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. It is Yahweh who clothes the wild grass, grass that is here today, then gone tomorrow, burned up in the oven. Won't Yahweh be all the more sure to clothe you? What little faith you have!

So do not start worrying: where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes? These are the things that pagans are always concerned about. And our Mother in heaven knows that we need all these things. Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Beloved Community, and with what Yahweh requires of us, and the Lord will provide all these other things. So don't worry about tomorrow. It will have worries of its own. There is no need to add to the trouble that each day brings.

Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks will receive. And anyone who seeks will find. And the door will be opened to those who knock. Would any of you who are parents give your son a stone when he asks for bread? Or would you give your daughter a snake when she asks for fish? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more will our Holy Parent in heaven give good things to those who ask.

Do for others what you want them to do for you. This is the meaning of the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets. Go in through the narrow gate because the gate to hell is wide, and the road that leads to it is easy. And there are many who travel it. But the gate to life is narrow, and the way that leads to it is hard. And there are few people who find it. (Matthew 6 and 7, adapted)

I. Introduction: Homelessness Is Hell

Homelessness is streets, rain and freezing cold. Homelessness is James Davis with no feet, ankles and 1/2 a calf on 3/4 of a leg.

Homelessness is four worn out women dreaming on our living room floor of another room in another time.

Homelessness is jails and prisons gone awry and awash for structural reasons, so said the rotund guard when he denied Chuck and me entrance to Don Mills' cell block on Thursday. "Too much rain and too much water for visitors," he said. But convicts must remain in the sloshing waters on the 4th floor, the 5th floor and the 7th floor of the Fulton County Jail—the new jail; the state-of-the-art jail; the state-of-the-art hell hole for the poor and homeless and criminal among us. "God's gonna trouble the water."

Homelessness is death; the desire for death, the hunger for death. So Ed Weir came a'callin' on us Tuesday, and 10 Open Doorites went downtown to the Fulton County Justice Center while Lyndon Pace, backed by loving sisters and frightened

Homelessness is Hell, is jail, is death, is hunger. Not long ago a man I've been visiting for over a year at the Fulton County Jail wrote this:

There exists a problem with the issue of getting enough to eat in here. If a person doesn't purchase food from the jail, then he or she is at the mercy of the system and will lose weight because there isn't enough to eat from the trays that are dispensed.

People are hungry! I mean hungry! I went without purchasing food from the jail for three months, and I averaged 10 pounds of weight loss each month that I didn't purchase food from the jail.

Homelessness, paradoxically, is Hope. For we are nourished and led everyday by

formerly homeless folk in this Community, by those out on the streets of Atlanta, and by those in the jail houses and prisons of the state of Georgia. The homeless even boast of their suffering and are gifted with endurance. So James Davis told me this week after he arrived in Eatonton to live with his mom: "I lost my legs in that driving storm, but I got my life. God's got lots of work for me to do yet; I know it; I just believe it." And endurance brings God's approval, which creates

Hope for Housing and Justice, for Freedom and Life, for Love and Community for the end of riches and the end of poverty.

And this Hope does not disappoint the poor, the hungry, the prisoner, the homeless. For God has poured out God's love into their hearts and into the hearts of those who stand in line with them, by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us (Romans 5: 2b-5, adapted).

The paradox and mystery of the lives of the oppressed is the Hope and Liberation which God gives them. For those of us who live on the other side of the tracks, the good news to the poor is simple: we must descend into hell, and there receive, with hands outstretched, the gift of life, which comes from the hell of homelessness.

II. Standing in Line with Jesus

And so it is on a morning, we leave our beds and roofed rooms, and load the van with grits and coffee, with oranges and hope, with vitamins and love, with the salt of friendship, and hen eggs hotly boiled. We park on Butler Street and walk to the corner of Coca Cola. We hear our God say to us and to the oppressed and to the homeless and to the prisoner: "Do not be afraid. I will save you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through deep waters I



brothers, sat erect before Judge Elizabeth Long (white flesh, black robe) to watch his fate unfold. "Death," the jury said. "Electrocution," the judge muttered. "No!" cried his family. "Yes, fry him!" lapped America.

Mike Mears, friend and protector of the orphan and widow within our gates, told the press, "Hard not to get death anymore. Most everybody wants death these days."

Homelessness is hatred, meanness, murder and entertainment.

Last month, columnist Molly Ivins shared this with the nation:

Canada recently called its army into action after three homeless people froze to death; the army opened its armories to the homeless and provided coats, cots and food. This report caught my eye because I happened to be in Atlanta three winters ago, when a homeless man was found frozen to death.

Georgia did not call out its National Guard. Instead, a local radio talk-show host named Neil Boortz, one of many Rush Limbaugh imitators, made a joke: After reporting that temperatures were expected to go down to zero again, he said, "I can't wait to find out how many homeless-cicles will be on the streets tomorrow morning." Heh-heh-heh (Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 2/21/96).

will be with you. Your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned. The hard trials that come will not hurt you. I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, who saves you. Because you are precious to me and because I love you and give you honor. Do not be afraid for I am with you."

6:30 a.m.: There is a line, mostly of men, stretching down Coca Cola Street. People whose bodies ache with hunger, and who are riddled with the fear of life in this hostile, inhospitable city, which has pushed and ground the poor and homeless, long before Billy Payne ever had a dream while sitting in a pew at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church. There denied, forgotten, sought by police, are those whom God promises:

"I have called you by name, you are mine."

We here at the Open Door—the group that goes to Butler Street—begin a work that separates us. We must order the line at the Butler Street Breakfast along Coca Cola St. We give out tickets because the drive and hunger for food is such that we would be overwhelmed without ordering the line.

On rare occasions, (most often when it's cold and rainy, but sometimes when it's warm and feeling friendly), all of the sudden a fight will break out.

The line goes unruly.

People yell and scream, and anger boils over—

hotter than the hottest grits that Leo can cook.

Broken-hearted, we turn our bodies, and

we come home, without sharing the prepared meal

for we cannot distribute the food in the midst of chaos and violence.

The hurt hurts so harmfully when we cannot share.

And those who have been standing in the line,

some for several hours

curse, turn, and walk away with nothing to eat.

But most of the time:

there is happiness and order in the line: the tickets given

and we are learning one another's names down there on that corner.

We're moving.

We get the van unloaded and move down into the basement.

We go to serve while Jesus stands outside in line and waits for breakfast.

Glory, Glory Hallelujah!

III. The End Is Not Near

We believe Yahweh, the Lord our God, who led us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, we believe that Yahweh hates hunger, despises homelessness, crashes prison bars. Yet we see with our own eyes, feel with our own hearts and fingertips, hear with our own ears in the cry and agony and groans of the hungry and homeless who stand in the line with Jesus; we smell in the urine in cornered places, the growth

of evil and suffering on our city streets and in our prison cells. We are people of hope who share a life in Jesus the Jew, who was crucified, who is our liberator and sustainer as we wait in line on Butler Street. Our hope keeps us from denying our troubles, and our troubles produce folk who are in this struggle for the long haul, which energizes our God, which moves the Holy Spirit, which encourages Jesus to choose again to be on the side of the poor, the oppressed, the hungry, the homeless, the prisoner, the people and the communities who fight and struggle against racism, sexism, classism, and the greed that grasps us all.

This hope does not disappoint us, and yet, and yet, we may be like our ancestors, who struggled and failed in the wilderness with Moses. Psalm 95 ends with the sad lament and memory of Yahweh's judgment:

"You will never enter the land where I would have given you rest."

Today it seems that we will not in our lifetime behold the end of homelessness. So we work for our children, and our children's children; we work and we share with the young people who join us as volunteers; for Ira's children and Sye's grandchildren and all our children. For today it seems that we will not in our own lifetime behold the end of homelessness. You will not go into that land yourselves. If you could, you would have gone into

the land of rest. But not you.

The death penalty spreads its torturous tentacles toward greater numbers of the poor, and the rich fight gun control, and Dole supports assault weapons. So we practice peace and gentleness and nonviolence for those yet unborn, believing and hoping that the one who rode a jackass into town is the one whom death could not stop. We shall not enter the land where the hungry are fed and no line lasts long on Butler Street.

But today we have each other. We have the streets upon which to walk and to serve, and we have the prisoners to visit and to write. And we have our life in Jesus, who is a Jew, who was crucified, who on the third day rose again from the dead, who leads us toward the New Jerusalem. So we, who are wounded and lame, we limp together toward God's table. Homeless we are, in prison each of us, hungry, hopeful, believing, on fire for justice, ready for the Beloved Community to come, where there will be no line hanging out on Butler Street, we come to the table together, crying, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Ed Loring is a founding partner of the Open Door Community.

Mothers in Prison

- Fact Sheet -

- More than 113,000 women are incarcerated in U.S. prisons and jails.

- Women continue to be the fastest growing population in prisons and jails.

- The number of women in prison increased fivefold from 1980 to 1994.

- Two-thirds of the women in State and Federal prisons are mothers to dependent children.

- The cost of incarcerating a woman in a New York State prison for one year is \$30,000. In New York City jails, the cost is \$59,000.

- The median cost of prison construction across the country is \$52,000 per bed.

- 75% of women in prison are serving sentences for nonviolent offenses.

- The majority of women in prison for violent offenses are accused of crimes that involve a spouse, relative, or acquaintance. Many of the women are defending themselves against an abusive partner; they are not a threat to community safety.

- More than half of the women in State and Federal prisons were unemployed at the time of their arrest.

- More than 40% of women prisoners were physically or sexually abused prior to incarceration.

- The dramatic increase in the women's prison



population is driven largely by mandatory drug sentences. In 1991, 1 in 3 women in State prisons were serving time for a drug crime, compared to 1 in 8 in 1986.

- In 1982, 67 women were sentenced to prison for drug offenses in New York State; by 1993, that number had grown to 1,264—an increase of 1768.6%.

- Many women who are in prison for drug crimes were unknowingly exploited, coerced, or tricked into the drug trade. So-called "drug mules" are trapped by mandatory sentencing structures.

Source: Justice Works Community, Brooklyn, New York

WEALTH, FAITH, AND POVERTY:

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Editor's note: We are excited to bring to our readers such extraordinary reflections and insights into the struggle of an affluent disciple of Jesus the Christ. To protect the author's privacy we are running this 3-part series anonymously.

I grew up being rich without ever really knowing it until I was 13 or 14 years old. I have always heard this put another way: "I grew up being poor without ever knowing it until—" Not too many rich people talk about being rich. At least, not many speak of economic wealth as an issue of personal identity, as a spiritual question, or as a problem. If anything, most of the wealthy people that I know do not talk very much about their wealth. Most of us do talk a lot about taxes and the stock market and the economy, but not about what wealth does to us or how we use our wealth as an expression of who we are.

So, to be honest, I have often felt isolated because of my wealth. There have not been a lot of people I have felt free to talk with about my wealth, because the idea of wealth as a problem is really alien to mainstream American values. But there have also been few people I have felt free to talk with about my wealth because I have been afraid for my own and my family's safety. I have also been concerned about being "hit on" continually or causing envy.

Wealth often alienates people. When I was younger I noticed that the wealthier people became, the more they tended to move into homes with bigger lots, more rooms, and more privacy. And this does not include all of the vacation and retirement homes rich people buy so they can have more seclusion still. Upscale cars are quieter, upscale jobs give you a more private work space, and high tech computers and communication devices like cellular phones mean less and less need to deal with people face to face.

Wealth has often been a problem for me because it has isolated me from other people, it has gotten in the way of my relationship with God, and it often makes it harder for me to know myself as I really am. But paradoxically, wealth has also brought me closer to people, especially people I might never have known, when I have allowed my wealth to be an expression of my love for God and others. I will say more about the bridge-building side of wealth later.

My first experience of wealth as a problem came when I was around thirteen years old. My dad started making me work during the summers in his warehouse at that time, and I learned about class, caste, and society in one fell swoop. Literally crossing the railroad tracks every morning as we drove into the city from the suburbs, I saw sub-standard housing, learned how people "got by" on near minimum-wage salaries and learned about racism and paternalism. For the first time, I encountered the ambiguities of power as fellow workers teasingly referred to me as "the boss's son." It was a very traumatic experience, not only because of

the contrast between my suburban cocoon and inner-city reality, but also because my own family was experiencing a lot of pain. I was starting to question God and challenge the church. When my church built a brand new "recreational wing" for a million dollars, I was so enraged that I left it for a pilgrimage among several different churches and denominations for the next few years.

Around the time that I graduated from high school, I experienced a dramatic conversion to personal Christian faith and came to believe in the abiding and life-changing love of God. From this time on, I began to ponder and struggle in earnest with the role of wealth in my life, especially since I was becoming a new creation in Christ. Very quickly I learned that the Bible had some tough words for rich people.

My first reaction was to condemn my parents for being wealthy (A typical adolescent response!) and to argue with them about our culture's idolatry of money. I announced to my friends that I was thinking about giving all of my money away to the poor—as soon as I got it! I came to admire people such as St. Thomas a Becket, Clarence Jordan, and Millard Fuller, who gave their wealth away to follow Christ.

After college I became a VISTA volunteer and soon after that volunteered to do evangelistic work with inner-city teenagers. I was also drafted as a conscientious objector and worked in a menial job at a local hospital. This became a formative stage in my life because, for the first time, I began to realize how hard it is to surrender my wealth and to free myself from the culture of wealth, and to live in solidarity with the poor.

My ideals of living as a non-materialistic Christian came into a hard collision with forces outside me and inside as well. I discovered how little I liked the smells of poverty, of stale urine in alley-ways, unwashed clothes and flesh, cheap upholstery and rugs. I learned about having to live with noisy neighbors and tight-fisted land-lords. I saw violent crimes and learned to be wary of strangers. I learned how seldom you get respect when you don't wear a coat and tie and have a title—and how a moody boss can put you out on the street in a minute.

If taking up my cross and following Jesus meant living like this... well sure, I was willing to give it a shot, but for how long? But, I asked myself, what kept living the way that I did from just being masochistic? My friends asked me this, too. Was this what it meant to live in solidarity with the poor—to smell these smells and see these sights? If so, how could I survive and live in some sort of sane and physically healthy way?

Unfortunately, I did not find too much help in answering these questions, perhaps, in part, because I did not look hard enough. Perhaps, also, those of us who were intent on being "radical Christians" were so caught up in being radical that we lost sight of each others' needs and the abundant mercy and forgiveness of God.



COME FOLLOW ME

Ade Bethune

As I say, I learned a lot about poverty during this period, from a wealthy person's perspective. But, more important, I came to know people who happened to be poor. Perhaps my most striking personal experience was with a young Black Panther who castigated me for being the son of a rich man. I now realize he was lambasting "the system", and not me. More commonly, however, I got to know ordinary people, most of whom were what today we would call the working poor. I particularly remember my friends and co-workers at the hospital, who did me the profound honor of treating me as one of their own, to be teased, cajoled, corrected and accepted like everyone else in our department. They taught me a lot about how to survive on a little and how to laugh in the face of the Devil and all of his allies.

But by the end of this period of "radical discipleship" (which really wasn't all that much of either), I was "burned out" and ready to "get more in touch with myself", as we said at that time. I began to examine myself and my attitude towards wealth and poverty a great deal more closely. It was a confusing time for me.

I started seminary and got married in the same year. In both of these new experiences, I was pushed hard to justify my high-sounding rhetoric about the need to resist the culture of wealth and the oppression of the poor. Close friends became less sympathetic with my discomfort about the inequality of our society. I became more attached to living with the comforts my family's wealth afforded. In addition, I began to feel increasingly like a hypocrite, preaching against social injustice while benefitting from it.

Seminary professors and other counselors whom I respected urged me to accept my wealth, myself, the fallenness of this world and all its inequities, and the grace of God. They were quick to point out a puritanical, self-righteous streak in me. They put a spot-light on the wide gap between my calls for public selflessness and a deeply-felt need to be in control of my family's purse-strings and other dimensions of my life.

This was a very painful time in my life. As I think back on it now, it was really my rite-of-passage into adulthood. I was being called out of my rage at the world for not being as I wanted it to be and called into living in the world as it really is and with myself as I really am. I also began to see how desperate I was to prove myself worthy of other people's and God's love and respect, and how little I believed in that worthiness. I wish I could describe the depth of the pain I felt at this time, or how long I lived with this pain. If anyone reading this is in the middle of such pain, I pray that my own experience can bring some comfort and hope, because, thank God, I did find deliverance. But not until I walked through a lonesome valley for a very long time.

Even though I was retreating from face to face experiences with the poor at this time, I began my ordained ministry by serving an inner-city church. I had been looking for an "emotionally safe" ministry. I was not seeking this consciously, of course, but I now realize that I wanted to retreat to the edge of the inner city, even if not all of the way to the suburbs. The church I was called to was somewhat on the boundary between a working-class neighborhood and some older suburbs in a large city. In retrospect, I cannot help but think of myself as being like Peter, hovering around the edge of the high priest's courtyard while Jesus was being interrogated. He did not want to flee totally from discipleship, but he was unwilling to step into the light and stand beside Jesus.

What was ironic about all of my planning, however, was that around the time I came to this church, our state de-institutionalized the care of mentally ill patients at state hospitals and our neighborhood was flooded with the first wave of homeless people. This was what I now realize was part of a long trend of government and business downsizing that started in the 1950s and has continued to the present. In any case, in spite of my plans to the contrary, I began to meet a growing number of street people in our church. Many came to my office asking for help, while others stopped me in the hall and parking lot or called me at home. Sometimes I would give meal or transportation tickets and sometimes help them find assistance from appropriate agencies. I was lucky enough to become friends with some folks, and I came to consider them family. Occasionally I felt obligated to say no to unreasonable requests or destructive behavior and I had to bear the thrust of the offended person's rage—which often took the form of denouncing me as unchristian or unfaithful to my calling as a minister. Because I was aware of my deeply divided feelings

towards the poor, their denunciations haunted me considerably.

During this time, a wise counselor suggested to me that my divided feelings about the poor might have something to do with my own poverty. If I could examine how I was poor, I might be able to connect with the poor at a deeper level. As I look back on what my friend was saying, I realize it is one of the most important pieces of wisdom I have ever been privileged to discover. To be sure, I could not understand with any depth what it is like to live in a public housing project or on welfare or on the street. However, I could understand myself as impoverished—poor on account of my isolation and loneliness, poor in wisdom and self-knowledge, poor in relation to God and poor because of my wealth. I remember becoming friends at this time with a young man who lived in a cardboard box near our church. What I remember most clearly about our time together was that he gave me a chance to think about myself as poor and as his brother. Somehow I became less afraid of the poor. I began to realize that I need the poor to help me know who I am and to help me meet God. For I was coming to believe that the more we see others and ourselves as we really are, the more likely we will be able to experience God.

At about the same time, my marriage caved in on itself, and I was forced to deal even more forcefully with my own spiritual and relational poverty. Even though my divorce was a devastating experience, the act of surrendering my image as a righteous and untainted preacher set me free to experience God's grace in a dramatic way. I no longer had to save myself by being worthy of God's and other people's love. Blessed indeed are the poor in spirit. Church members and others began to open up their lives to me—and I in return—in a way that I had never known before. I am convinced that it was no accident that my ability to let go of my fear of the poor and my need to be righteously "in charge" of my life came at the same time. Grace and embracing poverty are two sides of the same coin.

See next month's *Hospitality* for part 2 of this 3-part series on *Wealth, Faith, and Poverty*.



Fritz Eichenberg

IF YOU PUT AN END
TO OPPRESSION,
TO EVERY GESTURE
OF CONTEMPT, AND
TO EVERY EVIL WORD;
IF YOU GIVE FOOD
TO THE HUNGRY
AND SATISFY THOSE
WHO ARE IN NEED,
THEN THE DARKNESS
AROUND YOU WILL
TURN TO THE
BRIGHTNESS OF
NOON.
ISAIAH 58:9-10

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AT THE DOOR

by Murphy Davis

There is an old story about five blind folks and an elephant. Each person—unable to see the whole animal—felt one part and described it from their experience. "It's like a tree," said the one who felt the elephant's leg. "No, it's like a piece of leather," argued the one who grabbed the ear. "No, a large rubber hose," insisted the one holding the trunk of the beast....

It's kind of like that in community life. What the community appears to be depends a good deal on when someone is here and where and how they "take hold." Each time someone leaves or a new person comes in, we are different because the personality of each person becomes at once a part of the personality of the whole.

Some things are constant in our structure and even in our personality (shaped in large part by us curmudgeonly old-timers). But many faces of our reality change from week to week, month to month, year to year.

This time of year often brings groups of college students for classes or alternative spring breaks. The energy level of the place really zooms when the young folks come through the door. And of course, part of it always depends on what a person brings. A cheerful person can usually find plenty to be happy about. A grump can find reason aplenty to grouse around.

Most of the time we laugh a lot, but sometimes more than others. Like now. Sye, Adolphus, Elizabeth, Phillip and Ira have taken to fishing on their days off and the reports and stories get more preposterous by the week. Sometimes they run on til our sides ache.

And if you checked by the Open Door in the month of March you'd be impressed with what an art colony we've become. Longtime friends Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough are founding members of the Patchwork Central Community in Evansville, Indiana. After nearly 20 years they

managed to get away for a brief sabbatical and they spent the first month of their leave with us. (More than a few friends said, "You're going to *rest* at the Open Door?") But, in fact, they did get some rest and spent much of their time at their art. Calvin is a filmmaker and photographer (whose portraits have often appeared on the pages of *Hospitality*), and Nelia works primarily in clay and drawing. Her discipline for the time with us was to bring no art supplies and work entirely with found objects and materials. So while Calvin made hundreds of pictures, Nelia crafted art pieces with plastic, cardboard, wire, broken glass, and other treasures of Ponce de Leon. The second floor gallery provided space for all of us to look at the art and deepen our vision of the space, textures and people around us. And oh, was it fun to have them here!

Our friend Sister Helen Prejean called the other day. The film, "Dead Man Walking," about her experiences on death row in Louisiana has been a smash hit (with an Oscar for Susan Sarandon for her portrayal of Helen) and has Helen much on the road. She said she went to speak in Memphis and one thousand people showed up. So, Helen figures, the anti-death penalty movement has caused its first traffic jam!

A TV crew arrived to interview Ed last week—they all want to talk about the homeless and the Olympics. Ed was making some point about sharing and how we need to live in ways that we can help each other. The young TV woman looked perplexed. "Are you a socialist?," she asked.

Reminds me of the film, *Excuse Me America*, in which the heroic Brazilian Archbishop Dom Helder Camara tells of being called a communist because of his love for the poor. "Eet ees because," he says, "zey do not under-stand zee goss-pell."

We celebrate the life of Ora Browne who died this fall in Sinks Grove, West Virginia. Ora and her husband Conrad were one of the families who lived at Koinonia Farms in the 1950's. During those years Koinonia, in rural Sumter County, Georgia, was often firebombed and terrorized with gunblasts into their homes because of their interracial life and work. They instituted the practice of community members walking two-by-two along the highway in front of their homes to keep watch. One visitor who came to help was a tall, strapping man who looked like he could handle anything. His time came to walk the road with Ora Browne on night watch duty. As they walked along, a car approached out of the darkness; a loud noise had the man hitting the ditch in a flash. Lying there, realizing it was not a gunshot, he looked up sheepishly at little Ora who stood over him and had never flinched.

We are grateful for the courage and fire of Ora Browne. We pray for comfort for Con and their children and grandchildren. And we gratefully acknowledge

A City Just for You

by Kamau Marcharia

I'm building this poem
and calling it a city
just for you
It is built
on the rock
of my mind
so that it will last
and carry your name to time.
I'm planting flowers
in the streets
and hanging stars
on corner lampposts
to light your way
when you walk the streets
of my memory.
I'm building this poem
and calling it a city
to show my gratitude;
this is your city
from this moment on
you have a home

(Editor's note: Kamau Marcharia is on the staff of Grassroots Leadership and South Carolina United Action in Orangeburg, SC. He wrote this poem after a February visit to the Open Door.)



Kamau Marcharia

memorial gifts that have helped us at the Open Door.

We also remember with deep gratitude Bishop Joseph Coles of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, who died in November.

Rev. Coles was Bishop of Georgia for many years and was always ready to stand up for the poor and oppressed. He had powerful gifts as a preacher, a pastor's heart, and great courage to confront the powers and principalities. When we began to serve breakfast at the Butler Street CME Church (at the invitation of Rev. Thomas Brown, now Dean of Philips School of Theology), Bishop Coles encouraged and supported our partnership. We called on him often to help in the work against the death penalty and he was always happy to oblige. At the end of every conversation including such a request, Bishop Coles invariably said, "I thank you for the opportunity to serve."

Murphy Davis is one of the founding members of the Open Door Community.



The upstairs art gallery at 910.

CALVIN KIMBROUGH

A Letter to the Neighborhood Police

Office of Professional Standards
c/o Investigator M. D. Lewis
Atlanta Police Department
70 Fairleigh St., Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Investigator Lewis,

I am writing this letter to you in the context of my 17 years of experience as a minister to and with the homeless people of the city of Atlanta. For the past 14 years I have lived and worked at the Open Door Community on Ponce de Leon. Every day we open our home and our yard to our homeless friends who need food, clothes, a telephone, an address, a place to rest, a bathroom. Through the many connections and relationships I have developed with people who live on the streets around the Open Door, I have received innumerable complaints about Officer Terry McFarland, who has been on duty in this neighborhood and in the Little 5 Points area, where many of the homeless spend time sitting and resting. I have heard of harassment, of racism, of rudeness, of brutality, and other such abuses.

From a member of the Open Door Community I have an example of this abusive behavior exhibited by Officer McFarland. Several years ago, Officer McFarland began to set himself up in front of the Open Door Community. He threatened people with arrest who sat on our wall in front of the house. He even came up into our front yard to shout at people and threaten them as they waited in line to come in for the soup kitchen meal. When we challenged his authority saying that we welcomed these folk in our yard, and reminding him that there is no law against sitting on the wall, his behavior became even more aggressive. One day he set himself up across the street and began to arrest homeless people as they crossed the street to line up for the soup kitchen. If they had an I.D. card he wrote up a ticket. If they had no I.D. he took them to jail. They were charged with jaywalking.

Ralph Dukes, a partner and long-time resident of the Open Door Community, was arrested and spent 24 hours in jail because he jaywalked across Ponce de Leon, as he had done for many, many years, to go up the street to return a video that the Community had watched together the night before. This was one of Ralph's jobs in the Community, and he had never been stopped before. In addition, Ralph had been a law-abiding, peaceful citizen of that neighborhood of Atlanta for 10 years at that time. It was clear that Officer McFarland's harassment was aimed at the Open Door Community and the homeless people we serve.

Please know that we are very grateful

Tincture Of Time, The story of 150 years of medicine in Atlanta a book by Martin Moran, MD

Published by Williams Printing, Atlanta, GA
To order, call Medical Association of
Atlanta (404) 881-1020

Over the years, Dr. Moran renewed his absorption with history, joined the Medical Association of Atlanta (MAA) and became very active in the metropolitan community. His community involvement and that of his family members has touched the homeless, the uninsured, and church and social groups.

"Physicians came to what was then an undeveloped area, built offices, cared for 'frontier' patients and worked to establish a community. Even those who started Atlanta's early hospitals often did so with private monies because the society was in need. From 1845 through their financial support of this book in 1994, these health care providers have demonstrated this is a most honorable profession."

Tincture Of Time,

The story of 150 years of medicine in Atlanta,

by Martin Moran, MD

Review by John T. Bonner, MD

(Editor's note: John Bonner is a friend of the Open Door and Associate Professor of Anesthesiology at Emory Medical School.)

One of the bits of wisdom from baseball, attributed to Yogi Berra, is "if you don't know where you are going, you might end up somewhere else." Dr. Martin Moran helps us know where we are going by showing us where we have been in his attractive coffee table book, "Tincture Of Time." The author notes in the Epilogue that in this time of change for patients and providers, we cannot predict the future, but have the responsibility and opportunity to be part of the future. He has spent six years writing this book, with the help of many: the Medical Association of Atlanta and other staff, his friends, professional colleagues, and family.

After Elizabeth Dede asked me to review "Tincture Of Time," I borrowed the copy that belongs to Ed Loring and Murphy Davis, autographed by Dr. Moran. I discovered that the author and I graduated from medical school the same year, 1963, he from the University of Tennessee and I from the Medical College of Virginia. We were born within two years of each other, I won't say which way.

As I read through the book, I discovered that Dr. Moran's college major in history came alive

for the Atlanta Police Department. So often we receive good help as we face the many crises that come as we pursue justice for the poor, hungry and homeless people of Atlanta. We are especially glad and thankful to call Officers W.J. Butcher and Ralph McCann our friends. They treat each person with dignity and respect and have been models of peace and justice.

Because there are such fine examples of caring and helpful police officers, it is all the more shocking and sad to encounter such an unkind officer as McFarland. It would be a great benefit to this neighborhood and this part of the city if Officer McFarland were no longer here.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my observations and experience with you. If I can be of any help, please do not hesitate to call.

Peace to you,

Ed Loring

in his passion for discovering the past, and in his persistence in obtaining facts, dates, and photographs. The book is objective, rich in detail, and well organized. It can be a narrative or a reference. Each time-period covers five years, beginning in 1835. The world and national events of the time provide the tapestry on which the author reveals Atlanta's medical history. He, in off-call weekends and extended days, molded mountains of information into a landscape of history that shows attention to accuracy, but particularly a sense of identification and pride in Atlanta's successful effort to become a center of the best in medical care, education and innovation.

I learned from this book. I learned that Dr. Joshua Gilbert, Atlanta's first physician, whose MD was earned from the Augusta Medical College (now Medical College of Georgia), rode his horse from his office on Marietta Street and blew a whistle announcing his presence. Now, there is the answer to long waits in doctors' offices! I learned, on page 33, about Emory Medical School's evolution, from Atlanta Medical College in 1854, merging with the Southern Medical College, forming the Atlanta College of Physicians and Surgeons, which became Emory School of Medicine in 1915 after merging with the Atlanta School of Medicine and Atlanta Medical College. I learned more about Grady Hospital's history, the hospital of my internship, where I lived for that year, delivered babies, rode the ambulance, and learned what medicine is really all about.

In the story of medicine in Atlanta, I learned more about people I had met, who had taught me, been my friends and role models: J. Willis Hurst MD, Bill Pinkston, Arthur Richardson MD, Frank Wilson, David Apple MD, Luella Klein MD, Frank Houser MD, Hamilton Holmes MD, Jeff Nugent MD, Robin Line MD, Dean Warren MD, Alan Plummer MD, and Asa Yancey MD, to name a few.

As a pediatrician in private practice, Dr. Moran brings his concerns for the patient and his understanding of medicine's privileges and obligations to this endeavor. He saw evidence of these qualities in our predecessors, who devoted their careers to the story he tells. However, he is careful to be scholarly and avoids editorial comment. There is enough evidence, though, to understand the author's values and priorities, which make him a part of the story itself.

This one-of-a-kind publication should be a part of the personal library of any physician, educator, health care administrator and provider who works in the Atlanta area. The book was supported by 16 contributing institutions, and all of the proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to five charitable organizations, one of which is the Open Door Community. Copies are available from the Medical Association of Georgia, 875 West Peachtree Street, Atlanta, Georgia, 30309. Their phone is (404) 881-1020.

I am ordering my copy today. I invite you to do the same.

A Response to Bill Swain's Series "The Way The World Ends"

by Robert F. Chandler, Jr.

Editor's note: Dr. Robert F. Chandler, Jr. is a world leader in food production. He has been a primary person in the world's movement to produce rice, especially for people in Asia and Africa. He is a recipient of numerous awards and prizes, an author, and husband to the most wonderful Sunny Chandler. At 90 years he continues to be an active scholar and speaker. He and Ed Loring are first cousins once removed!

I agree fully that there are four critical global issues that affect the future of life on this planet, viz., population growth, food supply, energy sources and the economic interdependence of nations.

I had bought a copy of Limits to Growth, sponsored by the Club of Rome when it came out in 1972. Just recently (1992) the co-authors, Donella and Dennis Meadows, wrote a sequel entitled, Beyond the Limits, which I also have.

Although Dr. Swain didn't mention it, I expect that he has read some of the recent books put out by The Worldwatch Institute, headed by Lester Brown. I say this because so many of his statements agree with those of the Institute. Anyway, Bill Swain, Lester Brown and RFC, among many others, agree that unless the human population is stabilized, the world faces a disastrous future.

Dr. Swain believes that the world population will reach 12 billion before it is stabilized. A number of demographers paint a somewhat more optimistic picture, feeling that population growth may even out at between 8 and 10 billion. This view is based on the fact that already fertility (number of births per female) and average population growth rates are declining worldwide. The annual growth rate peaked at 1.9 percent in 1970 and has been slowly declining since. It is now between 1.6 and 1.7 percent. Not a great reduction, but headed in the right direction. As Dr. Swain pointed out, in spite of the decline in the rate of population growth, the number of people added each year continues to rise. For example, the world population in 1970 was approximately 3.5 billion. So 1.9 percent of 3.5 billion is 66.5 million which is the number of people added that year. The current world population is about 5.7 billion. Multiplying this by 1.6 gives us a figure of 91.2 million for the people added during 1995.

Of course no one can accurately predict the size of the world population when it becomes stabilized. Estimates vary from as low as 8.5 billion (highly unlikely) to as high as 14 to 16 billion (also highly unlikely). Dr. Swain's estimate of 12

billion may prove to be right after all. We just don't know.

When it comes to the food/population balance, the picture is not at all rosy. Lester Brown sent me a copy of his most recent book, Who Will Feed China? Wakeup Call For A Small Planet. He points out that China, because of its growing prosperity due to industrialization, is losing agricultural land to factories, roads, etc. At the same time the number of livestock is increasing, thus adding to the need for grain importation. He predicts that between 2020 and 2030, China will require so large an importation that there will not be enough food grain to feed China and the rest of the world. He predicts that there will be at least 500 million more people in China by 2030, in spite of the country's efforts to reduce family size.

On the energy issue, there is no question but that eventually we'll run out of non-renewable sources of energy (principally oil, coal and natural gas). I agree with Dr. Swain that, considering the recent advances in the design of photovoltaic cells, solar energy is a very promising source of energy. Although solar, wind and water power are non-polluting sources of energy, it is doubtful that they will be sufficient to meet world needs (solar energy is fine when the sun shines and wind when it blows). In my opinion, the greatest hope for an inexhaustible and clean energy source is fusion (not to be confused with fission). We have an unlimited supply of hydrogen in our oceans but, with current technology, fusion reactions have to take place at such high temperatures that they require more energy to produce products than can be got from them. Scientists believe the energy produced by our sun and millions of stars, results from fusion.

In thinking about the natural world, I believe the S-shaped curve associated with all sorts of growth is a very significant factor in our prediction for the future. I consider it to be a part of the "scheme of things," a natural law. For example, all animals and plants start growth at a very slow rate, then go through what is termed a "grand period of growth." Finally, as they approach maturity, the growth rate slows and eventually becomes zero. The same curve is associated with population expansion. For centuries growth was very slow. But after the industrial revolution, advances in medicine and nutrition and settlement of agricultural land in the Americas, the growth rate increased markedly. We are still in the rapid-expansion phase, but eventually it will become stabilized—deaths and births will become equal.

The same sort of thing is happening to the yield potential of food crops. Before the 1950s, the top yields of the principal crops increased only slowly. Then the Green Revolution took place and top yields, as well as total production, more than

doubled in 25 years. There are limits of growth and as yields get higher and higher, it is more difficult to add extra increments. The highest yields for wheat and rice, for example, now obtained under ideal conditions on experiment station fields, may be nearly as high as can be reached in the years ahead. Although modest advances will still occur, the real challenge is to produce such yields on farmers' fields.

This same S-shaped curve reflects the trends in fertilizer use, water supplies, available arable land and non-renewable energy resources. We are now, or soon will be, reaching the "top of the S."

THERE IS A RUMBLING IN THE WORLD

by Dan C. Armstrong

(Editor's note: Dr. Armstrong is a retired Presbyterian minister now living in Clayton, Georgia)

They are coming!

Perceptive ears can hear the distant rumble.
Sharp eyes can see the movement on the horizon.

The first signs of mobilized discontent.

Those who have complied, been gentle and dependent.

The second-class citizens of the world.

The minimum-wage worker, the migrant field hand.

The woman with partial wage and position.
Those multitudes who live on the crumbs from abundance.

The struggling, divorced Mother and children.
The black, brown, the poor white trash.

The Native American whose land and heritage was stolen.

Living in poverty of slums, ghettos, trailerparks,
and on barren land.

They have been the hollow-eyed refugees,
Long lines in blankets and scant clothing.

All beaten, broken and destitute,

extending bony hand, begging for understanding

empty cups, closed doors, back turned.

They are coming!

Marching as Roman phalanx.

Marching!—Marching!—Marching!

Crushing all ignoble barriers placed before them.

Bruising all guardians of the status-quo.

Ever pressing forward.

The rumble of marching feet over castles and ivory beds.

This fierce discontent honed by years of painful humiliation.

Grinding into dust the patterned orthodoxy,
Pulverizing the hollow religious words.

Betraying the years of painful distress with a violent disregard for the unjust order of life.

Contempt for laws patterned for the rich against the poor.

They are coming!

Marching!—Marching!—Marching!

The color of the races of the world blend into one expression of discontent.

A rainbow of acrimonious humanity.

Dear Hospitality Readers,

Used Postage stamps, ordinarily thrown away, can be sold to raise money to feed the hungry in the U.S. and abroad. Large commemoratives (like Olympics, Black Heritage, Nixon, Lighthouse, etc.) and all foreign stamps are wanted, along with unused U.S. and any collections (no standard issues such as Flags, Love, etc.) They are sorted and sold to dealers. All proceeds go to ministries like the Open Door, Bread for the World, Heifer Project, and Church World Service.

POSTAGE STAMPS

*Send stamps to: Arthur M. Field
148 South Village Drive
Americus, GA 31709
Telephone: 912-924-3015*

Dear Ed and Murphy,

Peace and everything good to you in the Lord, Jesus. I hope that you are well and enjoying the choicest of God's blessings. This is just a short note with an enclosure about capital punishment resistance action. I have always been impressed by the Bruderhoff. Whenever I run across the capital punishment subject, I always think of you. Did you know about this group? I just sent them a donation to stay connected.

We were overcome by the movie, Dead Man Walking, and now I am reading the book. I have always been supportive of action against the death penalty since my Fifties Franciscan seminary days. Our Provincial then had just finished many years as chaplain at Joliet State Prison, and he was a staunch opponent from that experience.

We are just "keeping on keeping on" without any community involvement or social action. We stay busy with family and parish, though. Priscilla is teaching Montessori in an inner-city school and loves it. Agnes Kasper is the only one left in the neighborhood (from the former community). I always read your newspaper with interest, and we continue to pray for you everyday. Father Joe and Sister Corita are going strong with probably the biggest meal program in the Diocese. Our neighborhood is up-scaling and we are getting heat from the new arrivals about the street presence of the poor, of course mainly Black, at the program.

Please don't forget us. With this I close, and again we wish you every blessing for you and your wonderful community.

Curt & Priscilla Treska
Cleveland, OH

Dear Friends,

I receive your Hospitality newsletter where I work at the Presbyterian archives in Montreat. I am always inspired by the account of your good work. Paul Scouten, a former member of your community, is now active in our local church.

I particularly appreciated the beautiful calendar you sent this year.

Thank you for all that you do in Christ's name.

John Walker
Montreat, NC

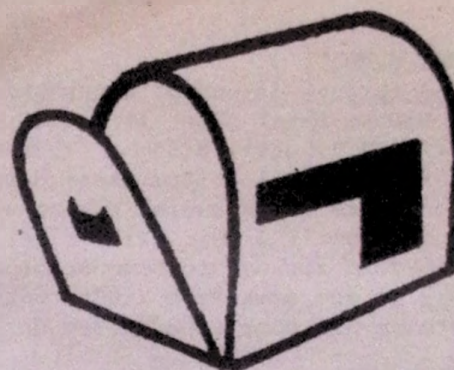
Dear Ed,

Your last publication was super. One of these days talk a little about the various ways by which people became homeless and if there are ways by which this might be prevented, if at all. I am quite an ignoramus regarding this sad, sad problem.

Last night I saw and heard you at church supper when we were introduced to the Seminary TV series on the "Signs Of Our Times." You remind me of the reformer and fiery advocate for the Gospel: Favel.

Miriam and Ludwig Dewitz
Decatur, GA

Grace and Peaces of Mail



Dear Open Door Community,

I am in my apartment at San Francisco Theological Seminary awaiting the death of William Bonin at San Quentin State Prison. A facility less than five miles from the seminary, both in Marin County. I have, less than an hour ago, returned from a class in Berkeley called "The Deconstruction of Racism." The pending execution, now less than two hours away, was discussed in great length.

At this moment I find myself thinking of you all, especially Murphy and Elizabeth, and your tireless work against the death penalty. I also find myself thinking about the meaning of transformation.

In January of this year, I heard Rita Nakashima Brock speak of transformation in the annual Earl Lectures at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. In her reflection, she pondered the existence of a hell, coming to the conclusion that there is no such place. And that its existence would be letting those, who would go there, off too easy. She stated that hell seems to be a tool of religion that encourages self interest and absorption, meaning that we do all we can to avoid such a place. We spend our lives making sure that we will not be where Hitler or Caligula, or William Bonin, will surely be. Brock asked the question, do we believe more in the punishment of God, rather than the transformative love of God? She then reminded us that Jesus says even those who break the commandments will go to heaven. I'm sure this includes "thou shall not kill."

Instead of hell, she postulated the existence of a heaven where everyone would go upon death. A place where everyone would experience transformation. Yet, not in an instant. No one gets off so easily. Rather than face the fires of hell, we would face our victims, as well as our own abusers.

Brock believes in the transformative power of God's love. She believes heaven is a place where we will be loved back into our full potential and into a true, profound self-recognition; where, facing those we abused or hurt or killed, we will have eternity to make restitution, to be loved back into life, and to create and restore right relationship. Not only with others, but with ourselves as well. Brock states that "sending evil to hell, cutting off any chance at transformation and reconciliation, lets evil off too easily. Transformation requires hard work. But resurrection and redemption must be what we hope for if we believe in a God of love and justice. A God who can do anything with compassion and care."

Brock imagines a heaven where Jesus is already there, having talked with the Pharisees and Pilate, where they have understood the horror they inflicted; where the repressive leaders of El Salvador have met and talked with Archbishop Oscar Romero and all of the disappeared ones, and have

been transformed by the love of God.

She ended her reflection, asking us who we would see there that we do not want to see us.

For me, this is truth. This is my theology. Yet, my theology also includes the fact that we should also be about this transformative work in this life as well. Yet, why is it that we and our system of government seek revenge rather than transformation? Why must we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?

I take great comfort in knowing that William Bonin will be in heaven tonight, not meeting shame, revenge and condemnation. But rather, love, support and the work of transformation and forgiveness; he will be experiencing Lent moving toward his own Easter. Not only with and from those whom he wronged, but with and from those who wronged him.

I do not rejoice in his execution, because it shows that we are still a hell-bent rather than a heaven-bent society. We believe that revenge is justice, rather than the love of God. Still, I do find bliss in knowing that he will find the hope and potential for right relationship awaiting him. That forgiveness is already his.

It is now 12:05 AM. His death/murder is only minutes away. CNN is giving a blow-by-blow description. I can't help but feel bad that I am not there protesting. Know that my prayers are with him, and with you, as well, and your continued vigil.

Murphy, all my hopes are with you and your recovery. Our friend Don Steele sends his best to both you and Ed.

God be with you during this Lenten season. You are Easter people.

Will Smith
San Anselmo, CA

Dear Pastor Loring,

I want to thank you and the Open Door Community for your openness, your generosity and most of all just being plain good folks, as they say in the South.

These days it is hard to find those who actually follow in the steps of Jesus Christ and help those who are homeless and imprisoned. Some say they care, other think they do, but the Open Door Community actually shows their helpfulness, affection, kindness, and love for others. Thanks.

Arnold Porter
Atlanta, GA

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 9:10, 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), next retreat is our spring retreat, May 10-11.

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 Worship

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

Please join us!

- May 5 Worship at 9:10;
 Ed Loring, preaching
- May 12 Worship at 9:10;
 Music night with
 Elise Witt and
 Joyce Brookshire
- May 19 Worship at 9:10
- May 26 Worship at 9:10
 Pentecost
 Celebration



Open Door Community Needs

JEANS
T-Shirts
Men's Work Shirts
Men's Underwear
Quick Grits
Cheese
Coffee
Multi-Vitamins
MARTIA Tokens
Postage Stamps
Women's Underwear
Household size Clothes Dryer
Men's Shoes (all sizes)
Disposable Razors
2 Mountain Bikes for
Dayspring Retreat
Toothbrushes
Vaseline
Socks
Shampoo
Men's Belts
Washcloths
Sandwiches
Vacuum Cleaner
Soup Kitchen Volunteers
Butler St. Breakfast Volunteers

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!

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!*