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

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September 2001

Meeting Christ at the Open Door

by Brian Terrell

(Editor's note: Brian Terrell lives with his wife Betsy and their two children, at the Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm in Maloy, Iowa. Brian began his journey as a Catholic Worker when he went to Maryhouse in New York as a nineteen-year old in 1976. We were helped by his presence and his teaching while he was with us in July. As a Benedictine oblate, Brian has made a particular study of the Benedictine roots of the Catholic Worker movement.)

In July I answered a gracious invitation to visit the Open Door Community in Atlanta for two weeks. I was invited specifically to join in the work of the house and to reflect with residents there on my experience of the Catholic Worker movement in various cities and rural places over the past twenty-five years. One morning during my visit, the mostly orderly flow of homeless guests being served a sumptuous breakfast in the dining room at the Open Door was briefly interrupted. One hungry guest knelt before the serving table and profusely thanked the volunteers behind the table for the grits, the eggs, the bread, the fruit, and the sausages they were serving. There followed a quiet and awkward moment, hosts and guests equally embarrassed and humbled, so it seemed to me, by this excessive expression of gratitude. The awkward moment was broken by a young resident volunteer who approached this guest and went down next to him on one knee, thanking *him*, in turn, for joining the community for breakfast. Both smiled, helped the other up, and shook hands; then the serving resumed.

With this graceful and unselfconscious gesture, the fragile dignity of a hungry man was respected. The gesture was also an unusually dramatic illustration of the faith and theology behind Catholic Worker hospitality. A common fixture of most Catholic Worker kitchens, the Open Door included, is a print of a wood cut by Fritz Eichenberg called "Christ of the Breadline." The print depicts Jesus, not as one serving food to the poor, as one might expect, but as one among the many poor and ragged waiting in line for food.

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PHOTOS BY GLADYS RUSTAY

Ronnie - In The Embrace of God

by Murphy Davis

Ronnie loved our parties more than anything. Weeks and even months ahead of time he would start to inquire: "We gonna have a Mardi Gras party, aren't we? We gonna dance, right? Will you dance with me? You remember the last party when we danced, right?" He was always ready to dress up and declare a special occasion. When he came for worship on Sunday nights, he often wore a tuxedo shirt and cummerbund, and sometimes he found a gold lamee jacket or a sequined vest to complete the outfit. Around Christmas, he always managed to find a Santa Claus hat. But whatever the costume, he wore it with panache and he knew that we had to make the celebrations as we went along.

Ronnie died sometime between night and morning on July 28. He had been doing odd jobs for the folks at a sleazy bar in the neighborhood. The rumor on the streets is that they paid him with liquor. We were dismayed to see Ronnie drinking more in the last few years, and it meant that we had to lay down some particular rules about his visits to the community. Like everybody else, Ronnie couldn't come through the door if he had been drinking. Sounded simple enough, but Dick Rustay, who was Ronnie's designated "friendly supervisor" for the community, had to keep a sharp eye out. Ronnie often thought that if he grinned and tucked his head mischievously to the side, we might not notice that he had alcohol on his breath. When Dick had to say, "Ronnie, you've been drinking. You know you can't

come in tonight," Ronnie would turn away sheepishly and say, "All right, Dick, all right." But most of the time when Ronnie came for Sunday evening worship or to help us with a special meal or celebration, he would bound through the door and charge around from one person to the next greeting everyone and introducing himself to new folks. He would most often say, "Hi, I'm Ronnie. I help out here at the Open Door. They say I'm a good worker."

And help out, he did. We've known Ronnie as long as we've been on Ponce de Leon. When we came here in 1981, our neighborhood had many personal care homes where folks like Ronnie could live out of their meager disability checks. There were many retarded adults and many who were mentally ill who lived in large homes and apartment buildings that had been divided up into semi-supervised living quarters for those who needed a little help to get along. Most of those places are now gone. Large homes and buildings that accommodated 40-50 people have been renovated and sold as single-family dwellings or condominiums. Ronnie continued to live in one of the few personal care homes that remain. It was good to have him close by so that he could continue to see the Open Door as a "home base."

As we have come to understand his story, Ronnie was born in the Dakotas. When he was six years old, the family planned a trip to Florida. They drove as far as downtown Atlanta. When they stopped the car and Ronnie got out, he thought they

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Meeting Christ

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Jesus' presence among us in the poor is an old but little recognized or celebrated concept, rooted in the Gospel: "Whatever you do for the least of these my brothers and sisters, you do for me."

Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day, founders of the Catholic Worker movement in 1933, often recalled the admonitions about guests in St. Benedict's sixth-century rule for monasteries: "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for He Himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matt. 25:35), and "Great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because it is in them more particularly Christ is received."

Dorothy also often quoted Francois Mauriac, a contemporary French novelist: "...for Jesus is disguised and masked in the midst of men and women, hidden among the poor, among the sick, among prisoners, among strangers." Dorothy even insisted that the only real atheist is the one who refuses to see the face of God in the poor.

When Catholics approach the Eucharist it is customary to genuflect, to go down on one knee, in recognition of what we believe to be the real presence of Christ there in the sacrament. I could not help but see in the event at the Open Door breakfast a similar gesture with a similar meaning, unconscious and unintended as it was. With a bend of the knee the real presence of Christ was recognized and adored for a sacramental moment in the person of a hungry stranger in the dining room at the Open Door house of hospitality.

Sometimes called the "Protestant Catholic Worker" house, the Open Door Community does a lot of preaching, more than occurs at most "Catholic Catholic Worker" houses. The preaching, however, is never directed at the poor, who are not proselytized but welcomed as guests. Many "faith based initiatives" that give aid to the poor could be said to use a bed or a meal as bait to get a hold on poor people's bodies in order to convert their souls. This strategy seems to be based on a totally unbiblical notion that poor folks, rather than being the image of Christ, are in more particular need of evangelizing than the well-to-do. Catholic Workers do not serve the poor to bring Jesus to them, but to

find Jesus in them. We seek not to convert those who come to the door in need, but seek the conversion of ourselves and of our society through them. If we take Jesus at His word that to serve the poor and suffering is to serve Him, then what effrontery, what arrogance, to try to convert Jesus!

The preaching at the Open Door is directed to its own members first of all, to society at large, and to those who come to give or to volunteer. It is probably not a sound fund raising technique to



TONNIE KING

Brian Terrell recently spent two weeks at the Open Door. He worked hard and also led us in several powerful reflections on the life and work of the Catholic Worker Movement.

harangue ones' benefactors, but few come to help serve a meal without hearing about "this filthy rotten system" (Dorothy's words) and their place in it. Everyone is offered instead the better vision of Jesus' beloved community and the new heaven and new earth seen by Isaiah.

I have never been part of any community that was so intentional in the education of its volunteers. Bible study is held before serving breakfast, and the experience of serving is reflected upon

afterwards in the light of that morning's lesson. The Bible is a living word, so talk of wages for day laborers, sanctions against Iraq, the price that agribusiness exacts from the few remaining African American family farmers, racial and sexual discrimination, and the availability of public toilets are all relevant and necessary to the study of scripture. A stay at the Open Door, as at other Catholic Worker houses, is educational, but not academic. Issues that look mundane and insipid from a classroom or from the pages of a newspaper take on meaning and urgency when one is living among people directly affected by those issues.

The Open Door Community, for example, has befriended many on Georgia's death row. Consequently, during my visit the macabre case before the Georgia Supreme Court—the court deciding whether execution using electrical shock constitutes cruel and unusual punishment—could not be ignored as irrelevant. Lawyers defending many of the men and women on death row also volunteer at the Open Door, giving professional and compassionate perspective to the issue. Dostoyevsky said that to know all you need to know about any society it is necessary only to visit its prisons. He did not know about Catholic Worker houses, but I am sure that the same thing goes for them as well.

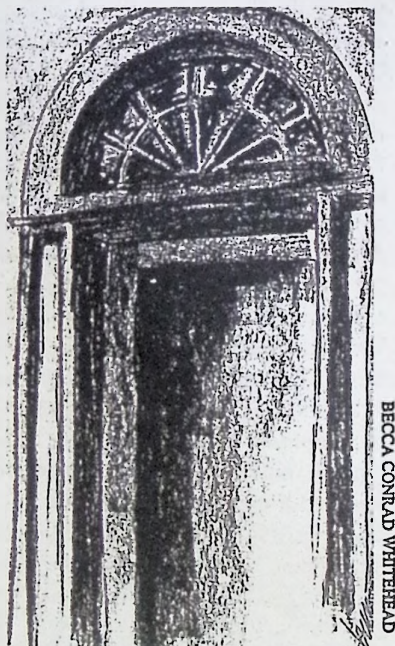
It was a privilege to travel to a strange city and find a welcome in a place which the prevailing society, the empire, would call the bottom of the heap. I have never been to Atlanta before, but I feel confident that from the Open Door I got a clearer and less obstructed view of this beautiful and troubled city than I ever could have received by staying the same two weeks in any of the tower hotels and condos where the rich and powerful live. I am also quite sure that I had a better time.

Living the Catholic Worker life for the long haul is not easy (it is not for nothing that Dorothy Day's autobiography is titled *The Long Loneliness*), but it is immensely rich. The promise of Jesus that anyone who gives up home and family for the sake of the kingdom will get back a hundredfold homes and families "in this life" makes no sense to those who haven't tried it, but it is a living reality for those who have. At the Open Door in Atlanta I rejoice to have found one of those homes and families that I have coming to me.

HOSPITALITY

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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Open Door Community

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were all coming along. Suddenly the car door slammed behind him, his parents' car drove away, and Ronnie never saw his biological family again. The rest of his "growing up" was moving from place to place, institution to institution, foster care to personal care. As time moved along, he was forever a small child trapped in a man's body. What never changed was that his needs were insatiable. Is it any wonder that he simply *could not get* enough reassurance or affection? One reason he loved to come to the community was that we were glad on many occasions for him to take the roles that children naturally tend to love. Every time a birthday cake was prepared with the candles he begged, "Can I take it out? Can I do it?" At the completion of any task he would implore, "Did I do good?"

Abandonment at such a young age was not the only cruel blow in Ronnie's life. His last name was Rude. Ronnie Rude. We simply refused to call him that. Early on, we decided to make his name French and spell it with an accent on the final "e." So to us, he was always "Ronnie Roo-day." It seemed okay with him.

One of Ronnie's many remarkable qualities was that he never, ever forgot someone who showed him special attention or care. The prayers in the supper circle or the intercessory prayers on Sunday night were always a time for Ronnie to remember a beloved friend. "Liz," his special name for Elizabeth Dede, was always lifted up, whether she was present or not. But there were so many names out of the past. Ronnie remembered people who were important to him, even if they might not have made a major impression on the rest of the community. In the mid-1980's we had a young resident volunteer named Andy. During Andy's last week with us, his friend Felicia came to spend a few days. Felicia must have been particularly kind to Ronnie, because for several years Ronnie would shout out during prayer time, "And let's don't forget about Felicia!" Often others in the circle would say, "Who's Felicia?" And we would recall a young woman who, among the hundreds of people who had come and gone, remained in Ronnie's special memory file.

He also never forgot some other things that we might have wished he could let go. Every year for Halloween, we all dress up to be as scary as possible. As you might imagine, this is not a difficult task at the Open Door. My personal preference is to be a witch. The first year that I dressed as a witch, Ronnie was astonished. He stood and stared at my frazzled whitened hair, my black pointy hat and the mole that I had carefully constructed on my

wrinkled nose, and he didn't quite know what to make of it. Finally he clapped one hand over his mouth, pointed his finger and bellowed, "WITCH!" From that day forward, Ronnie was likely to blurt out that same word at the most unlikely and inauspicious moments. Visitors were often puzzled if not embarrassed when Ronnie would come into the room and greet me (never quietly!) with, "There's the Old Witch!" Sometimes I would laugh and try to make it sound better by saying, "Tee-hee.

Ronnie never forgets Halloween, you know." But the worst was the time I got onto a MARTA bus. As I was dropping my



It is to just such as these that the kingdom of God belongs

coins into the fare box, I heard from the back of the bus in his loudest voice, "Hey, Old Witch!" I stood there for a minute trying to figure out how to disappear as every face on the bus turned toward me with an expression like, "Oooo-she must be really BAD!" Finally I just smiled and shouted back, "Hi Ronnie, dear!"

Ronnie was known all over the city. He volunteered regularly at Trinity Methodist's Sunday afternoon meal for the homeless and was a constant presence at St. Francis' Table, the Saturday lunch at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Many, I am sure, have not yet heard of his death. For there were no "surviving family members," and we were called only because of the care of a friend who once helped Ronnie manage his disability check. Dick is in the process now of claiming Ronnie's body so that we might have him cremated and scatter his ashes in a service of thanksgiving. We will always claim him as one of us.

An Irish friend once told me that the Gaelic term for a retarded person meant "one who belongs to God." We know that this is true. Ronnie was abandoned at an early age and he never really "belonged" to anyone again. But we know he belonged, in a very special way, to God. And now he rests, his needs for recognition and love fully satisfied at last, in the loving embrace of God.

Murphy Davis is a partner at the Open Door.

The New Jerusalem

Isaiah 65: 17-25

by Syc Pressley, a.k.a. "Preacher"

Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Thy will be done, yes thy Kingdom is coming. For death, hunger and homelessness shall and will cease to exist. The new Jerusalem that God (Yahweh) is making shall be full of Joy, because there will be no more racism, sexism, or classism.

Yes, Love will be the foundation of our Joy. For we shall be happy, for there will be no more pain or suffering. And Yahweh's Joy, Jerusalem and her people (us) kept their eyes on Jesus and kept their faith. For we know one day Jesus will come again – and come again he will. Just think, no more mothers weeping for welfare, food stamps, decent housing or weeping for herself or children because they have been and are being abused. Babies shall not die of hunger, the elements, abuse, or lack of medical care. Those that live to be one hundred will do so because worrying takes that part of life that was meant to be lived, (or spiritually) to die before that time is Yahweh's punishment for those who still meant to hold on to the ideal of the old Jerusalem. Yes, we will build houses for the communities. Yes, Our Beloved Community, houses that shall accommodate all regardless of race, creed, color, and sexual orientation, for we are all God's children. We shall and will get to live in them, not like before, where we built condos, penthouses, lofts, and places for the rich. And then when we were finished, we said, "Boy, I sure wish that I could live in one of those one day."

The houses that we shall build we will live in: no more cat holes, no more shelters, no more abandoned buildings, no more under bridges, no more, no more. Thy Beloved Community, the new creation, the new Jerusalem. Yes, my sisters and brothers, we will plant vineyards and enjoy the new wine that others (enemies of Yahweh's children) shall not drink. Like trees, we will live long lives, only because we shall be rooted in the Lord Jesus. Yes, thy kingdom come, a new Jerusalem. All the work that we shall do will be successful because we will be safe from the Evil One(s). Yes, we shall enjoy the things we have worked for.

Thy Beloved Community on earth as it is in Heaven. And our children will not meet with disasters: no more broken homes, addicted parents, or separation from family, loved ones, mother, father, sisters or brothers. No more crying there, yes, no more crying there. Even before we finish praying, Yahweh shall supply all of our needs according to Yahweh's riches and glory.

Come Lord Jesus, come; and come he will. In fact he is already here – just look in our backyard. The wolves and the lambs shall eat together. The ones that used to oppress: the racist ones, the ones who used to be unjust, and yes, even the ones who lived off our blood, sweat and tears, shall all sit down at the banquet table with the Lamb. All of God's children. Yes, the Lord is our Shepherd. Surely, Goodness and Mercy has at last found us, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Come, my Beloved Community, for no more shall we fear the Evil One. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King: we will, we will, we will.

Syc Pressley is a resident at the Open Door.

Jim Crow Justice:

Alive and Well in Swainsboro

by Cathryn E. Stewart

(Editor's Note: Cathryn E. Stewart, Assistant Clinical Professor and Staff Attorney of the Legal Aid Clinic at the Northwestern University School of Law, was in Swainsboro, Georgia, on June 1, 2001, and observed two probation revocation proceedings held in succession before Judge Walter McMillan in the Superior Court. One involved an African-American man without a lawyer. The other involved a white woman with a lawyer. This is Prof. Stewart's description of the proceedings.)

The disadvantage of being poor and African-American was apparent in two proceedings, held back-to-back, in the Superior Court in Swainsboro, Georgia, on June 1.

Irving Cyril Higgs, age 34, who came before the court for a probation revocation hearing is African-American, like almost all of the people crowding the hallways, waiting in the lock-up, and sitting in the courtroom pews as Judge Walter C. McMillan presides over the criminal cases. Judge McMillan and all but one of the courtroom employees are white.

Mr. Higgs had been placed on probation and banished from the county after pleading guilty in July, 1998 to driving on a suspended license and obstruction of an officer. He was sentenced to five years probation.

The prosecutor opened the proceedings by explaining to the judge that Mr. Higgs was charged with returning to the county and being publicly intoxicated, in violation of his probation. The prosecutor then asked the judge for a continuance, explaining that he was not ready to proceed on the hearing because the arresting officer had failed to come to court.

Judge McMillan turned to Mr. Higgs. He did not explain to Mr. Higgs that the prosecutor was not ready to prove that he violated his probation. He did not explain that the State has the burden of presenting evidence to prove the violation. He did not explain that Mr. Higgs had a constitutional right not to speak. Instead, Judge McMillan simply asked Mr. Higgs if he had an attorney and if he had anything to say.

Mr. Higgs, who did not have a lawyer, began by explaining that he moved to Florida immediately after being placed on probation and never intended to return to Swainsboro. Upon his move, his case was transferred to a probation officer in Miami. Recently, his cousin wrecked Mr.

Higgs's car in Swainsboro and the people holding it would release it only to Mr. Higgs. Before coming to the county, Mr. Higgs checked with the probation department in Miami and received approval to return to Swainsboro.

When the Judge challenged Mr. Higgs's account, Mr. Higgs said, "I cannot call my probation officer collect to come here and testify. How can I prove anything? I am incarcerated. If you would let me get home to get [my probation papers] or call my Florida probation officer. . ."

Judge McMillan cut him off. "All I want is proof that you had permission to come to Emmanuel County."

"I just wanted to get my car and come home."

"Do you want to take the stand and swear to this?"

"Yes."

Turning to the prosecutor, Judge McMillan said, "It looks to me like you don't need that officer to come in and testify. He is admitting that he was in the county—and that's enough. Do you want to go ahead on this and just forget the Public Intoxication? You don't need it."

Smiling at the judge, the prosecutor agreed to go forward.

Judge McMillan then admonished Mr. Higgs that he had a right not to testify and asked him if he wanted to waive that right. After stating that he did, Mr. Higgs was sworn as a witness.

"Should I start at the beginning?" Mr. Higgs asked.

"Whatever you want," replied Judge McMillan.

Mr. Higgs began by explaining the circumstances leading up to his probation: he was taken to jail, where he waited for six months without seeing a judge or an attorney. After about two months, he got

Lovett Bennett, a lawyer who had a fixed-fee contract to handle the cases of all the poor people coming before the court, on the phone. Mr. Bennett promised to come and see him, but did not come for months.

Mr. Higgs said that he was innocent and could have won his case. However, by the time Mr. Bennett finally came to the jail, it was easy for him to convince Mr. Higgs to plead guilty. "He told me that if I went to trial I could get three sentences, and

I'd have to wait even longer." Mr. Higgs explained that he just wanted to get out of jail, leave the county, and never come back.

Mr. Higgs pleaded guilty to the charges and moved to Miami. He married his girlfriend and got not one, but two jobs. He began building his credit and his family.

Almost three years later, he received the phone call from his cousin regarding the wrecked car. Mr. Higgs explained that he still owed three thousand dollars on the car's note. He described the unsuccessful efforts he made from Miami to obtain the car's release. When it became clear that his car would only be released if he came to Swainsboro, he contacted his probation officer in Miami. Mr. Higgs said that the probation officer checked the computer files and said he could make the trip. Acting on this permission from his Florida probation officer, Mr. Higgs returned to Swainsboro.

After his arrival, Mr. Higgs was in his uncle's front yard when the police came by. According to Mr. Higgs, "They didn't have any business to be there. I told them that we weren't doing anything wrong and to let us go about our business." The officer's response was to handcuff Mr. Higgs and say, "OK, you are intoxicated," and then throw him to the ground. Mr. Higgs denied that he was intoxicated.

Mr. Higgs then said to the judge, "My family is in Miami. I am not selling drugs. I am not breaking any laws. I just want to get back to my family. I just want to get my car . . . stay working . . . keep up my payments . . . I am trying to get my life together, build my credit. I never wanted to come back to this town—I wasn't treated right here . . . Judge, you will never see me in Swainsboro again. I'll sign a paper today, right now, promising never to come back. If I come back I'll stay in prison for five years. I have two jobs in Miami. . ."

Judge McMillan interrupted him, "You are repeating yourself. You got anything else to say?"

When Mr. Higgs stated that he did not have anything to add, the Judge asked the prosecutor if he had any questions of the defendant. The prosecutor said that he did not think it was necessary to ask any additional questions.

The judge had some questions: "Did you know you were banished?"

"No. It was over. I thought it was over."

"Why did you think that? Who signed that your banishment is over? Who signed it? Did the judge? The probation officer? Cause as far as I know, unless you have a signed order from a judge or something, you are still under this court order. Where is your piece of paper?"

Mr. Higgs said that his probation officer in Florida could verify that he had permission to return to Swainsboro, but he could not call her collect from the jail. At one point, he stated her name and asked the judge to call her. The judge responded by asking him why he didn't just go to a different county and

have them bring the car to him and then cut Mr. Higgs off as he tried to explain once again that this was not an option.

Judge McMillan then allowed the prosecution to call its next witness—the Swainsboro probation officer who was originally assigned to Mr. Higgs's case before his move to Florida. As the probation officer was taking the stand, Mr. Higgs, who was sitting at the defense table, suddenly jerked his head as if he had just realized something and said, "Wait. Are you Judge McMillan?"

"What? Yes, what?"

"Ohhh! They all told me, they all told me that if you was my judge, I am going to prison."

"What? Who told you that?"

"Everyone. Everyone in the lock-up said that. Ah, now I know. Wasn't any point in doing this. I may as well go to jail right now."

Judge McMillan got visibly angry and told the defendant to be quiet. The prosecutor began questioning the probation officer. She began to explain the conditions of Mr. Higgs's term of probation: he was placed on probation in July, 1998, and could not return to the county until July, 2003.

Still seated, Mr. Higgs turned to the gallery, gripped the hand of his cousin, who was seated behind him, and said quietly to him, "Take care, man. I'm not going to see you for a long time." He then stood up and said, "Bruce [the sheriff], take me to jail. I can't see this anymore. I cannot take this. Take me back to jail. No reason to be here. I'm getting railroaded. I been railroaded from the beginning. A man can't be a man here without going to jail. In the State of Georgia, you are guilty until proven innocent."

The Judge yelled that if the defendant couldn't be quiet, he was going to have him gagged.

"Just take me to jail. That's where I am

going anyway." Mr. Higgs then walked out of the courtroom with the sheriff.

The prosecutor finished questioning the Swainsboro probation officer and then made his final argument. He did not say that Mr. Higgs had an extensive criminal history, or that he had ever violated probation before. There was nothing said about any criminal behavior other than the charges

to which Mr. Higgs had pleaded guilty three years before. The prosecutor did not say that he thought Mr. Higgs was a danger to society. The prosecutor told the Judge that he did not even know why Mr. Higgs was banished, but "he was banished and he came back." Based on this single fact, the prosecutor asked that the judge impose the remainder of Mr. Higgs's sentence: two years and two months in prison.

Judge McMillan then announced his finding that Mr. Higgs had violated his probation and would be sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. He stated with apparent regret that while he would like to impose the full sentence, he was restricted from doing so by some new case law. The Judge then turned to the sheriff, "Tell him to come back in and not disrupt. I'll gag him if he does."

The sheriff replied, "He don't want to come back in."

"Well, put chains on him and gag him and bring him back in."

Mr. Higgs returned. Judge McMillan imposed the sentence. The next case was called.

The next person to appear before Judge McMillan was a white woman also charged with a violation of probation. The woman had a lawyer. She had been placed on intensive probation in March 2001 for possession of amphetamines, and she had violated her probation just three months later by committing the same offense again. In fact, she was found in possession of amphetamines at the police station where she was performing her community service.

After the prosecutor stated the facts of this violation of probation, the lawyer for the woman stood up and said, "Judge, she was caught red-handed, but she has learned her lesson. She is just asking for one more chance." After very little discussion, Judge McMillan gave her that chance. While Mr. Higgs waited alone in the lock-up to be carted off to prison for two years, the woman, teary eyed, hugged her attorney and prepared to return home.



DAN KROVIN

The Power of a Pen: Listening in on "Dubya" at the TEXAS GOVERNOR'S MANSION

(reprinted from *City Justice*, no. 25)

An aide abruptly appeared with papers he held out to the Governor. "It's the death warrants to sign, Governor. There are two executions scheduled for tonight." Absentmindedly, the Governor took the offered pen. But in mid-signature he lifted his hand. He looked hard at his aide. "They're not white, are they?"

The aide flashed a nervous smile.

"Governor," he asked, "would we do that to you?" "It's not a woman either, is it? I'm not executing

any more damn women. That one—I was getting telegrams from as far away as Bolivia. What the damn Bolivians or anyone else in Europe know about law and order in Texas I can't imagine."

The aide reassured him. "Both prisoners are male, Governor. One's black and one's Hispanic. Nothing out of the ordinary."

Pacified, Bush nodded. "That's OK then," he said. In an instant the aide retrieved the signed

warrants and was gone.

The exchange above was witnessed by a tour group at the Texas Governor's mansion and has been recounted by multiple sources, including Saab Loftong of *L.V. City Life* and Lucious Lomax of *The Texas Observer*. John M Swamley, a professor of social ethics at St. Paul School of Theology and a writer for *The Humanist*, is the source of this version.



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FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION

Notes From Hebron

by JoAnne Lingle

(Editor's Note: JoAnne Lingle is a former Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. She has returned from Hebron to her home in Indianapolis, Indiana, where she plans to stay for several months before returning to Hebron to continue her work.)

My time in Hebron has gone by quickly. I am here as a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), living in Hebron with six to eight other team members.

CPT is an initiative of the Mennonite Church, Church of the Brethren, and Friends Meetings. When invited, CPT goes to areas of conflict to offer organized nonviolent alternatives to war and other forms of lethal conflict. Currently, CPT has a presence in Colombia, South America; Chiapas, Mexico; New Brunswick, Canada; and Hebron, West Bank. Although there is not a permanent presence in Vieques, Puerto Rico, CPT takes delegations there several times a year.

In Hebron, beginning in June, 1995, CPT has had two apartments in the old city market in the *souq ajaj* (Chicken St). Within several blocks of our apartment, there are four Israeli settlements and a Yeshiva (a religious school for boys). This area (H2) is under Israeli military control and is populated by 30,000 Palestinians, 400 Israeli settlers, and 2,000 Israeli soldiers. Although the IDF is here to protect the settlers, the settlers carry Uzis and M-16s while walking in the street. Even teenagers are well armed. They believe this land belongs to Jews, given to them by God, and their stated goal is that all Palestinians should leave. It is easy to understand why Hebron is one of the most conflicted cities in the West Bank.

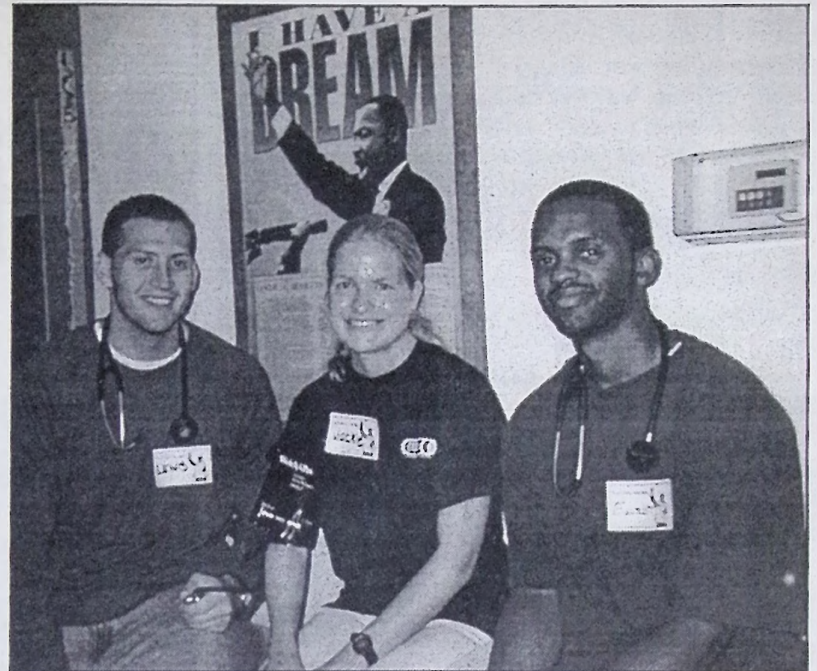
We greet soldiers and settlers with a smile and "Shalom." The soldiers often return the greeting, sometimes even engaging in conversation. If the settlers speak at all, they typically say, "This is our land and we want you to leave." They call us names like "Nazi" and "Christian whore." We have been pushed, kicked, spat upon, and threatened by settlers. When I was here in 1998 we received death threats from them, both in person and by email.

For the past two days, I have been staying in Beit Ummer (about 7 miles from Hebron) with another CPTer. When we heard that fifteen Palestinian homes received demolition orders, we came to visit the families and to urge people in North America to contact President Bush, Colin Powell, and Israeli leaders to protest the violence of home demolitions. These are homes of ordinary Palestinian families who build on their land or, in some cases, simply have added a room or repaired a roof. They receive demolition orders because building permits are uniformly denied to Palestinians in Occupied Territories. New Israeli settlements continue to be built and expanded in the West Bank, even though some settlements have vacancies of fifty percent or more. So much for the Mitchell



by Tonnie King

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the change in leadership of the Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic. Lewis Satterwhite, left, and Elliott Wade, right, have taken over the responsibility of coordinating the doctors and medical students that staff the weekly clinic at the Open Door. These two young men, pictured here with our previous coordinator Jackie Harztler, center, have done a great job this summer. Even though Emory Medical School has been out of session for the past three months, they have managed to have a full staff each week. They provide quality care for our friends who live outside as well as for community members with healthcare needs. We applaud their willingness to take over the leadership when Jackie's educational responsibilities became too demanding for her to lead the clinic. Both Lewis and Elliot have stepped into the leadership role and are developing the clinic in new and exciting ways. We appreciate the way that they love and care for our homeless friends in the spirit of liberation that Harriet Tubman inspires.



HANNAH LORING-DAVIS

Tonnie King is a partner at the Open Door.

Report on a settlement freeze.

On one of our family visits there was an old man sitting in his yard crying. I asked his son what was happening. He said the man heard there was more bombing in Ramallah, and his brother-in-law was working there. The old man was afraid his brother-in-law would be killed. He cried on and off the entire time. At other visits we heard there was a large construction crew in Ramallah from Beit Ummer, and many families were worried when they heard about the bombing. Last night we saw F-16s flying overhead in Beit Ummer shooting at flares for practice, as if to say "You may be next."

The violence continues. Besides home demolitions, there are bombings, collective punishment such as closures and curfews, and the humiliation of ID checks and checkpoints. There have been Israeli assassinations of five Palestinians recently (although it was acknowledged they were the "wrong" people), a Palestinian suicide bomber in Netanya Israel, followed by F-16s firing missiles in the West Bank cities of Ramallah, Nablus, and Tulkarm, as well as in Gaza.

Today the IDF shelled two Palestinian neighborhoods in Hebron. A hospital and an elementary school were hit at about 11 a.m. I don't yet know the extent of the suffering, but I continue to wonder when the international community will speak out about these war crimes.

On the up-side—if one is to be found—there are a number of Israeli peace groups that are protesting the settlements, the occupation, and the escalation of Israeli military violence. We have

participated in several Israeli and Palestinian demonstrations. In the planning now are a peace camp near a military base, an action at a Bethlehem check point, and an international vigil sponsored by Women in Black calling for an end to the occupation.

May God's peace come to all people in this land soon. *Inshallah.*

Volunteer Needs

- Groups to make sandwiches for Soup Kitchen
- People to cook or bring supper for the Community on occasional Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays
- People to answer the phone and door, various mornings or afternoons during the week (9a.m.-noon, 2-6p.m., training provided)

For more information, call Phil Leonard at 404-874-4906, or email him at pleon2000@mindspring.com.



Third Annual Frederick Douglass Taylor Human Rights Award

In July, 1999, The Open Door Community established the Frederick Douglass Taylor Human Rights Award to honor Rev. Fred Taylor's thirty years of service with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The award especially honors individuals who have worked diligently and faithfully "behind the scenes" for the cause of human rights.

This year we were honored to present the Taylor award to Elizabeth Dede, who was a partner at the Open Door Community for fourteen years where she served and advocated for homeless people and the imprisoned and death sentenced with skill and quiet diligence. She is continuing her human rights advocacy on the staff of the Prison and Jail Project in Americus, Georgia, where she has joined former Open Door member John Cole Vodicka in advocating for the thousands of men, women, and children who are imprisoned in Southwest Georgia. Elizabeth is also still very much a part of our life at the Open Door as she joins us often for community worship, retreats, and holiday meals.

We thank God for Elizabeth Dede and her tireless efforts on behalf of the least of our sisters and brothers and we celebrate her life and witness among us.

Greetings from Kenya

Dear Open Door Friends,

August 10 was the one year anniversary of our arrival in Kenya and it has really been an amazing time of learning for all of us. Clyde continues teaching graduate music courses at Kenyatta University where he finds the students to be so serious and motivated—a real joy to teach. He is also directing the chorus of the Nairobi Music Society. He is learning about Kenyan music from his colleagues and one plans to take us to a remote village to hear singing and drumming as it has been played for many generations. We have recently begun studying Swahili with a tutor. Susan and Bryan are settled into another school year—10th grade and third grade.

We came here in the middle of a serious drought when electricity was off more the half the time and the Great Rift Valley was brown instead of green. Rains have come since then, but times are still so hard now for Kenyan people with high unemployment, a recession, and a government nobody seems to have confidence in. There are always prayers in church for people who have lost their jobs because of layoffs (called "retrenchment" here) and for children who can't attend school because they can't pay school fees. What surprises us is the spirit of optimism and strong sense of community that we still see everywhere.

We miss you and hope to see you next summer.

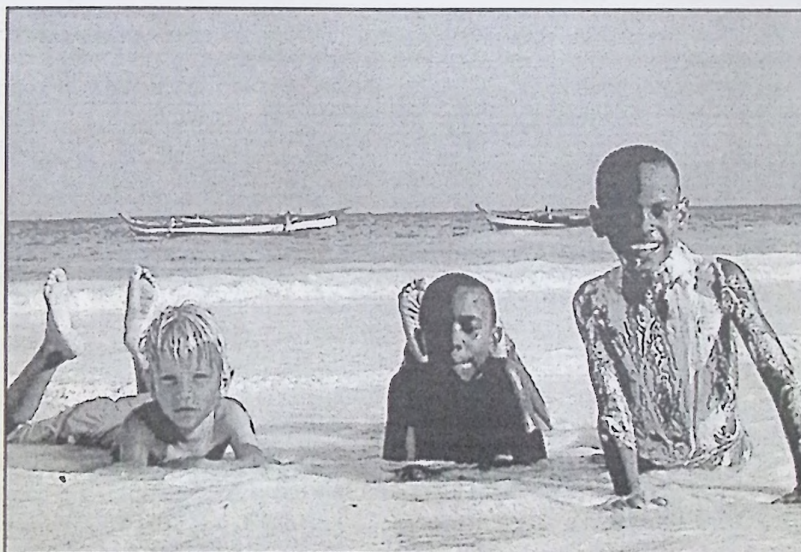
Love to all of you,
Jane Tipton

Jane, along with her husband Clyde and their children Nelson, Susan and Bryan, are from Milledgeville, Georgia and have been part of the Open Door worshipping community. They are currently living in Nairobi Kenya.



JANE
TIPTON

Susan Tipton (on the right) is with several friends including Protis Lumiti, Program Director of the Nyumbani Children's Center, a village for children with AIDS. The word "Nyumbani" means "home" in Swahili.



JANE TIPTON

Bryan Tipton, left, enjoys the surf of the Indian Ocean at Diani Beach, near Mombasa, Kenya.

Stephen Owen Kinnard

Remarks by Stephen B. Bright,
Memorial Service, Temple Sinai, Atlanta, June 1, 2001

(Editor's Note: Earlier this summer, our friend and colleague Steve Kinnard, died of brain cancer. His loss grieves all who love justice and fairness and calls us to take up his unfinished work with renewed energy. Attorney Stephen Bright, a frequent contributor to Hospitality, is the Director of the Southern Center for Human Rights located in Atlanta, a nonprofit, public interest, human rights organization that focuses on the rights of prisoners and those facing the death penalty in the South. Both a contemporary and close friend of Stephen Kinnard, Bright gave the following eulogy at Kinnard's memorial service.)

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy once said that the poor person accused of a crime has no lobby. That was not true in Georgia for the last 20 years. Poor persons accused of a crime had Steve Kinnard, who will be remembered as a shining example of how a lawyer fulfilled his obligation to make legal services available to the poor.

Some of us who celebrate his life here today had the privilege of being a part of his effort to bring us closer to the aspiration of equal justice for all—rich and poor, black and white. Steve was a great lawyer, a kind and gentle man, with a great passion for justice and unrelenting persistence, who became our mentor and our dear friend. We will miss him ever so much.

Steve devoted an immense amount of time to one of the greatest, most fundamental and most neglected problems in the legal system: the lack of competent legal representation for poor people accused of crimes.

When Steve was at the law firm of Hansel and Post, the president of the Georgia Bar appointed him to chair a committee to study the lack of lawyers for people facing the death penalty. This task was a truly thankless one. Those on death row did not just lack a lobby; they were despised. There was much more interest in speeding up their executions than providing them with lawyers. In fact, there was a concern that providing competent lawyers would make it harder to bring about their executions.

Steve saw the problem—the injustice of a poor person facing the

loss of life and unable, because of his/her poverty, to get the assistance of a lawyer. He spent the rest of his life doing something about it. What he did was set an example for the nation.

He saw the need for poor people facing the death penalty to receive the same type of representation that his corporate

hand, hiring directors, dealing with the legislature, and solving problems. There were lots of problems to solve and Steve gave huge amounts of his time and talent to solving them.

He also helped set up similar programs in other states. He served the rest of his life on the steering committee of the American Bar

Association's Death Penalty Representation Project.

Here in Georgia, he convinced the Bar, the Attorney General, and the judiciary to support funding for The Resource Center—because it was the right thing to do. And he got state funding.

A few years later, when the federal government withdrew its funding, resource centers in Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, and other places closed—leaving many people facing death without competent lawyers or without lawyers at all—because there was no Steve Kinnard in those

states.

But these extraordinary contributions were not all Steve accomplished. Upon learning just how bad legal representation for the poor is here in Georgia, Steve set about to do something about it in ways large and small. After we won a new trial for Tony Amadeo in the U.S. Supreme Court, the local judge refused to appoint us to represent Tony at the new trial. Instead, the judge appointed two local lawyers who did not have a clue about how to try a capital case. He set the trial for thirty days. He was going to have Tony back on death row in just a month. Steve handled the appeal to the Georgia Supreme Court. It reversed the judge's decision. That case became an important precedent. It was used in three other cases where the same thing was attempted. All four of those people are alive today because Steve Kinnard stepped in and made sure they had competent

counsel. And there are others who cannot be identified who benefitted as well.

Steve brought another case with us after a judge put the defense of a capital case up to the lawyer making the lowest bid. Working with Steve on these cases, I learned what a creative and resourceful lawyer he was. There was not a lot of precedent in this area, but Steve found ways to craft arguments that ultimately prevailed.

When it became apparent that there were serious problems with the representation of poor people accused of crimes in Fulton County, Steve became actively involved in efforts which led to major improvements.

At the time he was stricken, he was working on the State Bar's indigent defense committee, addressing the problem of legal representation for the poor in all types of cases.

Steve realized what too many members of the legal profession have forgotten—that, as Dr. King wrote from his jail cell in Birmingham, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Or as Justice Hugo Black said, there can be no equal justice when the kind of trial one receives depends upon how much money one has. These concepts are celebrated in the abstract; Steve Kinnard tried to make them a reality.

His loss leaves a tremendous void among the few who champion the right of the poor to fair treatment in the courts. Steve gave so much, for so long, and so unselfishly. He was, literally, the chairman of the board. But Steve's life inspires those who worked with him and serves as an example to those who did not. I can think of no more fitting way to remember Steve's life than to carry on this work.

Steve realized that this dream of equal justice is bigger than any of us; that the struggle for the realization of this dream must be waged by each generation; that we would fail and fail, but each time we would come back stronger and wiser; and that along the way, we would bring about the realization of the dream for some, if not for all.

Steve Kinnard made that dream a reality for countless individuals through the work that he did and the programs that he created. Now it is up to all of us to carry it on.

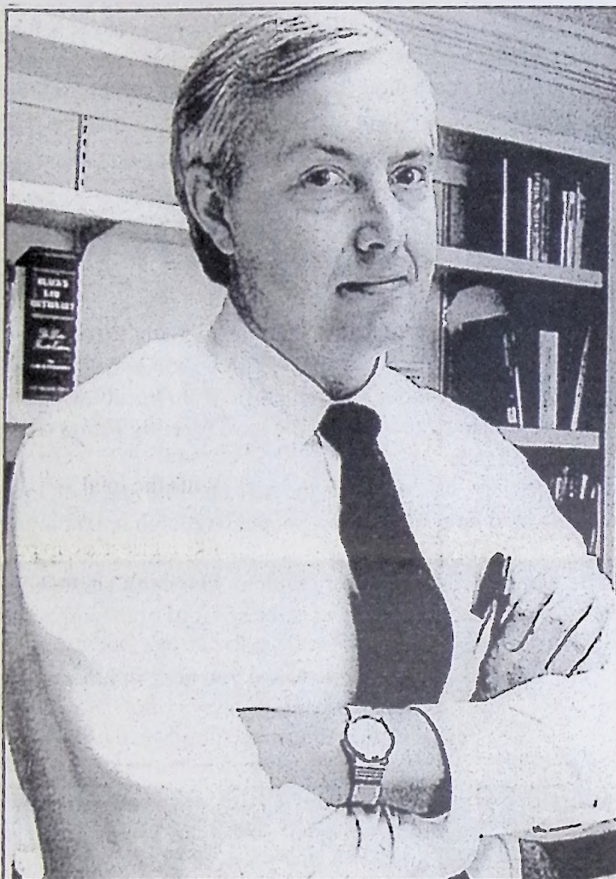


PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM DUNN

clients received at Hansel and Post and later Jones and Day.

He saw the need for lawyers who specialized—who knew what they were doing. This was a novel concept. Some feared that programs might be staffed by zealots. Steve observed that the cases were being prosecuted zealously, and asked if the Canons of Ethics didn't require that they be defended zealously.

He saw the need for independence—for lawyers whose loyalty was to the client, not to administrative convenience. He saw the need for lawyers who could represent their clients in this very controversial area of the law without fear of losing their job for providing good representation. So he set up an independent board to oversee the program. He was the chair of it for the rest of his life.

During the tumultuous years that followed, Steve provided a steady

The Homeless People's Bill of Rights

by Jenny Rees

(Editor's Note: Jenny Rees graduated from Decatur High School (Georgia) in June. She was a volunteer at the Wednesday morning breakfast.)

We, the homeless men and women of Atlanta, claim these, our inalienable rights:

The right not to be "swept" out of the way by the police whenever the city feels like "cleaning up" its downtown. We are not human garbage, nor should we be treated as such.

The right to accessible public restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities. The ability to maintain personal hygiene is absolutely essential to our health and self-respect.

The right to free, nutritious food. No one should die of hunger or scurvy on the streets of the richest nation in the world.

The right to the best medical care hospitals can provide, even if we do not have health insurance. Also, access to over-the-counter medicines and vitamins if we need them.

The right not to be persecuted by the police for being in a public area when we have nowhere else to go.

The right to free, competent legal representation. We do not deserve incapable, inexperienced, or indifferent lawyers simply because we cannot afford to pay better ones.

The right to mental health care and substance abuse programs rather than jail time. If we cannot heal our minds and conquer our addictions, we will never be able to improve our situations.

The right to a basic education. Illiteracy is a weapon that society uses to keep us powerless.

The right to job training, help with our resumes, free transportation to job interviews, and appropriate attire for those interviews.

The right not to be exploited or mistreated by employers who believe that because we are poor, we do not deserve fair compensation for our labor.

The right to a living wage so that if we work we will be able to afford the bare essentials: food, clothing, and shelter. We do not wish to be "burdens" on society.

The right to free, permanent addresses, such as post office boxes in our names. Without this, it is almost impossible for us to obtain identification, to receive government disability, veteran's benefits, or other types of assistance, or to exercise our right to vote.

The right to be treated with respect. We are people: someone's children, someone's parents. We must not be kicked, mocked, jeered at, spit on, or otherwise mistreated, no matter what our current position in life.

Prison, 2,001 (for Philip)

by Dan Berrigan

This is dignum et justum, the exact address of the just.

This fits like a skin a frame
the tegument of noble souls, your soul.

Over hill and dale of nightmare,
for the crowning of saviors –
barbed wire,
miles of it, indicting, arresting the sun,
betraying pure light for a Judas shekel –

woven on hell's loom, bristling with ironies
hell knows nothing of,
it keeps the unjust out (judges,
sheriffs, beware) who throw the just in,

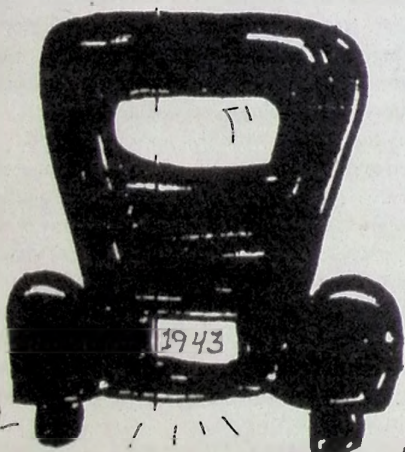
into this thorny nest
where the future broods precious eggs
unborn.

O my brother, ten like your soul, only ten,
and the times are redeemed.
You, Susan, Greg, Steven – God keeps
count,
wills the total –

like a priest's cup passed, full, unfailing,
breathing sacrament.

Dan Berrigan wrote this poem for his brother Philip who is in federal prison for his part in the Plowshares Vs. Depleted Uranium action protesting ongoing U.S. Military actions dropping deadly depleted uranium on the people of Iraq. (See letter on Page 9.)

Do you have a vehicle to donate?



We need a small, fuel efficient car for the work of the community.

Can you help us?

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Please call us at
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BOOK REVIEW



I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door

by Joe Capista

(Editor's Note: Joe Capista is a member of the Viva House Catholic Worker in Baltimore Maryland. This review was previously printed in the newsletter of Viva House, "Enthusiasm." For a subscription to this fine newsletter, write to Viva House, Baltimore Catholic Worker, 26 South Mount St., Baltimore, M.D. 21223)

"Justice is important, but supper is essential."
—Ed Loring

"I am known by many as the preacher with the bullhorn; Ed is known as the preacher who is a bullhorn." —Rev. Timothy McDonald III, in his introduction to Ed Loring's *I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door*

What does Jesus' knock sound like? Is it

I Hear Hope BANGING

AT MY BACK DOOR



Writings from *Hospitality*

ED LORING

The Open Door Community, Atlanta

WITH A FOREWORD BY
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the tap of a soft and gentle hand? Is it a patient steady rap? Ed Loring writes that it is a despairing bang, a bang of knuckles split and scarred. Jesus' knock is the bang and crash of Atlanta's sick and homeless at his back door.

I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door, Loring's new book, describes the work and ways of the Open Door Community. A residential Christian community comprised of 30 or so members, the Open Door feeds and clothes Atlanta's forgotten men and women, serving up hearty doses of cheese grits, Jesus, justice and love.

True to its name, hospitality is the focal point of the Open Door Community. "An open door is the central symbol of the Beloved Community's entrance in this tired old world in which we are waiting and working for renewal," Loring writes.

The book describes the Open Door's efforts to comfort the comfortless in the spirit of the Gospel: with a loving resolve to go beyond what is necessary. He, his wife Murphy Davis, and their daughter Hannah, have felt steam rise from blankets of those bedded-down on their back porch. They have witnessed the toilet-less behind dumpsters and

invited them to wash in their home.

Loring doesn't overlook the struggles of hospitality. He discusses the pain of turning people away, the ache when another friend is lost to addiction or beaten to death on the street. He assures that Open Door members "...are shaped, sustained, and made deep and powerful through our brokenness and sin."

Full of grace and humor, Loring moves quickly to the structural roots of poverty and homelessness without lengthy academic arguments. Echoing Malcolm X, he asserts that homelessness, hunger, and racism are public policy, not accidents. While justice and equality must reign, bread and housing are essential. Housing precedes sobriety, housing precedes employment, and housing precedes the justice struggle.

Loring is blunt about racism in America. He has worked closely with the Concerned Black Clergy of Atlanta and specialized in churches and slavery while obtaining a Ph.D. in church history from Vanderbilt. He knows the damage the white system has created. White superiority must be reckoned with, he implores. Only then will the American Nightmare begin to resemble the American Dream.

Both whimsical and candid, *I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door* draws from Revelations and Bob Dylan, Malcolm X and Amos. It is a book bound by joy in bending an ear to Christ banging at our souls.

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Friends at the Open Door,

Please add the names of my friends to the mailing list...May God keep blessing your ministry of justice and mercy. I miss being part of Wed. breakfast and worship in the yard...know that God uses Hospitality to keep pushing me toward active involvement in the needs of the poor.

Peace,
Becky Davis
Alabama Presbyterian Home
for Children
Talladega, AL

Dear Open Door Friends,

We are encouraged continually by your commitment and service.

Courtenay and Elizabeth Siceloff
Atlanta, GA

Dear Open Door,

Thank you for your life among the homeless in Atlanta. My wife and I look forward to receiving Hospitality each month. Not only is it encouraging to us to know of other faithful followers of Christ, but it is helping to shape the lives we live with the homeless in Kansas City. You guys are a great blessing and witness to God's Kingdom.

Peace to you all,
William and Lorene Holley
Kansas City, Rescue Mission

Dear Ed,

What is love? "Love," as a noun, to label something, just confuses me. Love as a feeling, what people call love, is usually simply a collection of other feelings — admiration, lust, infatuation, loneliness, etc. We know it when we feel it but I can't define it, can't get a handle on it. Of course we can recite God is love but I'm not sure how accurate the converse (Love is God) is. God is more than love. Love to me is best understood as a verb. Love is action, it's something we do. It's

something we have control of and can choose to practice or not. It's treating others as equals and making their goals and feelings as important as our own. Here in prison I practice love by leaving people alone to express their individuality, I allow them their space. I don't bully them. I also don't allow other guys to be bullied or abused. For example, my neighbor is 70 years old and has trouble keeping track of his stuff. Guys would just take whatever he has — especially his cigarettes. So I keep cigarettes for him, he never runs out. I practice love by listening, especially to the younger guys. Being alone is hard on them (that's where there's so many suicides in the hole) and just listening to them helps a lot. I never knew any of these guys before I got here and most of what they talk about does really interest me. But I listen anyway because I choose to love. It isn't always easy. Several years ago I had a girlfriend and putting her first, doing what was best for her, ended up with her marrying someone else. That really sucked. But she's happy and has a beautiful two-year-old daughter. I'm happy for her and proud of myself. Sometimes virtue is its own reward and sometimes you get hurt and punished for being good and doing what's right. Yet I'm sure that I'd feel worse if I had coerced and manipulated and taken advantage of her for my own self interest. There's guys here I don't like, not even a little bit, who I know are afraid of me. They're as much my enemies as I've got (except for the state that is trying to execute me). I'll never like them. It's love that keeps me from treating them like they deserve. My feelings toward them are definitely not good. I choose not to act on my feelings out of love. So prison isn't much different than anywhere else. We all choose how we treat others, the extent we respect them and their interests.

I finally received all the materials for my courses. It's good to be back in school. I'd rather have a job but this is the next best thing.

A friend in prison

(Letters, Continued on Next Page)

Dearest Ed,

Nuthin' but truth and righteousness comin' from you and the Open Door. Some of the needy guys are approaching me, and the Open Door money has an answer. Makes their stay in the dumpster a little more tolerable. Thank you so much.

Read you papers with great relish—thought that Murphy's article against Bush's measure to absorb the churches further, brilliant.

In the 80s when I was getting to Germany so often, doing civil disobedience against our Euromissiles there, I noted the absence of ministers and priests, when all the other intellectuals were represented. At Mutlangen, our Pershing II base, Heinrich Ball, over 80, sat in a puddle blocking the main entrance. He was a great figure, a Nobel winner in Literature. One priest was candid—Hitler imposed a dual income tax in the 30s—one for The Church and one for The State. Vast revenues poured into the church, even after the war and into the present. The churches were rebuilt beautifully, and every congregation had its staff—all on salary from income tax. It was a devilishly clever move to paralyze the Church politically. Bush's measure is of the same genre, for churches already immobilized by the Constantinian Arrangement.

Everything O.K. here, within the context. Sending you, Murphy, the Community love. Thanks, and the peace of Christ.

Phil Berrigan
#14850-056

P.O. Box 10, FCI Elkhart
Lisbon, OH 44483

(See Poem page 9)

Dear Murphy and Ed,

Bob and I were so moved by Murphy's recent article in *Hospitality*: "Turning Down the Big Cheese." What an incredible metaphor!

And I have been meaning to write for months to comment on Hannah's sermon in the January issue. Can that gal write! And think! And do incredible theological reflection. You must be busting your buttons over her. I was thrilled that the whole community was going to Guilford for her graduation. Please give her our congratulations.

Thanks for your faithfulness.

Love,
Phoebe and Bob Smith
Daytona Beach, FL

(Phoebe and Bob were members of our worshipping community while they lived in Atlanta and Phoebe ran our Friday Soup Kitchen)

Ed,

Your book, *I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door*, is perfect for awakening my sleeping "Status quo" Catholic ultra conservative friends. I have given away a dozen that I got from the Los Angeles Catholic Worker where I work on Fridays at the dental clinic.

God Bless,
Dr. Rich Meehan
Rolling Hills Ests, CA

Hello Open Door!

I've been thinking of you a lot lately. I spent a day at CCNV two weeks ago, learning about non-violence and the life of Mitch Snyder. I am continually humbled by individuals who truly commit to an issue and community of people.

I am living in D.C., right down the street from the Catholic Worker House. I heard Liz Walz speak there recently. She had just been released from jail after serving a year for a Ploughshares action. I was truly moved hearing about her ministry from inside the cell. One of her main tools of ministry was throwing parties —

transforming envelopes and toilet paper into confetti and streamers. Truly, living for the Kingdom is being able to celebrate at every step of the journey.

I am working on agriculture policy, specifically with minority and small farmers. I have learned so much about rural poverty and have been able to view my community in East Tennessee in a whole new light. I enjoy the city, but don't think I am quite cut out for national policy work. I am eager to return to hands-on organizing next year.

You are in my prayers and I continue to be shaped by my summer with you.

In gratitude,
Liz Clasen
Washington, DC

Dear Murphy,

Thanks for your essay, "Turning Down the Big Cheese..." in the current issue of *Hospitality*. Even without your quote from "a friend named John," I would have liked your approach to this very crucial issue. I'm glad to see you addressing it and addressing it with a sense of great urgency. All of the points you made are valid and should be of great concern to all who value "faith-based" efforts throughout this country. This is one of those solutions that will not make the government better, will not make organized religion more compassionate, and in the long run, will probably not help the people it is supposedly designed to help.

It should not be necessary for you to tell your cheese story. People should understand how

bureaucracy (not just federal bureaucracy — any bureaucracy) works. Why did Dorothy Day counsel efforts like the Open Door to stay small? She may have had other reasons, but one reason, for sure, was to avoid a bureaucratic approach to the work that needs to be done. As a former federal bureaucrat, I know how it works, from the inside. It is the way human beings organize when the task gets to be too big for the handful of people who really do it well on a limited

basis. Even in the short time I have been associated with the Open Door, I have seen evidences of how you must be constantly on guard and alert to the bureaucratic tendencies that arise when you want to do something well and for as many people as you can. You have been very successful, but not without a lot of effort and fighting the bureaucratic tendencies that can be so tempting. I have a one-liner that I like to use in my consulting business that applies to many situations: "Think big, act small." Think big — don't underestimate the resources and effort that an important task may require. Act small — one person at a time.

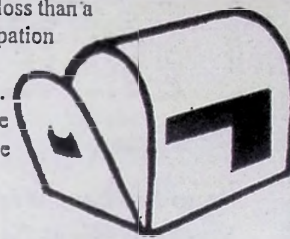
I get carried away when discussing organization and could go on for at least another paragraph or two. Let me stop here with another "thank you."

John Ehlers
Marietta, Georgia

Dear Ed:

Thank you for your use of the phrase "the temple guards" in a recent *Hospitality* article. Recently, I had an occasion to attend a meeting at First Presbyterian in Atlanta. Upon arrival I was greeted by "the temple guards" (paid security people complete with Smokey Bear hats and all). This was quite a shock, as I had never experienced a church with paid security people before. I must admit I am not quite sure what to make of it yet. We have had some security problems of our own at our church. However, seeing uniformed security people in a

church felt more like a loss than a gain, more like an occupation by those in uniform, than the body of Christ. I hope you will continue to raise the issue of "the temple guards."



Sincerely,
Frank Dew, Pastor
New Creation
Community Presbyterian
Greensboro, NC

Friends,

Just a quick note to express my gratitude for the work you are doing in the homeless community.

My last visit to the Open Door was on Thursday, May 25, 2000. I was allowed to take a much needed shower and was provided an enjoyable lunch. I also enjoyed dinner with you and participated in the medical clinic. The love and acceptance I felt that day was incredible.

On Friday, I chose to go to work at a temporary agency. After work, I chose to indulge my addictive behaviors resulting in my arrest Saturday evening on multiple charges.

Since my arrest, I have been forced to sit still. I have been able to use this time to re-evaluate my life and my priorities. The Spirit of God has truly been dealing with my heart in some amazing ways. I write this letter asking for your prayers for my continued spiritual growth.

I am not looking for sympathy, as I am guilty as charged. I do however need your spiritual support. God has a plan for my life and I will fulfill it. I plan to use my God-given gifts to glorify Him.

I do not know what the future holds for me, nor how long I shall be in here, but for now I know that I'm okay. Thanks again for all your efforts in helping the community...I would appreciate being added to your mailing list for your newsletter.

A Friend in Jail

Dear Murphy,

As an occasional contributor to the Open Door and a regular reader of *Hospitality*, I have been greatly enriched especially by your articles which are always inspiring packed with relevant information, high literary qualities, and penetrating social Christian insights. But, until now, I have never thanked you for the good your words do me.

Nevertheless, your "Turning Down the Big Cheese," one of your best pieces, has moved me to commend you for your extraordinary skill and passionate commitments as one of my favorite contemporary "writing prophets." Well done! and may your words work to move the churches and your city towards a new age of righteousness for all.

Greetings to all of your colleagues at the Open Door, also to my good friends Houston and Anne Wheeler when you see them.

Sincerely,

Hal Warheim
Louisville, KY

Dear Friends,

Murphy Davis's article regarding Government Money and the Church should be required reading for all our representatives in Washington! Your ministry reaches far more than the dispossessed in Atlanta. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us.

Your friends,
Dick and Lis Coss
Columbus, GA



Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Wednesday – Thursday, 11 a.m. – noon

Weekday Breakfast: Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m.

Use of Phone: Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.,

Wednesday – Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon

Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and Soul Foot Care Clinic: Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

Clarification Meetings: Selected Tuesdays, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

Weekend Retreats: Four times each year (for our household, volunteers and supporters); next retreat is our Advent Retreat November 30-December 2.

We are open...

Monday through Saturday: We answer telephones from 9:00 a.m. until noon, from 2:00 until 6:00 p.m. The building is open from 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. those days. (We do not answer phone and door during our noon prayers and lunch break from 12:30 until 2:00). Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. **On Sunday we invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m. and join us, following worship, for a delicious supper.**

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

Come Worship With Us!

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



- September 2 5 p.m. Worship at 910;
- September 9 5 p.m. Worship at 910;
Stan Saunders, preaching
- September 16 5 p.m. Eucharist;
5:45 Music Night
- September 23 5 p.m. Worship at 910;
Stan Saunders, preaching
- September 30 5 p.m. Worship at 910

Please join us!

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

*Plan to join us on selected Tuesday evenings for presentations and discussions of topics relevant to the justice struggle. Call us for dates and times.
404-874-9652*

Medical Supplies

(for our Thursday Evening Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic)

Can you help with the medicine cabinet?

- aspirin
- Tylenol
- bandages and band-aids
- antibiotic cream or ointment
- Ibuprofen
- antifungal cream
- cold medicine (alcohol free)
- cough drops
- foot powder

Open Door Community Needs

JEANS
T-Shirts
Men's Work Shirts
Quick Grits
Cheese
Coffee
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Postage Stamps
Underwear for Men
Men's Shoes (all sizes)

Meat for the soup in
our Soup Kitchen
Sandwiches
Table Lamps
Floor Lamps
Vacuum Cleaners
Twin Beds
Alarm Clocks
Blankets
Eye Glasses
Box Spring and Mattress for Double Bed

Disposable Razors
Women's Underwear
Toothbrushes
Deodorant
Vaseline
Towels
Socks
Shampoo
Men's Belts
Washcloths

From 11am 'til 1:30pm, Wednesday and Thursday, 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!