

# 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

November 1994

Shortly after midnight, the wind began whipping through Woodruff Park. The night suddenly turned colder, and my bones told me I needed more cover. I crawled into a fairly large cardboard box to shield myself from the weather and to perhaps even get some sleep.

As I lay in my box, looking out through the opening at the city lights all about me, Asher pulled his box up in front of mine. He, too, settled in for the rest of the night. The back-side of Asher's box now blocked my view of the high-rises. I noticed that on his box, a packing box used normally by moving companies, were written these instructions: "This End Up," "Fragile," and "Do Not Drop." I stared at these words for a few minutes. I thought, "How wonderful, Asher has found cardboard shelter this night, shelter that comes with instructions to all who pass by: 'This end up. Fragile. Do not drop.' He is safe. This human package is safe for this night."

And how ironic. These words on the box, "This end up," "Fragile," and "Do Not Drop," were never meant for Asher's or any other human being's welfare. These words were meant for material goods that are to be moved from one household to another. Goods we consider precious and irreplaceable—expensive china, priceless kitchenware, glass and porcelain fixtures and ornaments—material goods we can't bear to have damaged or destroyed. Yet now this box of Asher's, and my own and no doubt hundreds of boxes throughout Atlanta that night, were being used as overnight huts and homes by countless numbers of homeless folk, fragile and broken folk who cry out for justice, whose presence begs us to recognize them as human beings who need our attention and care.

"This end up." "Fragile." "Do not drop." I stared at these words on Asher's cardboard home, thinking that perhaps if God could slap this same label on each and every one of us—homeless and housed, rich and poor, prisoner and free, young and old, man and woman, white folk and persons of color—we could learn to live together in ways that truly allowed all of us to share in the tree of life.

We all struggle in life to stay right-side-up. We fall down. We take tumbles. We fail one another. We backslide. The bottom falls out. We are fragile people. We break or live broken lives. We need mending all the time. Sometimes, when we feel that we're on track again, we are dropped suddenly into the pit of despair. We look around for someone to recognize our humanity but are met only with resistance and oppression.

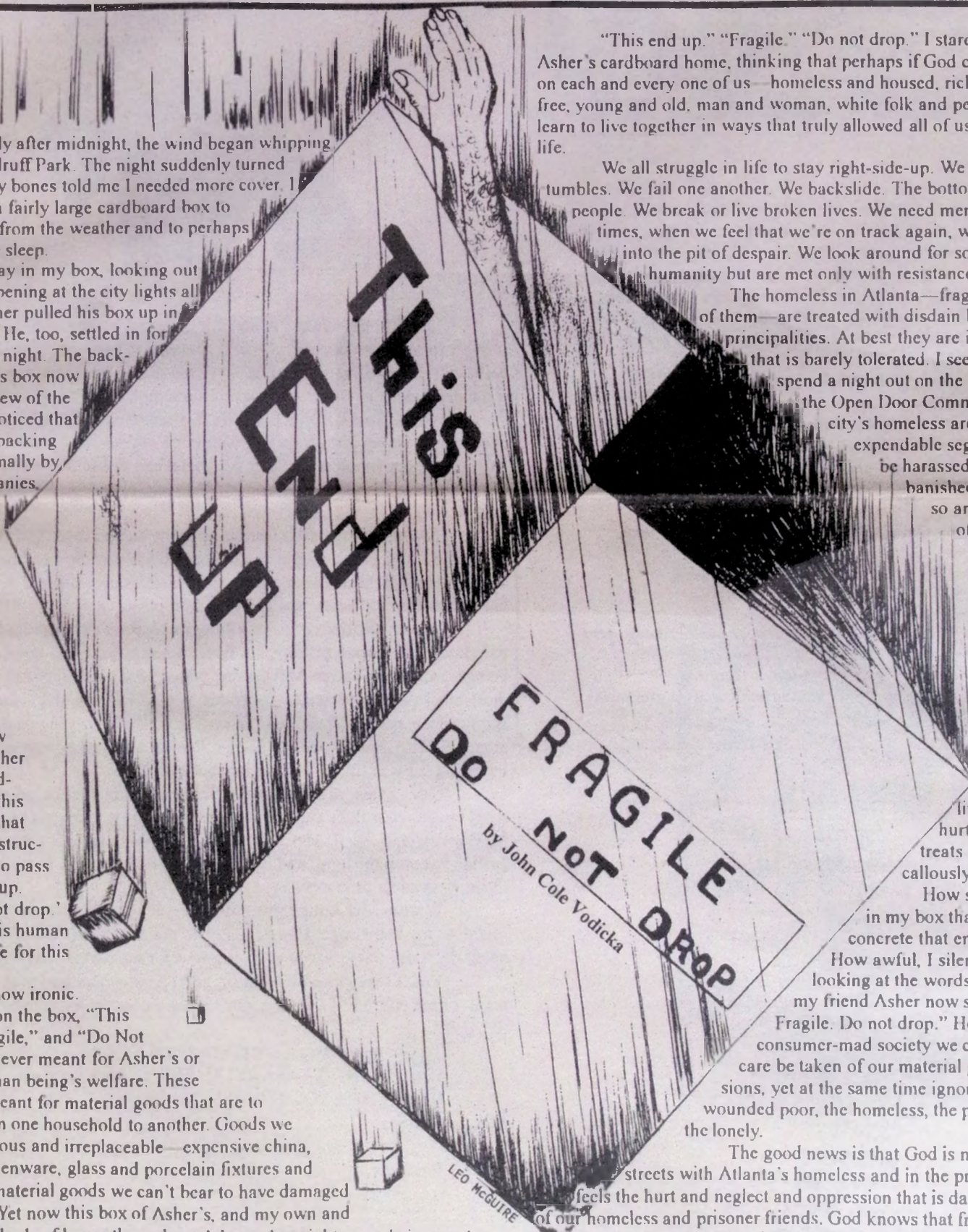
The homeless in Atlanta—fragile and broken every one of them—are treated with disdain by the powers and principalities. At best they are invisible or a nuisance that is barely tolerated. I see this most clearly when I spend a night out on the streets with members of the Open Door Community. At worst, the city's homeless are looked upon as an expendable segment of people, who can be harassed, hailed, beaten or

banished, whenever the need to do so arises at City Hall. Instead of treating our homeless sisters and brothers as fragile human beings to be handled with care, to be nurtured and empowered—to be housed—we allow those who set and enforce policy to run roughshod over the lives of broken, already-hurting people. The system treats the homeless poor callously and with contempt.

How strange, I thought as I lay in my box that night on the cold concrete that envelops Woodruff Park. How awful, I silently screamed while looking at the words neatly printed on the box my friend Asher now slept in. "This end up. Fragile. Do not drop." How awful that in this consumer-mad society we can demand that great care be taken of our material goods and prized possessions, yet at the same time ignore the cries of the wounded poor, the homeless, the prisoner, the outcast and the lonely.

The good news is that God is not pleased. God is on the streets with Atlanta's homeless and in the prison cells of Georgia. She feels the hurt and neglect and oppression that is daily heaped on the backs of our homeless and prisoner friends. God knows that fragile people need to be embraced, not humiliated and shunned. God tells us that one day the poor shall inherit the earth. God knows, yes she does, which end is up.

John Cole Vodicka is Director of the Koinonia Prison and Jail Project in Americus, Georgia. He and Dee along with their sons Gabe, Luke and Sam are former Resident Volunteers at the Open Door.





## HOSPITALITY



910 Ponce de Leon

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

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(A \$5 donation to the Open Door would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing Hospitality.)

### Special Needs for the Holidays



Pies

Rice

HATS

Yams

HAMS

Greens

GLOVES

TURKEYS

SCARVES

SWEATERS

Stuffing Mix

Green beans

Black-eyed Peas



## I REMEMBER McCLESKEY



John Kennedy said, "A nation's greatness can be measured by the way it treats its weakest citizens". Quite a contrast, to live with Clinton's rule and belief of killing our weakest citizens! (Even if they are brain-damaged.) (Even if the death penalty is racist.) (Even if innocent human beings are murdered.)

On the Special Olympics medal, a scene is portrayed, which really occurred. A young girl competing with other athletes was winning a race. She looked over her shoulder and saw her friend had fallen. She went back and helped her up. They finished the race, the story goes. Hand in hand, they came in last.

To me, this should be the spirit of the human race: The "DO UNTO OTHERS" segment of religions, that too often is preached and not practiced. Yet a mentally retarded young girl, had the ethics over the rest of the educated human race. In my heart, that girl took first place.

Why is the United States killing its weakest citizens? Its blackest and its poorest? The death penalty is a farce. It has killed many innocent human beings, including Warren McCleskey, whose case was cited with statistics that more blacks are murdered by the states, who kill whites, than blacks who kill blacks. They couldn't even make Warren a "token" for bringing it to their attention. They murdered him instead. Even if McCleskey was guilty, which he wasn't, he was the epitome of rehabilitation.

Now, safely in retirement, a Supreme Court Justice, admitted that he would have voted differently, if he had it to do over, in regards to the McCleskey case. Well, McCleskey is dead, even though this Supreme Court Justice has seen the light, and he can't breathe life into my brother's body. Oops, he made a little mistake.

Warren McCleskey was not the triggerman. No murder weapon was found, to my knowledge. Had he admitted guilt, he would be alive today. But never did a day pass, that he did not grieve for his part in that robbery.

Yes, I remember McCleskey, and I'll remember him every day, every night, of my entire life. Georgia murdered an innocent but rehabilitated man. SHAME!

To Georgia's Diagnostic Corruptional Center:  
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! THREE YEARS.  
STOP THE EXECUTIONS!

Miss you brother.

Sincerely,

Pajama Lady  
Old Town, ME



# Somebody Knows The Trouble I've Seen

by Elizabeth Dede

The song "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen" always seemed to me to be one of deep sadness, sung by a person left alone, friendless, surrounded by people who didn't care to hear their story, to share their pain. Out of the depths of this despair they cry to Jesus who hears them and pulls them up out of the quagmire.

But I don't think it's supposed to be that way. That kind of abandonment and loneliness is a sign of a society that has lost its soul--a people who no longer love and care for each other. I believe we can really only know about Jesus' love for us as we experience it in each other, else love is only an abstract concept, with no flesh and bones, no breath and voice, no ears to hear our troubles.

The Journey of Hope in Georgia began for me on Saturday, October 1, at New Hope House down near death row in Jackson. I spent the day visiting my good friend Jack, who is on the row there, and came out to a gathering of members of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, family members and friends of people on death row, the mother of a young man who had been executed, and many other friends whose presence said that they were opposed to the death penalty.

It was an amazing congregation, a holy family. Here, standing hand-in-hand, were mothers whose sons had committed a terrible murder with mothers whose children had been murdered. Our system tells us that these people cannot come together, that they cannot tell their stories to each other, that they cannot share their pain, that they cannot comfort each other. But it happened.

Mary, whose husband is now serving a life sentence after over 15 years on death row, wept and told how she wanted to reach out to the family of the victim, but she felt her hands were empty and she had nothing to give. The District Attorney had portrayed her husband Andrew as a remorseless animal, and the victim's family was not allowed to feel Andrew's grief and pain. It seemed that a great divide had been placed between the families by the District Attorney, and their hands could not reach each other.

Betty told of the sorrow she and her son Mike have suffered for the past 20 years, wondering what has happened to the wife and children of the man Mike killed. Betty and Mike were not allowed to contact the family of the victim while Mike's death penalty case was still on appeal. When Mike finally got off death row after 16 years, they feared opening old wounds and creating more pain for children who were grown and for people who had somehow gone on with their lives. Yet this mother and her son ache for reconciliation which is denied them.

Then another Betty, whose son Chris was murdered by the state of Georgia, shared her grief. Like all the other mothers and wives, she never denied that Chris had done a terrible thing, but the real horror for her was that throughout his trial, no one ever got to say a good word about Chris. Betty was not asked to testify, and even members of the victim's family who did not want the death penalty, were not allowed to say anything on his behalf. This mother's sadness made my heart hurt. All of us have a deep need to have good things said and remembered about us.

Her friend spoke up and said to those of us gathered there, "Nobody knows what this mother's suffering is like. She left her son healthy and strong and alive in the visiting room. And then Chris was killed. Betty never saw him again."

You would think that the family members of a murder victim would be furious, seething with rage, as they heard these stories--murderers' families crying and asking for forgiveness and understanding and mercy. The image we see in the news is that families of murder victims want revenge. They want the death penalty.

But there was a different spirit in this gathering. Murder victims' families embraced and comforted the families of murderers, and there was healing. Here were people who did know the sorrow of losing children and other loved ones to murder: daughters, mothers, fathers, sisters, grandmothers left strong, healthy, and alive. And then, they were killed, never to be seen again.

Sue, a member of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, shared her pain with the group as she told the story of the murder of her parents. When the trial for the man who committed the murder came, the District Attorney whipped up a frenzy of hatred. Sue did not want to remember her parents through violence and death, but she did not know that she could speak out against the death penalty. According to the District Attorney it was the only available, appropriate punishment. Now Sue honors the lives of her parents by struggling to save the life of the man who killed them.

She said to us, "I'm so glad to be gathered here because the system tells me I'm crazy when I say, 'Stop the death penalty. Don't kill in my name.' But I know here today that I'm not crazy. We're not crazy."

And that is what the Journey of Hope is about for me. It is a beautiful affirmation of life and of the struggle to abolish the death penalty. Certainly as it poured down rain on Sunday, October 2, and our group marched through the streets of Atlanta led by the Rev. Fred Taylor, singing and chanting, "Abolition Now!" we looked crazy, all wet and bedraggled. But I am so sure we are the sane ones. Hatred and revenge are crazy; they only lead to more hurt and violence.

When Sue had finished telling her story, we sang together, "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen." But the Journey of Hope changed that song. Somebody knows now. Hundreds of students at Marist High School know because they listened to George. Forty-five young people at Grady High School know because Ernest told them. Thousands of people in Atlanta know because they heard Sam's story on the radio.

We know each other's troubles as we share our stories, and we can comfort each other. There is strength to love and forgive as we listen to each other.

If a mother whose daughter was murdered can forgive, if a son whose mother was murdered can forgive, then reconciliation is possible for all of us. Join us on the Journey of Hope. It lasts for a lifetime and leads us from hatred to reconciliation.

*Elizabeth Dede is a partner at the Open Door Community. For information on what you can do to abolish the death penalty, contact Elizabeth at 404/876-6977.*

Sam Sheppard, Jr. told his story on the radio.



CATHY SCHUYLER



Sr. Helen Prejean, C.S.J. joined the Journey of Hope. She is author of the book *Dead Man Walking* which tells of her work on Death Row.

CATHY SCHUYLER



# History As Teacher:

## Reconstruction Today,

### Part 3

by Nibs Stroupe

*Editor's note: We continue here with the third of a 10-part series on Reconstruction. Nibs Stroupe, pastor at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA., is active in the Civil Rights Movement and author of While We Run This Race: Encountering The Power Of Racism. It will be available from Orbis Press in March, 1995.*

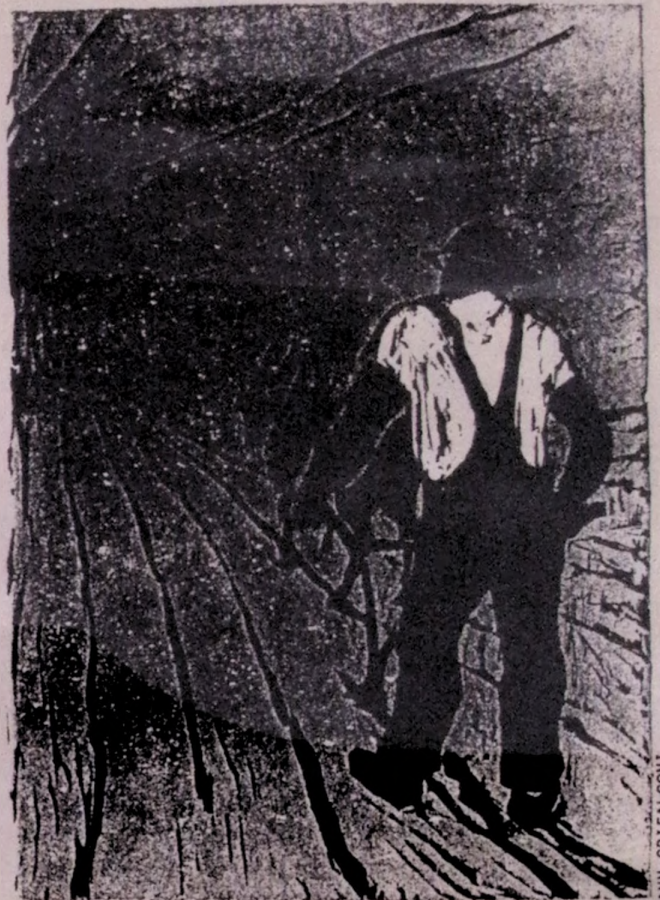
The years following the Civil War were years filled with both promise and conflict. The promise was rooted in the possibility that the idea of "equality" would prevail over the idea of "race." The triumph of Northern forces in the Civil War seemed to provide an opportunity for the idea of equality to blossom. The conflict was rooted in the continuing power of "race." It would not yield easily to the idea of equality. Indeed, after a few years of the experiment in democracy, "race" would begin its ineluctable movement to re-establish itself as primary in our culture. We will now experience some of the methods by which the primacy of race was re-established.

The hero of the Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant, was elected President of the United States in 1868.

He made a weak President. His tenure was filled with corruption and an inordinate trust in business. Ironically, it was during the presidency of the general who conquered the white South that the white South rose again. White Southerners used two strategies to attack the human rights gains of Reconstruction: (1) violence based on the notorious Mississippi Plan, and (2) a marketing campaign to discredit the idea of the humanity of black people.

White violence was the key in beating back the human rights gains of Reconstruction. The Ku Klux Klan was the center of it, having been founded in 1865, and dedicated to terrorism, intimidation and assassination of black people and white people who worked for human rights. Though the surrender at Appomattox on Palm Sunday in 1865 had officially ended the Civil War, the violent resistance to racial justice never stopped. In 1868, the year of the state constitutional conventions, over one thousand people were killed in the South in racially motivated terrorism. Violence like this was not intermittent. It was deep and widespread. Its purpose was to kill strong black people who stood up for justice so that the terror that permeated slavery might be re-established. It was also directed toward white activists and sympathizers in order to prevent whites from joining with blacks. Because of its state of origin, this systematic design of violence became known as the Mississippi Plan. At first, Congress and President Grant sought to respond. In April, 1871, Grant signed into law the Third Enforcement Act, known as the Ku Klux Act, which gave the President the right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus and to declare martial law where warranted in the South. It was enforced in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Mississippi by the fall of 1871.

This federal response did not succeed in bringing the violence to an end. It did, however, cause the Southern whites to strengthen the second part of their strategy: the marketing campaign to sell their case. This involved discrediting the idea of the humanity of African-Americans and mining the racism of Northern whites. Agents and materials were sent into the North calling for sympathy with the Southern whites who were a "wretched, downtrodden, and impoverished people." A Southerner named James Pike wrote a book called *The Prostrate South*, published in 1874, claiming that the reforms of Reconstruction were monstrous. This propaganda machine worked. The white people in the South came to be seen as the oppressed, as the ones treated unfairly. The black people in the South came to be seen as buffoons unable to be trusted with power, and as oppressors who crushed the white people. And while this campaign to change the country's perception of Reconstruction



continued, so did the white violence and economic exploitation of black people.

The campaign of violence and marketing worked. In 1875, when the governor of Mississippi requested that President Grant send federal troops into that state to quell the white rebellion, Grant refused, saying that the "whole public is tired of these autumnal outbreaks." Grant expressed the weariness of the nation with this racial justice business. The depth of racism had been underestimated, and when the white propaganda machine went to work, it tapped the racism of Northern whites. By the time of the infamous Hayes Compromise in 1877, which gave Ohioan Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency in exchange for pulling the last few federal troops out of the South, the systematic repudiation of the human rights gains of Reconstruction had been firmly established. The black people and white people who had struggled for justice during Reconstruction were now at the mercy of the terrorism of white people in power.

The march to reverse the human rights gains was relentless, and it was not limited to the South. In 1873 Congress did pass a Civil Rights Act, but not before severely diluting it by taking out sections prohibiting segregation in many places. The Act was ridiculed in many places, including a *New York Times* editorial of March 7. It was never seriously enforced. This lax approach, along with the Compromise of 1877, emboldened the white South to move ahead in re-establishing slavery through legal segregation. It became commonplace to have separate accommodations for black people and for white people, even before any state laws were passed to codify the separation. The white South was rising again.

Strong assistance in this reversal of rights came from the Supreme Court of the United States. In the 1870s and 1880s, it was composed entirely of Republican appointees--the Republicans having been born as the party to end slavery. In these years, however, it sided again and again with the voices of slavery. In 1875, it ruled in *Cruikshank versus The United States* that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments did not apply to individuals or groups (other than states) who deprived other individuals or groups of the



right to vote. In *Reese versus The United States*, the Court ruled that the Fifteenth Amendment did not confer the right to vote. Thus, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, passed to insure civil rights for all people, were gutted by the Supreme Court. In October, 1883, the Court ruled by an 8-1 vote (only John Harlan dissenting) that even the lukewarm Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional. This ruling and the commitment to oppression that it represented had a chilling effect on civil rights legislation. Not until 1957 did Congress pass another piece of civil rights legislation.

In May of 1884, Ida B. Wells, a black woman born into slavery in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and living in Memphis as a teacher, brought one of the first test cases of the common practice of separate accommodations. She refused to move from a "whites only" train car to a "black" car, and she resisted when the conductor tried to move her. He got reinforcements and removed her from the train. She stunned the state of Tennessee when she sued in court, saying that her rights had been deprived under the Fourteenth Amendment. She won in district court but ultimately lost when the Tennessee Supreme Court overturned the decision.



Ida B. Wells

Many other test cases were brought to the courts, but the most important one began on June 7, 1892, when a black man, Homer Plessy, got on a train in New Orleans, bound for Covington, Louisiana. Like Ida Wells, he refused to move from the "white" car. He was arrested and taken before magistrate John Ferguson. He was convicted of violating Louisiana's separate accommodations law, but he appealed his conviction to the United States Supreme Court. In 1896 (who says that slow movement in the courts is a recent development?), the Supreme Court ruled by an 8-1 margin in *Plessy versus Ferguson* (Harlan again dissenting) that "separate but equal" did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment. This doctrine would stand as law until the landmark ruling on segregated education on May 17, 1954. In another decision, one that indicated what "separate but equal" really meant, the Supreme Court ruled in 1899 in *Cumming versus Richmond County* that Richmond County in Georgia was not required to maintain a black high school (even Harlan joined in on a 9-0 vote in this case). Thus, not even "equal" was necessary. What was required by society was "separate."

States and local governments controlled by whites delighted in these developments. The system of segregation was soon put into law all over the South, as well as in other parts of the country. In 1890, Mississippi called another constitutional convention to repudiate its 1868 constitution by restructuring society along segregated lines. In contrast to its 1868 constitutional convention, in which 17 African-American people were delegates, only one black person, Isaiah Montgomery, was a delegate in 1890. As with the "Mississippi Plan" of violence, this former frontier state again led the way for Southern whites by initiating a system to re-establish slavery through disenfranchisement and legal segregation.

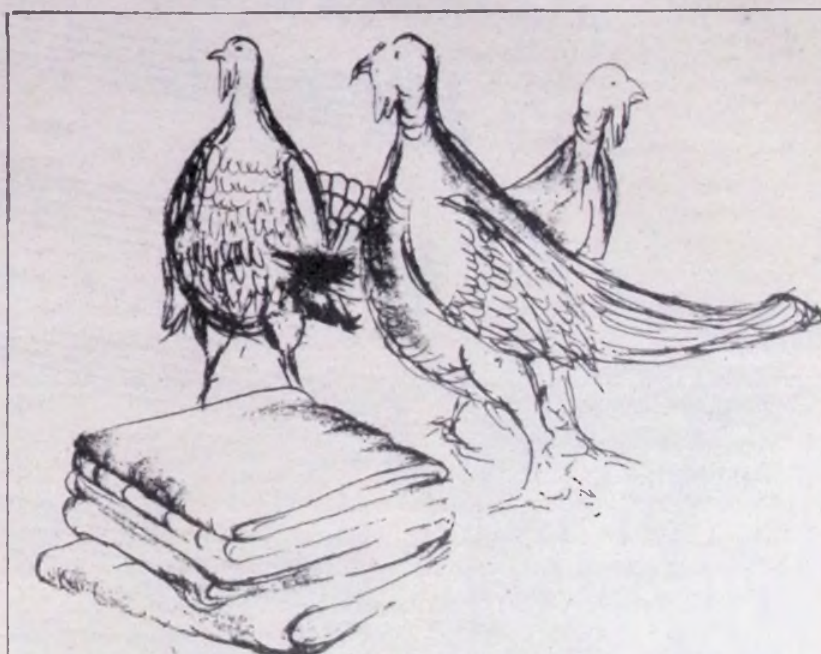
The constitutional convention of 1890 in Mississippi disenfranchised African-American people (as well as poor whites) by establishing property qualifications, literacy requirements, a poll tax, and a test on knowledge of Mississippi laws. Other Southern states followed suit to take the vote away from African-American people. At its constitutional convention in 1895, South Carolina did the same, adding a new twist of an "eight-box" system. Should we be grateful to the state of Louisiana for adding even another twist and giving us the phrase "grandfather clause"? In 1898, it passed a law that gave permanent registration to vote to men whose grandfathers or fathers were qualified to vote on January 1, 1867--a date that was prior to the enfranchisement of black people in Louisiana.

These laws were challenged, but to no avail. In 1898, the Supreme Court upheld Mississippi's new "black codes" by indicating that intent to discriminate had not been proven. This issue of intentionality is of supreme importance to maintaining the system of race. The Court held that no matter how many unjust results could be demonstrated, there was no constitutional violation unless intent to produce unjust results could be proven. The new "black codes" did not talk about black people being disenfranchised. Thus, the Supreme court upheld the laws in *Williams versus Mississippi*, because no intent to discriminate had been demonstrated. The decision held that such laws "do not, on their face, discriminate between the white and Negro races, and do not amount to a denial of equal protection of the law ... and it has not been shown that their actual administration was evil but only that evil was possible under them."

All Southern states, as well as some other states outside the South, followed Mississippi's lead. Throughout this time period, the campaign of terror and violence continued. Many black people, and some white people, were murdered. Many others were injured and intimidated. The terrorism and disenfranchisement put a chill on the struggle for justice. By the beginning of the 20th century, African-American people had been put back into slavery in the South, and into second-class citizenship everywhere else.

How did this happen? How could the nation turn its back on the gains of the Civil War and Reconstruction? How could the society disdain the honor of the 600,000 people killed in war to end slavery by allowing slavery to be re-established? There are three reasons: (1) the power of "race," (2) the clash between "race" and "equality," and (3) the desire by white people to blame the failure of reform on black people. We will look at these reasons in depth in the next part.

*This series will be continued in the January Hospitality.*



*We need turkeys for our Thanksgiving meal, and blankets for the upcoming cold weather.*



Moderate

# "It's Christmas Time" for the Open Door Community

Words & Music by  
Blake Neely

Deck the halls and  
Shop-ping for that

trim the trees. it's Christ-mas time. It's Christ-mas time ----. O- pen gifts that  
spe- cial gift, ig- nor- ing those who ask for change-. Can't you stop and

we don't need. It's Christ-mas time. It's Christ-mas time. But do we e- ver  
take the time to try and ease them of their pains? Spread some kind- ness.

stop to. think of o- thers who can on- ly try to find a warm place  
Spread some love. Re- mem-ber all life's gi- ven you ----- Give the ones with-

find some food, and pray it does- n't rain to- night ----. is this real- ly  
out a chance some hope to live an- o- ther day----- Let them cel- e-

1. 2.

Christ-mas time at all -----?  
brate this Christ- mas, . too -----!

How can we hear them ----- when we won't

li- sten -----? How can we learn to un- der- stand -----?

How can we know them ---- when we re- fuse to

see them -----? How can we give them a chance -----?

We welcome again to our  
pages the words and music  
of Blake Neely. Blake is a  
native of Paris, Texas, and  
currently a songwriter and  
music producer for Walt  
Disney Studios.



# Christmas

by Bob Otto

Indeed, how should we stand,  
If, in all majestic holiness,  
Trailing awesome mystery,  
God should break in upon us?

Who may see God and survive?  
Unnameable fear and dread would ensnare us,  
Leaving us in the embrace  
Of the dark abyss.

And yet? "Who," says Luther,  
"Would back away from a crib,  
Filled with the sounds  
Of an innocent, gurgling babe?"

Christmas is God's condescension  
To our human frailty.  
In a babe, Holiness is near;  
In a babe, Compassion lies.  
Behold, the crib pregnant with Redemption.

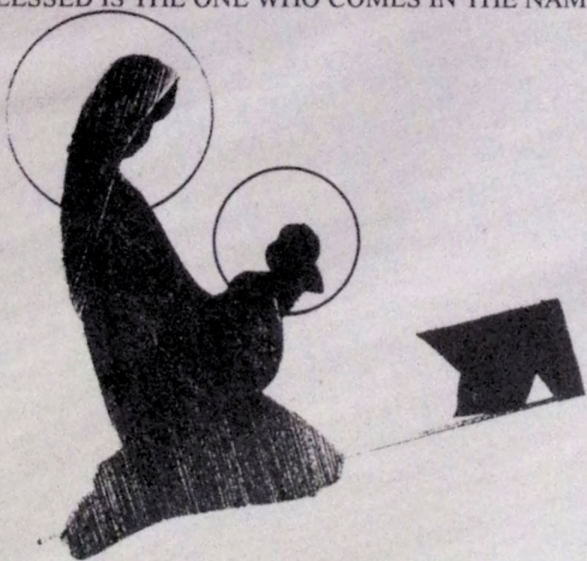
Nevertheless, beware  
Of the deception of Christmas.  
The Babe, become adult,  
Makes friends of leprosy and aids.  
He has compassion on prostitutes,  
And is tender with addicts and the homeless.  
The unwelcomed by Him are welcomed.

The Holiness of this Babe  
Tramples upon our holiness.  
Incarnate in this Babe is the Goodness  
That reverses all our goodness.  
Behold, it is upon the prisoners of Darkness  
That the Light does shine.

BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD



Bob Otto is a Baptist minister,  
retired from teaching Religion  
at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.



## Celebrate Christkwanza in Advent

We would be happy to  
send you a packet containing the  
November 1993 Hospitality with  
an article by Dr. Ndugu T. Ofori-  
Atta and Elizabeth Dede's  
adaptation of the Christkwanza  
ritual into the Sundays of  
Advent, and a sample order of  
worship. Please send the request  
with your name and address to:  
Murphy Davis, 910 Ponce de  
Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA  
30306-4212.





# Struggle In The Streets

by Rev. Houston Wheeler

Frederick Douglass wrote these words in 1849:

If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

The moral and physical struggle to end homelessness is not going on in the corporate board rooms, nor the halls of city government, nor even in the sanctuaries of our churches. Indeed, the struggle is going on in the streets of Atlanta.

In October 1993 members of People for Urban Justice twice laid their bodies on park benches and were twice arrested to win the struggle for homeless persons to rest their bodies.

This past summer a People for Urban Justice member, Phillip Williams, was arrested for "remaining in a parking lot". The City refused to prosecute or rescind the ordinance, so the struggle is now in Federal court.

After many years of protest, the City of Atlanta next summer will finally place 10 - 25 public toilets on the streets of downtown in time for the Olympics. People for Urban Justice believes the City should rescind the laws against public urination immediately and encourage downtown businesses to welcome homeless persons to use their toilet facilities, at least until the 10 - 25 toilets arrive. The homeless shouldn't have to "hold it" for another six to twelve months.

The struggle for housing continues. Four years ago People for Urban Justice took over the Imperial Hotel and our former Mayor Maynard Jackson publicly pledged to homeless people the development of 3500 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units. Afterwards, the homeless have seen the development of Welcome House, Walton House, O'Hearn House and the Santa Fe Villas, and other facilities are being planned.

The struggle continues because the development of such housing is primarily driven by the availability of Federal dollars. But, even more Federal dollars cannot keep pace with the ever growing numbers of homeless, especially women and children. To date, local banks have been reluctant players of community reinvestment to house the homeless, claiming such SRO's are too risky. So, the struggle will more than likely intensify because the corporate and philanthropic community sees fit to invest \$50 million in a Centennial Park for the Olympics and at the same time reinvest little to house the homeless.

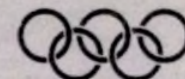
Ironically, the planners of the Centennial Park, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) and the Georgia World Congress Center Authority (i.e., State of Georgia) even hired a consultant through the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership (ANDP) to report the impact on the homeless in the area. The report, completed this summer and prepared by B. Akhaven & Associates, points out on page 50 that:

As a percentage of shelter beds, the removal of the shelters in the target area will eliminate roughly a tenth of the shelter beds in the city. This situation is exacerbated for men who constitute a larger percentage of the homeless. The removal of the shelters in the target area effectively eliminates between 16 and 19 percent of total Shelters for Men in Atlanta.

The most serious impact is on the number of Barrier-Free Shelter Beds for Men (i.e., no restrictions). Between 35.4% and 57.25%, or roughly between a third and a half of this type of shelters will be eliminated if the existing shelters in the target area are removed. The persons who fill these types of shelter beds do not have a particular health or substance abuse problem. They often have not had a particular crisis causing them to seek shelter. The persons who fall into this category do not have a particular profile except that they are.....hopeless.



Atlanta  
1996



In June of this year, at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ held in Cullman, Alabama, a small delegation of some 200 laypersons and clergy from Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama, unanimously passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS we as a Christian faith community are called to assure that all human beings are able to meet their basic needs for physical survival (Matthew 25), and

WHEREAS one of those basic needs is affordable shelter and housing, and WHEREAS the city of Atlanta government and economic interests have caused the displacement of over 100,000 of its residents over the last 40 years through urban renewal, model cities, federal highway construction and housing code enforcement creating a severe shortage of affordable shelter and housing for our homeless and low-income sisters and brothers,

AND WHEREAS the Centennial Olympic Park and other civic developments necessary to stage the 1996 Olympic Games threaten to destroy even more affordable housing without any plans for replacement of lost units or relocation of displaced people.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeast Conference Minister immediately send a letter to Daniel A. Graveline, Executive Director of the GEORGIA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER AUTHORITY and to Billy Payne and Andrew Young of the ATLANTA COMMITTEE for the OLYMPIC GAMES (ACOG) requesting that development plans related to the staging of the 1996 Olympic Games make provisions to replace on a one-to-one basis any destroyed affordable shelters and housing before any homeless or low-income person is displaced, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that by September 1, 1994, the Southeast Conference Minister will arrange a meeting with Daniel A. Graveline of the Georgia World Congress Center Authority, Billy Payne and Andrew Young of ACOG, Dorothy Gager, chairperson of the Social Justice Commission, and Houston Wheeler, chairperson of the Ga.-S.C. Social Justice Committee, for the expressed purpose of exploring ways to maintain and replace affordable shelters and housing.

In a cover letter accompanying the resolution to Billy Payne and the Rev. Andrew Young of ACOG and Daniel Graveline of the Georgia World Congress Authority, Conference Minister the Rev. Roger Knight and the Rev. Houston Wheeler stated:

Four years ago, then Mayor Maynard Jackson ended the takeover of the Imperial Hotel by promising the development of 3500 units of Single Room Occupancy housing. While everyone recognized that the promise is not legally binding, the promise does affirm a moral obligation which requires the total community to attempt to solve the problem of homelessness in a manner exhibiting fair play. This has not happened to date and is inherently contrary to the Olympic spirit. If those 3500 units had been constructed then we dare say our church members would not have passed its resolution nor would we be writing this letter.



Our meetings with ACOG and the Authority have placed heavy emphasis on the issue of financing and what responsibility the Atlanta business and philanthropic community could take to address that issue so that affordable housing for homeless persons gets developed. The specific proposal put forward is the establishment of a "security pool"--using philanthropic funds to act as loan guarantees rather than the actual capital to finance affordable SRO's. This would allow a greater multiplier effect on the use of government funds and allow conventional banks into the lending arena for these types of projects. The underlying assumption is that an "affordable SRO" can be economically developed to support debt, and that cash equity and a return on investment is available from the operation of these developments. For instance, a \$5 million security pool would be used as a revolving completion and operation guarantee for a conventional bank to make a market loan. The \$5 million would guarantee up to 10 projects in the early stages of existence (at \$500,000 each), but could guarantee more projects as the early projects reach successful stabilization and reduce the guarantee requirements with the banks.

While the security pool idea is being kicked around, homeless people are being kicked out of the Centennial Park development area. So, the struggle continues to be in the streets. It is not a pretty picture.

In conclusion, however, consider this Olympic scenario:

After all the window dressing and spending upwards of \$500 million on venues, a Centennial Park, bridges and street infrastructure, as well as police security, Jesus Christ is seen running down International Blvd. in his Nikes, looking for a place to sleep and a place to pee. However, before he even gets within sight of the Centennial Park, he is arrested and detained for 16 days during the Olympic Games.

Word begins to spread throughout the detention center that Christ has been placed in an isolation cell. Whispers go out into the community. The churches remain silent. Olympic and City officials deny that Christ has been arrested and detained. Homeless advocates have left the City and set up temporary homeless sanctuaries in the suburbs.

Suddenly, the evening before the closing ceremonies for the Olympic Games, thousands of African American homeless men, women, and children gather in the street and encircle the detention center with lighted candles. Their voices can be heard all over the City singing, "Jesus loves me, this I know."

Yes, the physical and moral struggle to end homelessness in Atlanta is in the streets. At some point, however, this struggle will indeed spill over into the corporate board rooms, the halls of city government, and even into the sanctuaries of churches --because the sheer number of homeless refugees flowing into this so called international city will become overwhelming.

In the meantime, struggle with this. If Jesus asked you three times, "Do you love me?" You would surely respond by saying "Yes", "Yes", and "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." And Jesus would then say to you three times, "House My Homeless," "House My Homeless," "House My Homeless."

*Rev. Houston Wheeler is an ordained UCC minister. He is active in leadership with People For Urban Justice.*

### A Note On Donations

We appreciate all your donations that keep us going. Please help us by bringing them only to our front door. We suggest you park in our side driveway, lock your car and come ring our doorbell. We will get folks inside to help you bring your gifts in.

Donations left at our back door usually do not get to us. Folks in our front yard may offer to help, but this causes problems for us, so we ask you to ring the bell and let us help instead.

Many thanks!



GLADYS RUSTAY

Connor Lukkar stirring soup

## The Open Door Community Needs Resident Volunteers

### Spend 6 to 12 months as a Resident Volunteer

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

Contact: Ed Loring  
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE  
Atlanta, GA 30308-4212  
404/874-9652; 874-7964 (FAX)

We have a special need  
for shoes size 12 and 13.





# Sonya

by Murphy Davis

Eighteen months or so ago, a woman in her twenties arrived for her first time to ride on the Hardwick trip with her two small children. On that day and on one Saturday each month for the next year, Sonya arrived promptly at the Marta station pickup to ride with us. After a two-hour drive, we arrived at the Milledgeville Presbyterian church where we formed a circle, introduced ourselves, gave thanks and then sat down to share a good meal together. Refreshed and relaxed, we left for the prison where Sonya's husband was serving a sentence. She and the two children walked into the prison, showed identification, walked through metal detectors, waited, and finally sat down for a two-hour visit with their husband and father. When we picked them up, the children always bounced happily into the van, chattering with news of their daddy. Sonya always had a smile on her face.



**HARDWICK TRIP**  
Lena Anderson and her grandchildren enjoy time at the 1st Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville before visiting at the prison.

After a year of the family riding with us on the prison trip, Sonya's husband was released from prison. She wrote us a letter, telling of his homecoming, thanking us for the many rides, and sending a contribution from her tiny income for the continuation of our ministry.

It seems like a small thing. Because of the willingness of churches to offer their vans and individuals their cars; because of the countless volunteers who give a day of their time once a month, or once in a while; because of the twelfth year of hospitality of the Milledgeville Presbyterian church... Because of all this, one family managed to stay together. The daddy got out of prison and his children knew who he was and eagerly jumped up to cling on his neck. The wife and husband had a monthly visit to share news and decisions, discuss their lives, and dream together. The end of a prison sentence for one family meant coming home instead of wandering into the midst of strangers.

Our ministry brings us the privilege of witnessing these "small" miracles. The story of the Brown family is repeated again and again. Sometimes, of course, the stories do not have happy endings. But month after month, year after year, as the mood of our society grows more and more punitive toward people like the Browns, we are privileged, as Gospel people, to take part in God's good word/work of "liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and healing and restoration to the broken victims."

## Prison Visiting Room



Veronica Compton  
Woman in Prison

by Murphy Davis

Lovers sit on plastic chairs at a table close as they can get under the confines of the circumstances. The air in the small spaces between faces, shoulders, hands and thighs aches like a throbbing magnet. How much touch to risk under the sharp eye of the guard on duty? How long, how deep the embrace before a harsh reprimand?

The bouncing seven-year old frame crashes into his mother's lap and presses into her carefully ironed brown uniform. Quickly relaxing, he sinks deep, deep, deep into the warm canyon between her elbow and breast.

Three newborns in the visiting room at once today. (Each sailed into the world within the last few weeks on a cloud of pitocin to suit the schedule of the prison-contract obstetrician.) New mothers beam, each wanting, no doubt, to parade the room showing off with pride to each set of visitors. But rules forbid: no mingling allowed; one set of visitors per table. Grandmothers relax for a moment, happy for the brief respite.

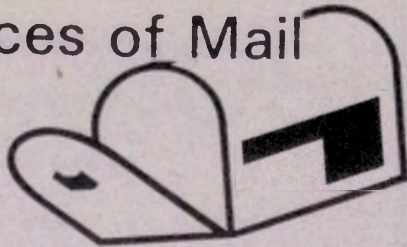
There is no ritual for the parting.



Veronica Compton  
Woman in Prison



# Grace and Peaces of Mail



Dear Partner in the Faith,

I was reading James 2 today, and it jogged me into remembering to put my faith and actions together, and that it had been quite a while since I had sent you a check.

It is always good to read your prophetic word in Hospitality. Thank you for what you are doing in our community.

Peace,

Martha Mattes  
Roswell, GA

Dear friends at the Open Door,

Thank you very much for your hospitality during my recent visit last week. I learned a lot by working and talking with each of you, and just by being part of your community for 5 days. Each of you clearly brings special gifts to the Open Door, those you serve, and each other, and thank you for sharing those gifts with me.

I am enclosing a newsletter prepared by the street youth of Youth Outreach and a check toward your efforts at the Open Door.

Mahalo a nui loa. [Thank you very much]

'O au iho no me ke aloha, [I am with love]

George Harris  
Honolulu, HI

Hello Mr. Loring,

Still here at Fulton County Jail and doing OK. I pray that every one is well and in good spirits. There were two inmates who tried to kill themselves on Saturday--two young guys. You know there are a lot of mixed feelings about that.

I am thankful that I have God who tells me there's always hope. You know I look at my life and I become discouraged in a lot of ways, but I have faith that God will work everything out. I can't begin to tell you what a big help you are Mr. Loring. Ed, in a place like this a person sometimes finds himself. I realize the way I was living my life was wrong. For the first time, I truly feel that all of that is over for me. I don't want to go back to that type of life. I know it won't be easy to stay on the right road but I am going to do it.

Well, my friend, as always after writing you, I feel a little better than I did. I will pray for you and everyone over there. Please pray for me and everyone here. The young man I spoke about in my last letter says to tell you "hello", and he would like to visit with you the next time you come to the jail. He has been here as long as I have. He wants to know if it's alright to drop you a line (letter)--you know hip talk. So write me back and let me know if you found out anything, and if it's OK for Robert to write you. I will close my letter now. And I ask for a special prayer as I become frustrated and impatient as weeks go on. Please pray and ask the Lord to be with me. Take care of yourself and God bless you and yours!

Respectfully,

Calvin Smith  
Atlanta, GA

Dear Mayor Campbell:

I am enclosing an excerpt from the August issue of Hospitality, a publication of the Open Door Community in Atlanta. The article is regarding Underground Atlanta, and the section I have highlighted for your consideration concerns the Al Smith Park.

I recall reading a while back about the Al Smith Park, and I assumed that by now it was a reality--a place where people in our city without homes "could sit and rest throughout the day undisturbed." I know that physical exhaustion and sleep deprivation are some of the greatest obstacles for the homeless. I have driven by the places that serve the homeless and seen the tired men standing and waiting.

I have also enclosed a copy of a letter from the same publication regarding Dallas' "clean up" of the city for the World Cup. It reminds me of the Olympics coming to Atlanta and how the plight of the homeless will undoubtedly be worsened. They will need a place of rest more than ever.

Please let me know what has become of the park and if indeed it will ever come to be. I appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Peggy L. Davis  
Atlanta, GA

Dear Hospitality,

I met Bruce Bishop in Iowa City during the American/ Soviet Peace Walk. I appreciate the 1994 calendar (which he designed).

I really look forward to your monthly paper, and appreciate the wonderful work you do.

Margaret Baldwin  
Iowa City, IA





### 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), November 25-27

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

### Open Door Community Needs

JEANS  
T-Shirts  
Men's Work Shirts  
Men's Underwear  
Blankets  
Healthy Breakfast Cereal  
Quick Grits  
Cheese  
Mayonnaise  
Multi-Vitamins  
MARTA Tokens  
Postage Stamps  
Men's Large Shoes (12-14)  
Coffee  
Non-Aerosol Deodorant  
Toothbrushes  
Toothpaste  
Vaseline  
Disposable Razors  
Shampoo  
Socks  
Washcloths  
Sandwiches  
TV for watching videos  
Throw Rugs  
Twin Mattresses  
Shrubs for Backyard Plantings  
Infant Car Seats

*From 11am til 1:30pm, Monday through Saturday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. THANK YOU!*

### Open Door Community Worship

*We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5:00pm on Sunday evenings followed by supper together.*

*Please join us!*

- November 6    Worship at 910
- November 13    Worship at 910 ; Rev. Fred Taylor preaching
- November 20    Worship at 910
- Nov. 25 - 27    ChristKwanza in Advent  
Retreat at Dayspring Farm
- December 4    ChristKwanza in Advent  
Worship at 910
- December 11    ChristKwanza in Advent  
Worship at 910
- December 18    ChristKwanza in Advent  
Worship at 910; Service of Lessons & Cards
- December 24    Christmas Eve  
Communion  
7:30pm
- (No Community worship on Sunday, December 25)



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!*