

# HOSPITALITY

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## Looking Through Christ's Eyes: One View of the AAH Rally

by Elizabeth Dede

Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you should suffer for doing what is right, how happy you are! Do not be afraid of anyone, and do not worry. But have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honor him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect. Keep your conscience clear, so that when you are insulted, those who speak evil of your good conduct as followers of Christ will become ashamed of what they say. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if this should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ died for sins once and for all, a good person on behalf of sinners, in order to lead you to God. Christ was put to death physically, but made alive spiritually, and in his spiritual existence, Christ went and preached to the imprisoned spirits.

-- 1 Peter 3:13-19

On October 15, 1986, The Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless (AAH) met in solidarity with 600 of our homeless sisters and brothers to hold a rally and vigil in Woodruff Park. We ate chili and drank coffee together and listened to speeches and sang songs that called for the human rights of all. And especially that night we were asking for the right to be in a public park, without fear of arrest; we were demanding the right to shelter, and even affordable housing, for the city's homeless people; we were seeking decent work and adequate pay; we were fighting for the right to proper health care. All of these rights are refused our homeless sisters and brothers, and we were there in the park to insist that their humanity be restored.

In part, the rally came as a response to increased attempts by the city to deny basic freedoms to the homeless. On October 3, the following appeared in The Atlanta Constitution:

A city-sanctioned task force is considering tough new proposals to rid the downtown area of homeless people, including mandatory treatment for alcoholism, park benches redesigned to inhibit sleeping and stricter enforcement of anti-loitering ordinances.

The public safety task force of the Central Area Study, a \$1.7 million undertaking aimed at improving downtown Atlanta, also has considered issuing identification cards to homeless people and transporting them to the city prison farm, according to several people with its familiar meetings. They said both options have been rejected as unconstitutional.

That this task force even considers unconstitutional options is an outrage and is proof that the homeless in our city have no rights. To stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers, to demand that their humanity be acknowledged and respected, we rallied in the park.



Several speakers were there to raise up the cry of the homeless, to make us all aware of the horror of life on the streets, and to call us together to action on the part of our voiceless sisters and brothers.

Arlita Chamberlain and her husband and two children were unemployed and lived on the streets and in night shelters for six weeks. She spoke of the daily displacement her family experienced. When the night shelter closed in the morning, they were turned out into the streets. Without a job or a home, they were wanderers and went to the park or the library. For the Chamberlains, the government didn't seem to care. And the city that wants to close its parks to the homeless certainly had no sympathy for the Chamberlain family. Yet Arlita Chamberlain was hopeful. She and her husband had found work, and they hoped to move into a trailer during the next week. Arlita promised that she had learned from her experience as a homeless person to look through Christ's eyes, to care for all people, to see

Rally - cont. on page 2

# Rally

cont. from front

2

even the homeless as Christ's sisters and brothers who need to be welcomed into shelters and homes.

Jim Beatty from the city's Homelessness Task Force demanded more than shelter for the city's homeless. He demanded homes--a place to live. If the city plans to spend \$138 million dollars to rejuvenate Underground Atlanta, then it should provide matching funds to refurbish the 2,000 abandoned, boarded, run-down houses that could provide low-cost homes for the displaced homeless of the city. Rita Valenti, a nurse and an active member of AAH, also demanded change. In a city where buildings and highways get more care than humans, Rita struggles for health care with decency for all people, including the poor and the homeless.

Along with hunger, sickness, joblessness, and homelessness, the poor also suffer from imprisonment. Ironically, the city does provide housing for the poor, in the form of jails and prisons. And the state sets itself up as God by claiming power over life. The state plans to execute a man named Warren McCleskey, but we must say an emphatic NO to a state that claims to have the power of God. Jack Boger, who earlier that day stood before the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC to argue Warren McCleskey's case, was at the rally to make us hear again that the state denies the human right of life to the homeless in Atlanta and to those on Death Row in Jackson. Our society has decided that some people, namely the homeless poor and the impoverished prisoner, have no rights. They have few voices to argue for them, but Jack Boger reminded us that we are one community--the Human Community; and we are one family--the Human Family. If one human loses their rights, we all lose a part of our freedom. If one human loses their life, a part of all of us dies. Among the six-hundred and more present in the park, there was a belief in that Human Community. Jack Boger urged us to continue to struggle to protect the Human Family and to cause even the death-seeking members to believe in and to preserve that community.

Two of our homeless brothers, Jay Soto and Billy Hands Robinson, proclaimed that the building of the Human Community happens when we get together. Billy raised the cry, "Get together!" and Jay spoke of the never-ending cycle of unemployment which tears down so many of the homeless. They receive wages so low (\$25 for an 8-hour day), that by the time they've paid to have their check cashed and paid for their transportation, little money is left to buy food, clothes, or to pay for a place to live. Unfortunately,



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others are destroyed by violence, either as victims, whose livelihood is taken as they are jumped, beaten, and robbed, or as perpetrators, who find an easy income in destroying others. With few opportunities for training and education, there seems to be little hope for improvement. Nevertheless, Jay urged the crowd, "Use your mind. Raise your voice, not your fist!" In getting together to support each other, to raise the cry and to make others aware, the Human Community is built.

The rally was a strong example of power in voices. Voices were raised in speeches, and hundreds of voices were raised together in song, and a community grew in Woodruff Park. There was power in those 600 voices as we all sang "Come and Go With me to that Land," which promises "Freedom in that Land where I'm Bound." One of my friends from the Butler St. Breakfast, Emory, by name, came up, took my hand, and asked, "Will there really be freedom?" I replied, "You know it, Emory," with faithful assurance.

But the assurance was gone by the end of the night. At midnight we had promised to pass out blankets, and just as the digital clock flashed 12:00, a mob of 200 people rushed to the van, where the blankets were stored. Many of us tried to restore order, to get a line going to pass out the small number of blankets, which wouldn't be enough to keep all the folks warm. Our peaceful efforts were ineffective. Soon a fist fight broke out, and as I was shoved into the street, I panicked, and realized that we needed to get the van with the blankets out of the park. We made the decision and announced that no blankets would be passed out that night.

What began as a night full of hope and solidarity became a night of despair and division. Everyone hated us: how could we claim to be their friends, to be with them, and yet leave them without blankets to freeze in



Rob Johnson

Dear Friends,

As cold weather jolts the homeless and hurts the hungry, we need your help. Our expenses continue to increase as we feed, clothe, shelter and shower God's homeless poor. This year we have spent money on plumbing and house maintenance in much greater amounts than anticipated when we wrote to you of our needs in the spring. Our Butler Street Breakfast has grown dramatically in the past few weeks and shall again experience large increases when Central Presbyterian and Trinity United Methodist open their night shelters. The breakfast now costs us \$1,300.00 per month - every penny of which goes for the breakfast.

We are filled with thanksgiving for you and for God's call in our lives to live this life and practice this form of love. We are approaching five years on Ponce de Leon Ave. Our journey is a good one, and we are filled with hope and trust as we await the Advent Season to break forth. Thank you for making our journey and servanthood possible.

We need your support; we need your gifts. We need your love; we need your prayers.

Peace and grace to you,

CARL  
BAIKER  
JACK LEROY  
John Cole Vodicka  
Jane Chrusinski  
Pat Ford  
Mab Hayer  
Repr Hon  
Murphy Davis Robert  
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# A Survivor's View of Murder

by Marie Deans

Marie Deans is a paralegal assistant specializing in appellate and death cases for the Virginia Coalition on Jails and Prisons in Richmond.

Reprinted from The Witness (Episcopal Church) April '85

Murder in all its forms, including legalized murder, is not like any other death. I do not mean that I believe in a hierarchy of victimization. I am strongly opposed to such ranking of sorrow and pain. I mean, simply, that the reaction to murder is unique in many ways. When we lose a loved one to natural or even accidental death, we know how to react, how to grieve. Friends and neighbors know how to help us. Our culture has given us a ritual of mourning and remembrance and taught us how to accept death in every way it comes to us--except murder.

While murder has always been a part of any society, it is taboo, and taboo implies complicity. The victim's family is drawn into an act that has brought consciousness to the subliminal terror of society out of control. Society's determination to push back the terror and enforce order takes precedence over the death. The ritual of revenge takes precedence over the ritual of mourning and remembrance.

My mother-in-law, Penny, was murdered at her home in South Carolina in 1972. My father-in-law had died of cancer a year before, and that year had been extremely difficult for Penny. She had not been able to see a future for herself without him. Then I became pregnant with her first grandchild. Life was once again something to live and look forward to. She had gone to celebrate this new life with her husband's family in

North Carolina. Upon returning home, she was followed by an escaped convict. By the time we got to her house, the police were setting up barricades. They told us she had been shot, and that we couldn't go into the house because they were collecting evidence. They assured us that paramedics were with Penny. Before long there were detectives, reporters and various onlookers all around us. We stood huddled against a police car that squawked out messages we couldn't understand, and we kept asking the police if we could see Penny, if she was all right. They just kept saying, not yet.

After some time we realized my husband's sister knew nothing of what had happened, so we left his brother there and went to get her. Coming back we were stopped by a police barricade. While a policeman was explaining the barricade, and we were identifying ourselves, the police opposite us let through an ambulance with no warning light. When we got back, my husband asked if Penny had been in that ambulance. "Yes, they told us. We sent her body to the hospital for an autopsy." That is how we learned Penny had died. To this day we don't know exactly when she died or if she was conscious when we got there. Denial is a strong defense. We stayed there until dawn when the police sealed the house and told us to go home.

The morning paper was already on our doorstep when we got home. There were glaring headlines, a picture of Penny's house, pictures of us. It was then that we realized we were in the middle of a sensational murder and manhunt. Reading that paper, we were accosted by horrifying physical details of Penny's struggle and death. And we were accosted by questions.

Why had Penny been on the road alone at night? Why had her killer followed her instead of some other woman? Why hadn't she locked the garage door before unpacking the car? It's called blaming the victim. We felt the first stirring of complicity in the need to defend her.

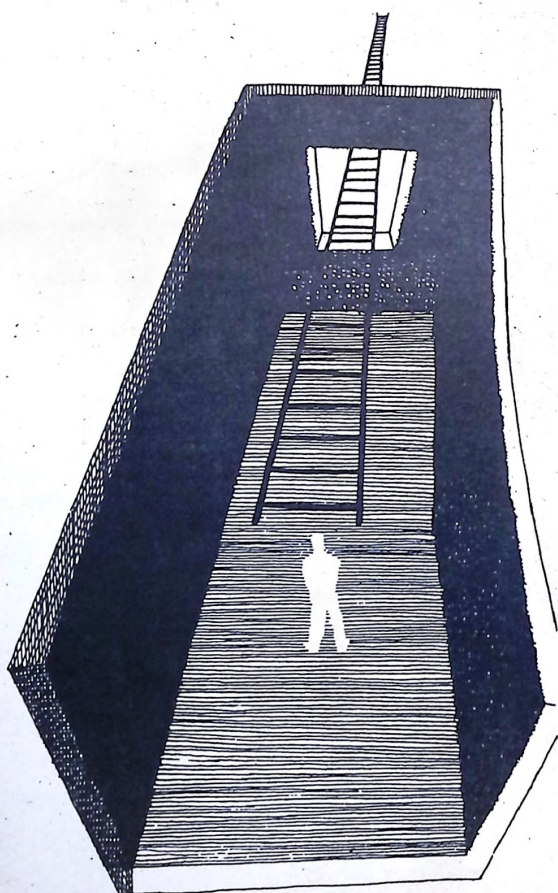
Naively we thought that would be the last front-page headline, that the story would be moved to the back page the next day, then disappear. We were wrong. The man who killed Penny had killed another woman in his escape in New England. The story became front-page news up and down the East Coast.

The normal process of mourning a loved one was forced aside. Within hours reporters began calling from all over the country. Detectives arrived to question us. We wouldn't talk to reporters, but day after day we went over and over the evidence and background material. We were not even allowed the privacy of a funeral. Total strangers came, asking questions that turned our stomachs. At the request of her youngest son, Penny's casket was left open--until we saw people turning her head to see the bullet wounds.

When the man was caught, another round of stories dredging up the entire scene, complete with pictures of us, Penny's house and the man, hit the papers and television. Day after day we shook our heads at the man's mugshot and went over the evidence again. For months we lived with Penny's murder, and yet we had no real idea of what was going on. While we cooperated with the prosecutor in New England, we kept asking what would happen in South Carolina. The response was always the same--don't worry. We'll take care of that.

But we could not help worrying. We had found out something of this man's family and their agony and sorrow at what he had done. In South Carolina there was a possibility that he would receive a sentence of death. We had always been opposed to the death penalty on moral grounds, and we, like most who openly oppose the death penalty, had been asked how we would feel if one of our loved ones was murdered. Now we knew the answer to that question.

We could not extend this violence to include yet another family. We could not bear for Penny's memory to be linked to an execution. We could not imagine how we could teach her grandchild that killing was wrong and life sacred if we allowed a human being to be killed in his grandmother's name or in ours. My husband went to the prosecutor in South Carolina and told him we would fight an attempt to extradite Penny's murderer to South



Uncredited, from Southern Coalition Report, June '82

Carolina if there was any chance of his getting a death sentence. The man is serving a life sentence in New England, and we have never regretted that decision.

From the night Penny was murdered until today, people have asked us why we did not feel the same anger and need for vengeance so many murder victims' families seem to feel. They imply that we are either saints or emotional freaks. We are neither. We did feel anger and horror and pain and an almost overwhelming sense of loss. But perhaps our most intense feeling was a desperate need to understand why--why Penny had had to endure so much, why we had had to lose her.

We wanted to know why there is so much violence among us. Why we are so good at passing on violence and so poor at passing on love. We wanted to know why the process of dehumanization went so far beyond the murder. The police had a job to do. The criminal justice system needed to use us like computers, providers of data. They were at best insensitive in their needs. But it is not just the system that is insensitive. The community reacts to murder by making false assumptions about what it feels like to lose a loved one to murder and what the family needs.

Until victims' families are in so much pain all they can do is scream out for vengeance, the community simply does not listen. For some members of the community, victims' families remind them of their own vulnerability, making them uneasy and fearful. For others there is a sense of reassurance when they see that a neighbor has become a victim. They believe in the statistics of probability. If their neighbor is assaulted, they will not be. And still others feel inadequate to respond.

We have rituals we depend on to get through tragedies. With murder there is no supporting ritual to fall back on and learn from. Even the clichés don't work. You can't say "She's better off--out of her misery." And it is pretty hard to say "It was God's will." The only rituals we have to respond to the violence of murder are not healing rituals but those, like executions, that only respond to the fear and anger by extending the violence.

Worse, victims' families like mine who oppose the death penalty elicit hostility from the community. We deny the community's rationalization for vengeance. In doing so, we become a new target. Long ago I lost count of the number of threatening letters and phone calls we have received and continue to receive. And long ago I began to believe that homicides and other violent crimes can be reduced if we, as a people, decide that life is truly sacred.

I came to that conclusion in my search for the why of Penny's murder and other violent crimes. That search took me to death row. In the past six years I have worked with over 200 death-sentenced prisoners. The details of their stories are different, but it is in the similarities that reasons are found.

They are all poor. They are disproportionately made up of minorities. All but a few were abused, molested, neglected or institutionalized as children or youths. They turned to drugs and alcohol to numb the pain of their own brutal lives. More than half appear to be mentally ill to some degree. In many cases their families sought help again and again. They gave out clear signals that they were in trouble. None received the help they needed. They were society's throwaways long before they murdered.

We did not help them. They ended up committing murder, and now we will murder them back. It is an American way of death. The way of Penny's death and thousands upon thousands more. It is a way of death that not only says the offender is expendable, it very clearly says the victims are also expendable.

It is violence feeding on itself, dehumanizing us all and denying to victims and offenders alike the process they need to go through in order to survive--the process of reconciliation.

Murder is wrong, not because you do or do not have a permit to kill. Murder is wrong, because life is sacred. The result of denying that is to continue the cycle of violence and brutalize more and more people. That brutalization is creating a new mood of vigilantism, and victims' families are a growing part of that mood. Yet one of the rationales for the death penalty is that it will prevent vigilantism.



Don Hubig, Pacific News Service

I believe there are three reasons why victims' family members are susceptible to this new mood. One is the natural guilt of survivors. A second is the trap of becoming the primary victim. The pain and anger of the loss becomes so overpowering that the focus is fixed on "my loss" rather than on the person who was killed. Grief is blocked by anger, and healing never begins. The third reason is that our society gives out the clear message that what it expects and finds acceptable from the victim's family is the need for vengeance.

All these reasons are used to exploit the victims' families into helping prop up a criminal justice system that is totally bankrupt. That system and our political leaders know very well they have no solutions to our reactions--fear, anger, pain and desire for revenge. In addressing these reactions, they feed them, and in feeding them, they destroy our ability to heal, regain our humanity, learn to forgive and empathize with one another. They destroy the process of reconciliation and in so doing, our sense of community.

In such a society, human life has no intrinsic value. Our values become so skewed that in the week the courts cleared the way for Texas to kill James Autry and North Carolina to kill James Hutchins, a court order came down from a Superior Court in North Carolina giving a stay of execution for a dog that had killed a man, because "Our society should refrain from killing animals unnecessarily."

It is not just victims' families who need reconciliation. Our society is desperately in need of the process of healing, regaining our humanity, learning to forgive and empathize with one another. Without reconciliation, we cannot and will not grow individually or collectively.

At a church service in Virginia on October 12, the night Linwood Briley was killed, a large banner was unfurled. It read: "We Walk For Life. No More Victims in Our Names." Twenty-seven people with cards bearing the names of the men on Virginia's death row and the murder victims walked behind that banner followed by about 250 others.

Across the street a group of about 300 people carrying signs reading "Fry, Negro, Fry," and "It's Time to Bring Back Lynching" chanted racial slurs, swung nooses and set off firecrackers. Between the two groups hundreds of people drove by on their way home from the movies, bars, card games and dances.

Each of us has a choice. We can support violent death, either by advocating it or turning away from it, or we can "Walk for Life." I hope you will choose life and walk behind that banner with me. \*

# Carmes

by Rob Johnson

I still remember vividly getting back my first two rolls of film from our Nicaraguan "Witness for Peace" back in May. Mostly I took slides--which wouldn't come for a few more days. But the picture I most wanted was in the first small batch of color prints.

It was perfect! Her name is Carmes Pinos. She's twelve. And I fell in love with her sitting in a small hut-of-a-church in the tiny village of Jacinto Baca. I promised to send her a copy of the picture; such luxuries are real treasures to these very poor folk.

In church she had looked at me coyly. We sat close, for the church was small and packed. This was a special service, North Americans being very rare way out here in the Nueva Guinea zone of southeast Nicaragua. Besides the novelty of my attire and my zoom-lensed camera, I probably smelled different to Carmes. She did to me. The soap used here has a strong lye base. By the time I left the village I had a new sensory definition of freshness.

Her voice was beautiful. She and a friend sitting together sang all the hand-clapping hymns with a high, nasally resonant pitch that all but forced me to stare. It didn't matter that I couldn't understand the words. I was moved by the confidence of Carmes' words in a world where poverty and death are so near.

Towards the end of the service, I leaned over and in "international sign language" invited her to look through and play with the camera. She did, and flashed me a heart-stopping smile before quickly turning to her friend to share the discovery.

Then church was over. At last. Two and a half hours was fascinating but also very hot and tiring. As soon as I could without being pushy, I went to Carmes and waved her to a place in front of the church to take her picture. She was obviously excited...and smiling. But when the few seconds passed while I adjusted the camera, her smile faded.

Through the lens, and in the print I now hold, I saw Nicaragua symbolized. A wooden background, painted blue with white stripes, is very simple. In the midst of a war and in a struggling frontier town that could easily be a hundred-year-old page out of Little House On the Prairie, at least the church has some color. Carmes' dress is also blue and white checked. How the white can shine when it was hand-washed in the muddy stream below the cacao field, God only knows. And there's just a touch of pink spread in a floral pattern across her chest. Because the Contras have ambushed this village three times in recent months, I shudder knowing that the red on her dress may yet be blood.

Her complexion is so rich. Her dark hair, pulled behind, is like a dark halo. And the expression on her face...well, yes, I wanted the gorgeous smile. But perhaps that would have been exploitive. I'm glad now I see what I do: a slightly apprehensive young woman, looking back at the friendly side of American technology. She really enjoyed me, and wanted to share in the abundance, hope, and love that our Georgia delegation brought. For at least a few hours she could somehow even forget that our money and bullets have killed her kin.

Yet in her penetrating look, she has seen through the camera, and through me, all the way back to the U.S.A. There is fear in that look. It joins her body posture which is slightly twisted--leaning as if anticipating pain. And she gazes forward in time too,



perhaps all the way to Judgement Day. It is a gaze that miraculously conveys compassion. Maybe its because of her age. Or maybe, as one Nicaraguan Official conjectured, there is a naive current of good will in these people. From whatever source, there is no hate, only genuine love for her enemy. She wants to live in peace. She isn't wishing that the Contra or the U.S. go to hell.

But in her eyes I know we may. If God damns anything, I believe it is the gruesome tactics of the Contras and the calloused manipulation of our government. In the face of Carmes Pinos I know that judgement is deserved. Certainly the Nicaraguan government has and is making mistakes in their effort to rebuild their country. But criticism through the barrel of a gun is barbaric. Admonition through the torture of simple farmers is abominal.

I pray that all the Pinos family will be alive to receive and enjoy the picture of Carmes I'm sending back. I'm sending it with tears--inadequate insurance in these troubled times. \*



Acción Permanente Cristiana Por La Paz

## WITNESS FOR PEACE

Gray Fitzgerald  
Co-Coordinator  
Georgia Witness for Peace

# The Monastery:

## Freedom in the Love of God

by Brother John Albert



Greg Zolowski, O.F.M.

At the time of the publication of my reflections entitled: "IN THE HEART OF CHRIST: THE MONK, THE OUTCAST, THE PRISONER," (HOSPITALITY Part 1--February 1986; Part 2--March/April 1986), Editor Rob Johnson asked me to consider a third part: "How does the monastery differ from a prison?"

As I sat this evening in our cloister meditating once again on this question that has preoccupied me since the early part of this year, Gregorian tones could be heard from cantors practicing in the Chapter Room. From another room across the cloister garth came voices practicing the Divine Office in Spanish. Water from a fountain made of mill stones gurgled in Father Corentine's lush garden where a golden Canna Lily stands erect against its lush surround. At such moments it is not hard to imagine why monks since early times have traditionally written about the *Paradisus Clausalis*--the "Paradise of the Cloister" being a bit of Heaven on earth. And the texts of Psalm 133--"How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" and *The Acts of the Apostles* (4:32-35) about Christians of like-mind sharing all things in common--have rightly been applied to the monastic life generation after generation.

Yes, there are obvious similarities between a monastery and a prison: 1. separation from family and loved ones, 2. the strictly regulated life, 3. the uniform, 4. the predictability, 5. the sharing of all things in common, 6. the institutional meals, 7. the lack of privacy, 8. the noise of industry and intruders. But it would be completely irresponsible for me to leave anyone with the impression that the monastery is a prison.

If the monk is convicted to monastic life, it is by his own free choice, a choice which is a lived response to what is experienced as a real, direct call from God in the person of Christ Jesus who says to us: "Follow Me!" Like prison, the monastic life is a life of reparation, but it is a life not filled with bitterness and resentment and the awareness of injustice. It is a life totally infused with God's grace allowing each monk to continually convert his mind and heart and will. Each monk's life is a self-donation to God. His solitude and chastity, his ascetical life, his robes of consecration, his simplicity of life, his conformity through obedience, his poverty, his fasting, his availability, and his work and hospitality are all means of encounter for the monk with God, and not punishments.

The prison world is made up of accumulated hurts and universal suspicion, more often despair than hope. The monastery is a place of forgiveness and trust. If not exactly the aspect of Friar Tuck, faces of monks are usually bright with smiles and a sense of joy, not the blank stare of resentment and hostility that come to disfigure the once open faces of inmates. "*Semper in ore psalmis, semper in corde Christus*," is a fitting epithet for the monk: "Always singing psalms, always Christ in his heart." The monastic life is a way of life in which all the activities that occupy the monk are centered in Christ himself and nurture the continuous growth of the monk as an integral human person in Him, before the Maker, through the energizing power of the Holy Spirit.

Black historian Vincent Harding, long associated with our community, during a visit with us in July of 1986 linked Holy Spirit Abbey with other Christian communities familiar to him. He described us as places of: 1. disciplined search for the presence of God, 2. a life of solitude in company with others, 3. study and physical work, 4. communion with earth/nature, and 5. openness to others in the search. Vincent's critical perspective is certainly useful in dispelling any notions that prison life and monastic life are the same. The horrible realities of incarceration--so well known to the OPEN DOOR and JUBILEE and KOINONIA prison ministers--have no parallels in life at Holy Spirit Abbey.

Each monk could write his own account of the monastic life. But seen in a wide perspective, all monks are in some relationship with the outer world of sin and evil, the "inner" world of personal sinfulness and the light of healing grace, and with God in freedom and abiding love.

### The World

The meaning of world is complex. Psalm One accentuates the difference between the way of the believer and the way of the non-believer in the world. Though it is not conveyed in some English translations, the Hebrew text speaks of the follower of the Law of God as a tree "transplanted." Here, then, it might suggest that the just persons reward is not found in this world, but in the next. Jesus said: "My

kingdom is not of this world. It is something other." (I John 4:7ff.) Scripture warns against the enticements of the world, the flesh and the devil (I John 2:15-16), but tells us how Jesus sent his disciples into the world to preach and heal (Matthew 10). There is the evil world that Christ condemned, to which no Christian can belong, and there is the "life giving" world, the "building up of God's Kingdom" through family life, social action and religious service.

The Bible allows for us to contrast material creation from a "worldly" spirit. This is conveyed by terms in the Greek: *kosmos*---*sarx*---*soma*. Here we have material creation; flesh as sensual appetite; and physical body. We all know very well how intertwined all of these--and the "enticements of the eyes"--are in us, in our ambition and pride of life. But the struggle, according to scripture, is toward fulness of life in Christ.

Early Christian literature resounded with appeals to believers not to get lost in this world. The Epistle to Diognetus, an anonymous early second-century treatise addressed to an unknown non-believer of high rank, speaks of Christians as "aliens" in the world. Here the Greek of the original text is *paroikoi*. Today we use *parish* and *parochial* to designate ministerial boundaries. But for the author of this venerable post-testamental text, movement is implied. This is the doctrine of the Christian as *home viator*, the person on the way to God.

Sin and objective evil are realities within the fallen condition of all human persons, and the world in which we live. Yet we embrace creation because God has made it good. While we have life we must live, and thus we are involved in an ongoing historical process that is made radically new by Jesus Christ. We are affected by, and likewise affect, our times. We are the Christianity of the modern world.

## Invitation to the "Desert"

The monastic tradition is a tradition of *anachoresis*: the voluntary going out into the "desert" (geographical, spiritual, psychological) not only to be in control of one's life in an oppressive society, but to surrender control to God. As Abba Mateos once said: "It is not through virtue that I live in solitude, but through weakness; those who live in the midst of people are the strong ones." But even the solitaries--because of their very goodness--found themselves eventually surrounded by the new desert society of fellow-seekers. And Mateos could say: "He who dwells with brethren must be not square, but round, so as to turn himself toward all..." Thomas Merton, in introducing his *Raids on the Unspeakable*, wrote: "You are not big enough to accuse the whole age effectively, but let us say you are in dissent. You are in no position to issue commands, but you can speak words of hope. Shall this be the substance of your message? Be human in this most inhuman of ages; guard the image of humankind for it is the image of God." But Merton by no means was an

isolationist monk. In *New Seeds of Contemplation* he said: "We do not go into the desert to escape people but to learn how to find them; we do not leave them in order to have nothing more to do with them, but to find out the way to do them the most good... But this is only a secondary end. The one end that includes all others is the love of God."

It is not with steps of the feet that God is sought but with the heart's desire, wrote Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. And when the soul happily finds God its desire is not quenched but kindled:

Does the consummation of joy bring about the consuming of desire? Rather it is oil poured upon the flames. So it is. Joy will be fulfilled, but there will be no end to desire, and therefore no end to the search. Think, if you can, of the eagerness to see God as not caused by God's absence, for God is always present; and think of the desire for God as without fear of failure, for grace is abundantly present. (*Sermons on the Song of Songs* 84:1)

For the monk, monastic life is understood as the direct invitation from God, as he reads in *The Song of Songs* 2:10-13:

My lover speaks; he says to me, "Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its fig, and the vines, in bloom, give forth fragrance. Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!"

This invitation is re-echoed in the *Book of Revelation* (22:12-17):

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" Let those who hear answer, "Come!" Let those who are thirsty come forward; let all who desire it accept the gift of life-giving water.

And most touchingly the monk hears this invitation in the words of Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30):

Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light.

In the Rite of Solemn Profession the Abbot asks the candidate:

"Having heard the Word of God, Brother, what do you seek from God and from his holy Church?" And he answers: "For the blessing of God and fellowship in the Holy Spirit, with this monastic community."

In the monastery, love is "freely given in full liberty of spirit." The monk makes himself "vast," his heart "filled with a love that embraces everybody, even those to whom it is not tied by the inseparable bonds of family relationship" (Saint Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* 27).

During the Rite of Solemn Profession the monk pledging his life to God is interrogated by his Abbot:

"Christ has said, 'Greater love than this no one has than to lay down their life for their friends.' Do you wish to make of your whole life a gift of love to God and to your brothers?"

And he answers:

"Yes, Reverend Father, with the help of God and of the brothers."

Again, the Abbot asks:

"Do you wish by obedience, stability and conversion of life to advance in the school of the Lord's service until death?"

Greg Zelowski, O.F.M.



# Monastery

cont. from page 8

9

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the presence of Reverend Father Dom\_\_\_\_, Abbot of this monastery.

And he responds:

"Yes, Reverend Father, with the help of God and of the brothers."

Finally, the Abbot asks:

"For the sake of the kingdom of God, in imitation of Christ and his Virgin Mother Mary, do you wish to be free for God alone, in solitude and silence, in a life of continual prayer and joyful penitence?"

And the candidate answers:

"Yes, Reverend Father, with the help of God and of the brothers."

The Abbot then says: "May God who has begun this work in you bring it to completion."

The profession formula itself is read and signed:

I, Brother)\_\_\_\_, professed under temporary vows, promise my stability, conversion of manners, and obedience, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict, Abbot, before God and God's saints whose relics are venerated in this place called the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, erected in honor of the Most Blessed

The monk sings three times:

"Receive me, O Lord, according to your word and I shall live. Do not disappoint me in my expectation."

Over him the Abbot prays that he be renewed continually in mind and body, and clothed with the spirit of the "new man" that he may truly be a son of God for ever and ever. Christ is asked to be a constant source of strength, that the monk may follow wherever the Master leads. And the Holy Spirit is invoked that the monk might keep with zeal his holy resolution in trials and difficulties, that he might find strength and courage in the spirit's unflinching consolation.

Then he is vested in the white cowl, symbol of the cross of Christ and the new man who died and rose from sin. And the new monk, with the Psalmist sings in his heart:

How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good God has done for me? The cup of salvation I will take up, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. My vows to the Lord I will pay in the presence of all God's people... For steadfast is the Lord's kindness toward us, and the fidelity of the Lord endures forever.

Psalm 116:12-14; 117:2

★

## Oh How I Love Thee!

Oh my Lord, I pray to Thee, that you always and forever love me. I promise to worship you, for all my nights - all my days, with all heart and in all my ways.

Because of you - I have learned to live, love and dream in such pretty colors, I have learned to give all of you that lives within me-

Oh how I love Thee!

You are my very hopes, the possibility in my every dream, all my sunshine, my gentle flowers, plus my rain.

You are the fertilizer that helps me grow - the very knowledge within that helps me know.

And my love for you is stronger than my love for you, and deeply within that love lies all of me, helpless, yet free.

I have given you my past, in return for inner peace and my everlasting future. I have given up the sword in order to share the right hand side of you - my Gracious Lord.

You gave your precious Son so that a sinner like me would have everlasting life So it's only fair that I too sacrifice.

Together we shall always share the love and oneness of the Son within me and I promise to remember and practice your gentle words of Love.

Oh how I love Thee!

by Roger Collins  
Jackson, GA



# "Salute to Black Fathers"

## A Litany

**LEADER:** Amid all of the trials and conflicts of life, black men have fought, bled and died to maintain the dignity of the black family. You have been beaten but unbowed; bending but unbreakable; at times faltering, but yet unmovable.

**PEOPLE:** WE SALUTE YOU BLACK MEN.

**LEADER:** For the times when you were forced to leave your family and the hurt so deep and so real no words would fall from your lips and no response was adequate, and even fighting back proved futile.

**PEOPLE:** WE RESPECT YOU BLACK MEN.

**LEADER:** For being supportive, encouraging, enabling and protective when system beat you down; institutions shut you out; the government oppressed you; your sons and daughters sometimes questioned your motives; and your desire to be needed was overshadowed by myths and misconceptions.

**PEOPLE:** WE BELIEVE IN YOU BLACK MEN.

**LEADER:** For not allowing your faith to be shattered, nor your dreams to be denied; for knowing that in the midst of confusion and chaos God has not forsaken you, the Holy Spirit had not abandoned you and Jesus Himself was your ever present companion.

**PEOPLE:** WE HONOR YOU BLACK MEN.

**LEADER:** For being strong and yet not ashamed to cry; a lover of life though not ashamed to die; committed to truth and undaunted by fear; stalwart with your convictions and relentless in your pursuits for fulfilling your quest to not only survive, but to overcome; You make us proud.

**PEOPLE:** WE UNDERSTAND YOU BLACK MEN.

**ALL:** For your depth of love and compassion so rich and true; for walking straight and upright all the years through; for looking ahead and never turning back; for trusting in God realizing there is nothing that you lack...keep on trusting...keep on hoping...keep on believing...keep on knowing...keep on fighting.

**WE LOVE YOU BLACK MEN.**

Written by  
REV. TIMOTHY McDONALD

# FLORIDA PEACE PILGRIMAGE

Dec. 28-Jan. 17



Join with us as we link the Trident II Missile Deployment and Testing Sites

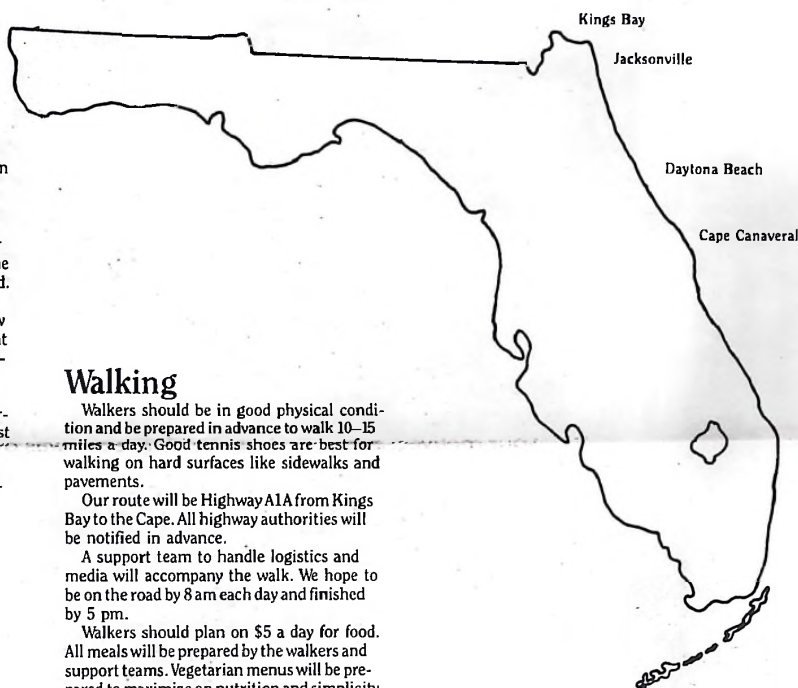
On January 17, 1987 a national protest will be held at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station to challenge the first test of the Trident II (D-5) nuclear missile.

While Ronald Reagan speaks of making nuclear weapons "obsolete" through a Star Wars shield, the Navy has been building the most powerful nuclear missile ever conceived.

If flight testing and deployment of the weapons system is not stopped in the next few years, the Pentagon will reach its long-sought goal of a full-fledged nuclear first-strike capability.

This peace walk will begin at Kings Bay Submarine base (located on the Florida-Georgia border). Kings Bay will be the east coast host base for the Trident.

Join us in this historic protest effort as we link these two important and dangerous military installations.



## Walking

Walkers should be in good physical condition and be prepared in advance to walk 10-15 miles a day. Good tennis shoes are best for walking on hard surfaces like sidewalks and pavements.

Our route will be Highway A1A from Kings Bay to the Cape. All highway authorities will be notified in advance.

A support team to handle logistics and media will accompany the walk. We hope to be on the road by 8 am each day and finished by 5 pm.

Walkers should plan on \$5 a day for food. All meals will be prepared by the walkers and support teams. Vegetarian menus will be prepared to maximize on nutrition and simplicity.

As we pass through major cities supporters will house the walkers in their homes. Camping in rural areas will also be done. While in the major urban centers we also expect that supporters will join the walk as it passes through their community.

## WALK FOR A DAY OR ALL THE WAY

### We hope to:

- Draw attention to the demonstrations planned at Kings Bay on Dec. 27-28 and at Cape Canaveral on Jan. 17
- Enlarge the web of support for these important actions
- Empower ourselves and others in a commitment to peace and non-violence



### Sign me up! I want to help.

- ☐ Yes, I'll walk. Send me the Walker's Sign-Up Form.
- ☐ I'd like to help with logistics. Send me more information.
- ☐ I can't walk but here is some money to help cover expenses.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Dear Editor

Dear Friends,

For a number of years while I lived and worked in Atlanta at the Village of St. Joseph, a residential treatment facility for children, I admired you and kept up with your varied ministries in Atlanta and Georgia. Now that I have moved to Kansas City, I still desire to keep in touch. I would appreciate still receiving the Open Door newspaper. In my new position at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church (I am Social Ministries Coordinator), I am having the opportunity to minister with and to many folks in need in our neighborhood which is partially inner city and poor and middle class black and white with many elderly. You are an inspiration and challenge me to grow in my own social awareness and action. Thank you for all you are and do for so many.

God bless you and your work.

Christ's Peace,

Janice Hughes



What follows is an unedited copy of a letter received by Suzanne Belote of the Agape Center for the Study and Practice of Christian Nonviolence in Brockton, Massachusetts, from Death Row inmate, Billy Neal Moore, on the eve of the execution of his friend and brother in Christ Jerome Bowden, electrocuted by State decree on June 24, 1986:

Grace, Mercy and Peace be yours, Brayton and Teresa (the names of Suzanne's husband and infant daughter) in God's love and from The Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearest Beloved of Christ,

Suzanne, it's 9:15 and everyone is locked in their cells as the state moves in for the kill... Jerome Bowden, Brother in Christ and a true friend. We have spent many warm and tender hours together over the years and our hearts beat as one, being apart of that same life line of Jesus Christ... God to be praised! For the ugly hand of the state cannot touch that--no one can pluck Jerome from God's hand, not even Georgia.

Watching at the window with great difficulty because of the bars in front of my cell, the railing from the second floor walkway; a chain-link fence from the floor to the ceiling; then the window which is down so only the fine mesh screen, that dulls the vision toward the outside; last of all the stone facing squares of the prison that make small holes about 5 by 7 inch windows. But with all of this the state cannot hide the highway patrol cars circling the prison like vultures waiting for the corpse.

Howard Thurmon once told his daughters about the prejudice of the officials in Florida to keep blacks off the public playground; he told them that the whole state of Florida needs laws, police and the governor to just keep two little black girls from the swings and sliding boards--it took all of this for them to perfect their prejudice on two children; that's why they were special girls... Jerome is very special, it takes all of the United States government to end his physical life--the Supreme Court, the State Supreme Court, the Parole Board, the Department of Corrections, the prison warden, the special prison squad, the Highway Patrol, the forest rangers, and last of all, the fellow who gets paid to push the button--WOW! Isn't that special treatment? If the state would have been that concerned from the beginning, he surely would not be here today.

Things are so backwards these days and it's called Justice--for who? Surely not for Jerome, the victim, or the families. Why can't they see the problem is the lack of true help from those who claim to be for Justice... that's right, it's JUST US POOR!

Well Suzanne, tomorrow is another man's, Son Fleming, execution. On July 2nd is the third, so may Georgia has it's flood gate open now?

Can you believe that all the good food has been saved for this time? See, all of those folks here to kill Jerome stay after their deeds and eat all the best Jackson has to offer--believe me today even our food will be nicely cooked, but tomorrow is another story--the coldcuts and hot dogs will be put up until they kill again.

10:20. No word, but I feel it's over now. My burden is gone.

Yours in Christ,

Love Billy

Dear Friends at the Open Door;

Thank God that your door is open. I wish I could do more to help but right now my finances are nearly as strained as yours. Although I am blessed with a warm cabin and enough food here on my piece of wilderness. I live on a small island out of Wrangell.

Each month I look forward to your paper. May God bless you as you labor for those God created to be loved.

Sincerely,

Joy Ortte

# Needs

We have recently changed our Tuesday "soup kitchen" procedure and have begun offering sack lunches to our homeless friends. Rather than serving people inside at a table, we will be providing at the door two meat and cheese sandwiches, a peanut butter sandwich, and a piece of fruit.

This change has created a special need each Tuesday for approximately 350 meat and cheese sandwiches and either oranges or bananas. We would greatly appreciate any individual or group willing to help provide for this weekly meal. Please call Joanne Solomon at 874-9652 if you can help.

socks

men's underwear

(both the long and short of it !)

1,000 Knit hats

gloves

coats



## Mitch and the Mayor

Mitch Snyder, from the Community of Creative Non-violence in Washington D.C., continues to encourage Atlantans in the long-term campaign to meet the needs of the homeless. On October 24th Mitch and representatives of the Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless met with Mayor Andrew Young and Fulton County Commissioner Michael Lomax. The purposes of the Advocates were 1) to discuss the general issues of homelessness in Atlanta 2) to request increased funding to help offset the massive redevelopment of "Underground Atlanta," and 3) to seek protection from increasing neighborhood pressures that are emerging against groups serving the homeless.

At a press conference following the meeting, Mayor Young did announce the opening of three shelters partially sponsored by the city. But Mitch, throughout his short visit with us in Atlanta (including an address to the National Legal Aid & Defenders Association) made one thing very clear: for the homeless throughout this country, the winter of 1986 looms more disastrous than ever. We must inspire more support from all the major actors in this life and death drama...but particularly those with so much power and control over the fate of the least in our midst.



### Do You Receive More Than One Hospitality?

Last week our good friend Father Richard Rohr sent us a message. "I get 4 copies of Hospitality," he exclaimed, "I do want one!"

If you get more copies than you can put to use, please drop us a line and we will send you only one, two, three, four or as few as you want.

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

Name

Street

City, State, Zip

## Training for the Train

### THIS PAINTING NEEDS A HOME.



**SO DOES THE ARTIST.** You'll find the paintings in the first floor gallery of the Atlanta Downtown Library. You'll find the artist on a park bench nearby. Unless it's cold. Then he'll be seeking shelter in an abandoned building, or unlocked boiler room.

During the first two weeks of December, Art Works will present

an exhibit of paintings and photographs. The featured work, by local artists, will explore homelessness in Atlanta.

Come downtown and see it. It may not get the homeless off the streets, but it will get the problem out in the open. And that's the first step towards bringing it to a close.

**ART WORKS**  
*to help the homeless and hungry*

Sponsored by the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, DeKalb County, the Atlanta Food Bank, and the Task Force for the Homeless. For information, call ART WORKS 872-3603, 970 Jefferson St. NW, Atlanta GA 30315

#### ARTWORKS SCHEDULE: DECEMBER 1ST-DECEMBER 13TH, 1986

**Art Works Opening Reception**  
Monday, December 1st at 5:30 p.m.  
Atlanta-Fulton County Central Library  
1 Margaret Mitchell Square  
Hosted by Michael Lomax,  
Fulton County Commission Chairman

**Photography and Street Artist Exhibit**  
December 1-13, 1986  
Atlanta-Fulton County Central Library  
Works by 35 of Atlanta's photographers  
focusing on the homeless, and paintings  
by Atlanta's street artists.  
Co-sponsored by The Atlanta Journal  
and The Atlanta Constitution.

**Art Works Art Auction**  
Tuesday, December 2nd at 7 p.m.  
Peachtree Center Shopping Mall  
Tickets: \$10 advance, \$15 door  
John C. Portman, Jr. Honorary Chairman  
Hosted by Atlanta galleries and artists.  
Works of gallery-affiliated artists will be  
auctioned to benefit Atlanta's homeless.

**Preview**  
November 17th-December 2nd  
Peachtree Center Mall

**ART WORKS**  
*to help the homeless and hungry*

**Art Works Theatre Project**  
*People of the Brick*  
December 3rd-6th at 8:00 p.m.  
Developed and performed by homeless  
people under the direction of  
Barbara Lebow and Kenny Leon  
Tickets: \$10; call 873-2518

**An Evening of Song and Dance**  
with Atlanta's professional ballet and  
dance community, The Atlanta Opera,  
and The Southeastern Savoyards.  
Monday, December 8th at 8 p.m.  
Peachtree Playhouse  
Free Admission/Donations requested



#### Nonviolence Training for Resisting the Nuclear Train

is being offered Saturday December 6th from 1 - 5pm at Oakhurst Baptist Church. During the first hour the excellent video, "The Arms Race Within" will be shown. Registration is \$5. For more information contact Mark Reeve at Atlanta Clergy and Laity Concerned (377-6516)



If you have  
questions about  
draft registration,  
the draft,  
conscientious  
objection  
or the  
military,

call  
**373-3709**

or write:

**Atlanta Peace Alliance**  
P.O. Box 54225  
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

## Open Door Schedule

WE ARE OPEN...

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00 am until 6:00 pm and from 7:15 pm to 8:30 pm. The building is open from 9:00 am until 8:30 pm those days. (Both phone & door are not answered during our lunch break (12:15-1:00). Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are closed until 1:00 pm. Then our phones and door are answered from 1:00 until 5:00 pm

OUR MINISTRY...

SOUP KITCHEN - Monday-Saturday, 11-12 noon; Sunday 3-4pm

BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST - Monday-Friday 7:30-8:30 am SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES - Monday, Wednesday,

Friday - 9:00 - 11:00 am (Be sure to call--summer schedule varies) USE OF PHONE - Monday-Saturday, 9am - 4pm.

SHELTER REQUESTS - Monday-Saturday 9am - noon. SUNDAY WORSHIP - 5:00 - 6:30 pm.

BIBLE STUDY - Alternate Wednesdays 7:30 - 9:00 (call for fall schedule)

ALL-DAY RETREATS - Every 6th Sunday (for our household & volunteers/supporters) - Nov. 29 & 30 (call for details)

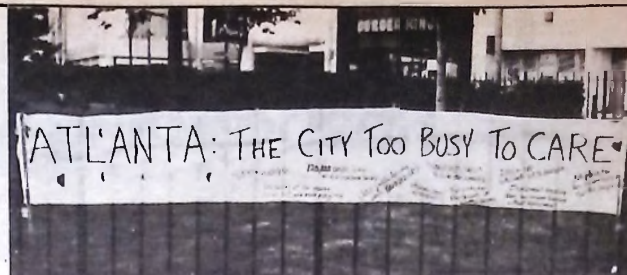
the park? All night long I heard, "I thought you said you loved us; you'd be with us; it ain't right; you're taking the blankets, and we're gonna freeze; it ain't right!"

Those voices were right. As the night wore on, and the temperature dropped to 45 degrees, and the wind blew through the park, and we had no blankets, it was all wrong. I shook uncontrollably with the cold, and I saw everyone suffer. I watched my friend Homer run around the park to keep warm. I saw him stumble and fall down and hurt those poor, frozen limbs, and I heard the other folk laugh at him as he sprawled on the pavement. It was all wrong. Homer should have been wrapped in a blanket.

In addition to my despair, I was angry and disgusted. Why did those friends of ours shove and push and fight and mob the van? "It ain't right!" my mind screamed out. People shouldn't behave that way. Why did they force us to get rid of the blankets? Why are they so angry with us now? Where had that friendship and solidarity gone? Jay spoke of raising voices, not fists, yet fights broke out, and violence spread. Hadn't anybody heard? In my utter despair, I even found myself beginning to think that I understood why the city wanted these folks out of the park. They were violent and dangerous, and dirty and mean. I didn't want any of this solidarity—it was a hopeless cause.



Much later as I reflected on the rally, on the words that were spoken and on the songs that were sung, I was called to remember the words of Arlita Chamberlain: "the world and people are changed when you look through Christ's eyes." At 3:00 a.m., I sat shivering on a park bench, and I was angry, and sad, and alone, and cold. Now I know that things were more wrong than the cold and the lack of blankets. And there was even a wrong greater than the wrong of violence in the park on that night of solidarity. The greatest wrong is the hateful system that forces humans to lose their rights, that forces humans to be without homes, that forces humans into violence so that they can have a fighting chance at a blanket that will provide the most meager sense of warmth and life. And the worst aspect of this greatest wrong is that too few people care enough about the Human Family to act for the preservation of rights and the chance for life.



It ain't right that people panic and mob a van to get a blanket to survive the cold night because it ain't right that people have to spend freezing nights outside when they have no warm homes, no beds, no blankets. It was all wrong. It ain't right that the city plans to spend an initial \$138 million to renovate Underground Atlanta, while, at the same time, plans to run the homeless out—to arrest them, to send them to jail. It ain't right that people are locked up in prison. It ain't right that the state can take the life of a person. It was all wrong.

"Ain't ya gotta right to the Tree of Life" is one of my favorite songs. We'd sung it earlier at the rally, and it's been singing through my mind ever since. All of us in that park who were shivering without a warm home, without a nice bed, without a thick blanket were dying. There was no life in that park. It was a desperate situation. But in that despair I have found reason to hope, to want to tell everybody, "Yeah! You gotta right to the tree of life." I am convinced that God does not intend for God's children to suffer. God loves us, and God is sad when we have no homes and no beds, and we feel forced to mob a van and fight for the life that one blanket provides. God is angry when the city doesn't care about God's children who have no place to eat. God promises life—life in abundance. And so we live in hope because if God is for us, then none of the powers of the city, of the state, or of violence can defeat us. So, at 3:00 a.m. when we're angry, sad, alone, and frozen, Christ comes to show us life.

Life comes when the hungry person is fed; life comes when the thirsty one is given a drink; life comes when the homeless stranger is received into your home; life comes when the person without clothes is given clothes; life comes when you care for the sick; life comes when the prisoners are visited, when the captives are set free. We all have a right to the tree of life. Let us all work, pray, struggle, and suffer for the growth of that tree among our homeless sisters and brothers and among our sisters and brothers behind prison walls. \*



# Responding to the Crisis of Hunger and Homelessness



## A Proclamation to the City of Atlanta, Georgia

To: Mayor Andrew Young

And all those who represent us and all those who shape the life and laws of Atlanta

We of the Open Door Community and the Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless believe this city is in the midst of a crisis regarding hunger and homelessness. We must take immediate steps to respond to this crisis, even as we must make more long ranged systemic changes to solve this crisis.

First, Woodruff park (formerly Central City Park) must be open all night (now closed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.) when the City Shelter is not open. The City Shelter is not open tonight, and it is not open most nights of the year.

When shelters are not open there is NOWHERE for the homeless to go. Presently the Atlanta Police are under great pressure to sweep the parks and arrest those who have nowhere else to go. STOP THE ARRESTS! OPEN THE PARK. What is the moral basis of a law that arrests folks for being homeless and having NOWHERE TO GO?

Second, the city needs to open a year round shelter. This shelter, an addition to the winter months shelters (for example West Hunter Street Shelter), should be located in the downtown central city area. Access to shelter is a fundamental problem in the City of Atlanta. A Central City shelter will be a partial response to this critical life-sustaining need.

However, our homeless sisters, brothers, and children also need access to transportation for both shelter and work. To this end, we propose that the City of Atlanta and the counties of Fulton and DeKalb issue special MARTA CARDS FOR THE HOMELESS. These cards could be given out the prior night at any of the existing shelters and would be valid on any train or bus between the hours of 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Access to Marta during these hours would be a step toward justice for it would mean the following: 1) men and women and boys and girls would be able to get to any shelter in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. 2) an open transportation system would encourage shelter operators to open small and decentralized shelters in a variety of places throughout the metropolitan area. This would decrease the homeless population in the downtown business area and make more humane the shelter experience for both the guests and hosts in smaller, dispersed shelters. The lack of access to public transportation is a central reason for the concentration of large numbers of hungry and homeless human beings in the center of downtown. 3) Of equal, if not of greater importance is that open access to Marta during the morning and evening hours would enable many, many people to find WORK - to get on one's feet, and out of these necessary but nonetheless damnable shelters. Labor pools, modern slave markets though they be, are out of reach for many who wish to work. Others could find and hold jobs with reliable transportation. Children could get to daycare and parents to work on a regular basis. Businessmen and businesswomen may well open more jobs and programs when transportation is assured.

Third, we ask the city officials, Mr. Dan Sweat, the Rouse Company, and others in position of leadership to devise an equitable and fair plan to create a continually growing fund for low income housing in the City of Atlanta. As we have found a way to guarantee \$138 million dollars for the re-development of Underground Atlanta for a place to enjoy and celebrate the good life of Atlanta, let us at this same time guarantee \$38 million dollars to build houses for the homeless. This is the minimum needed for a sense of justice and a spirit of fairness and integrity among those of us who have our needed daily food, a home and good work to perform.

Finally, let us say again that we are in a crisis. Atlanta is like a city whose foundations were built upon sand. We have been hit hard by the terrible flood of hunger, of joblessness among the poor and unskilled, and of homelessness among those with no place to go to rest, sleep or work. Out of this crisis we advocate: no arrests in the parks, a downtown year-round city shelter, limited free access to MARTA, and a fund of monies to develop and construct low income housing in the downtown area of our good city. But let us not settle for a crisis response alone. Shelters, even the best ones in the world, are not houses of choice. We need houses. Soups kitchens, even those that serve "all you can eat!" are an abomination in this land of plenty. Labor pools are the extreme of alienation between the worker and his/her work and bring the bitter harvest of despair and hopelessness. For a nation where work grows and employment shrinks, we must never sit satisfied with a free bus ride.

THEREFORE in the name of the 8,753 homeless men, women, girls, and boys of the City of Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. we cry out for these immediate responses even as we walk and work together for long range solutions which must reflect the justice and equality of which Martin King taught us when he spoke of the Beloved Community.

Peace & hope,

Ed Loring

Ed Loring  
Open Door Community

Joanne Solomon  
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Homeless