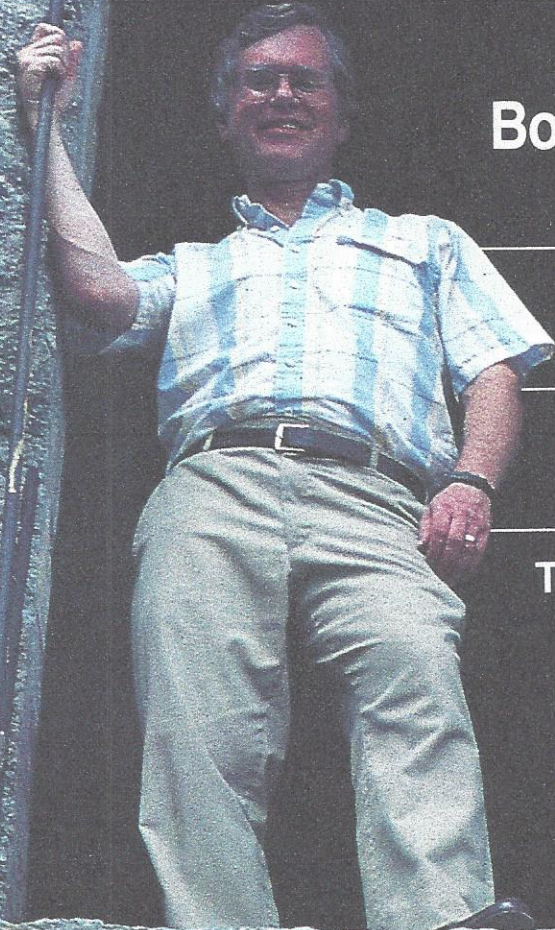


Ministries

TODAY

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Renny Scott:
Turning a Place of
Bondage Into a Place
of Freedom

George Barna:
Stop Playing Church

David Bivin:
The Name of Jesus

The Manipulative Strategy
of a Child Molester

RENNY SCOTT:

Turning a place of bondage into a place of freedom

BY BRUCE BUCKINGHAM

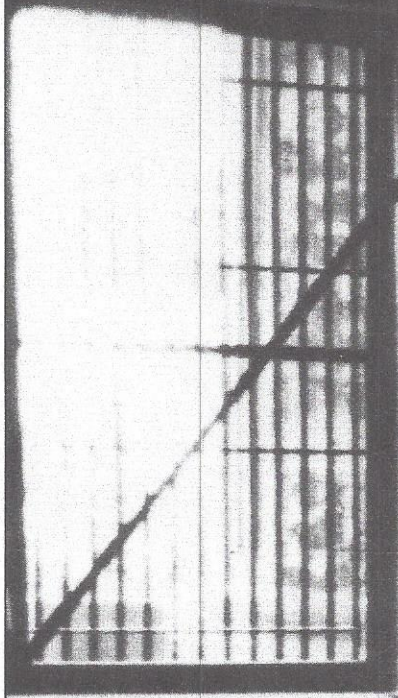
A public information officer for NASA, he is the oldest son of Jamie Buckingham.

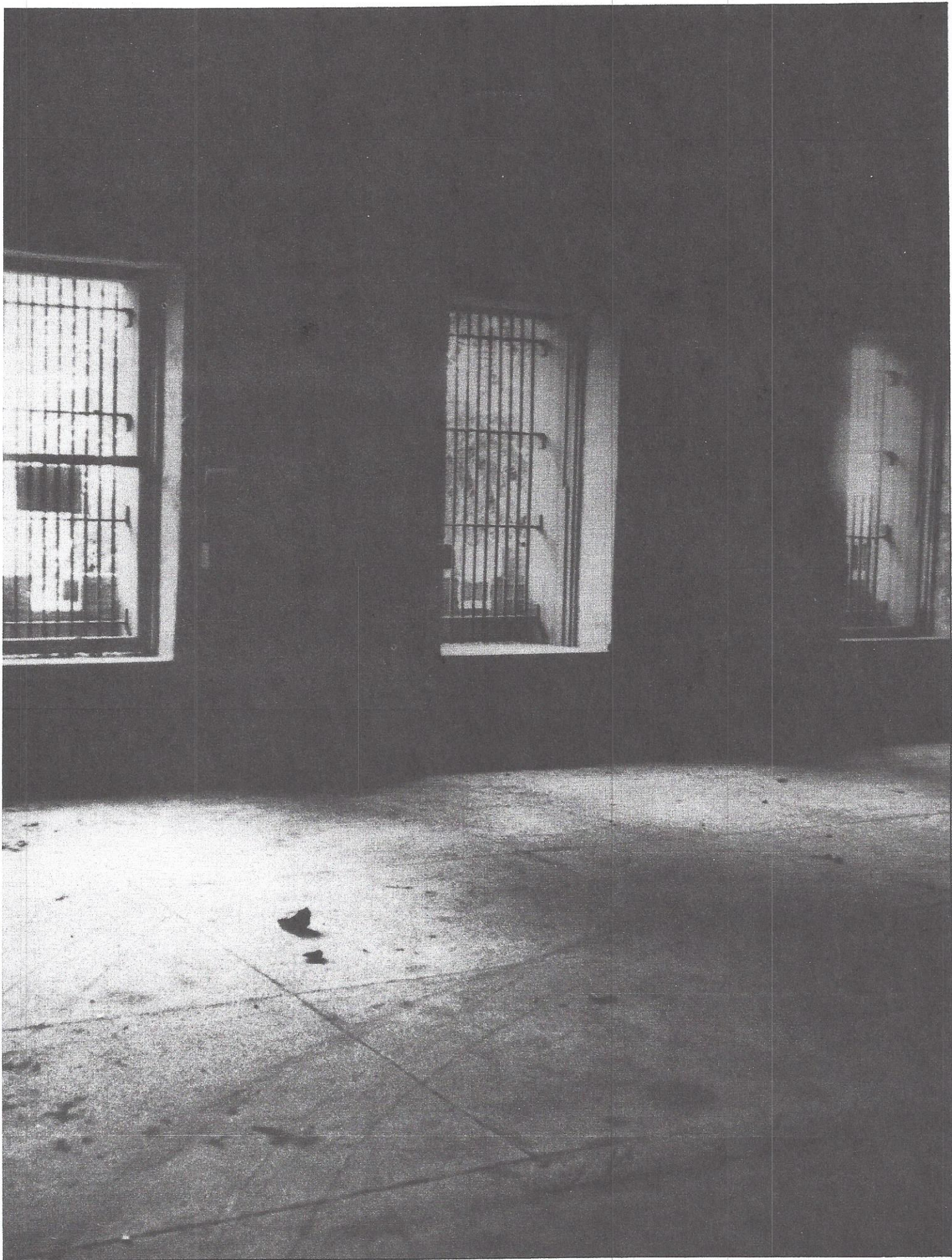


Behind Fulton County Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, a row of dilapidated houses stand boarded up, awaiting the demolition crews. In the street a group of preschool children play near a rusty, abandoned car. A pusher ducks into a dark, rat-infested alley. Two teenage junkies soon follow. Nearby, an old, wrinkled woman sits alone on the curb watching the cars go by. That piece of curb is her home for the night. She has nothing else.

A few blocks away, visible from Interstate 20, a large castle-like building stands empty under a security lamp. Weeds and rubble line the driveway and a security fence blocks the main entrance. Huge stone pillars rise from years of debris and negligence. Renny Scott, 42, a Yale graduate and former Episcopal priest, unlocks the gate and drives through. Scott first broke into prominence as an assistant to Terry Fullam at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Darien, Connecticut. From there he moved to the Washington, D.C., area and pioneered the Church of the Apostles in Fairfax, Virginia, which grew to several thousand without the benefit of a building. Leaving Washington, Renny and his wife, Margaret, accepted the call of the historic St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. However, after a two-year ►

Right: Somber room awaits transformation into an apartment that will give a homeless family a new beginning.





“A few months ago the Scotts moved to their new home—which actually, like GlenCastle, is over 100 years old.”



► period of deep, personal soul-searching, he left the priesthood and moved to Atlanta to “wait on God.” He didn’t have to wait long. The cry of the poor became the call of God.

Scott points ahead. “That’s it. GlenCastle.” Against the backdrop of the predawn light, a huge stone structure with twin towers stands coldly in the rain.

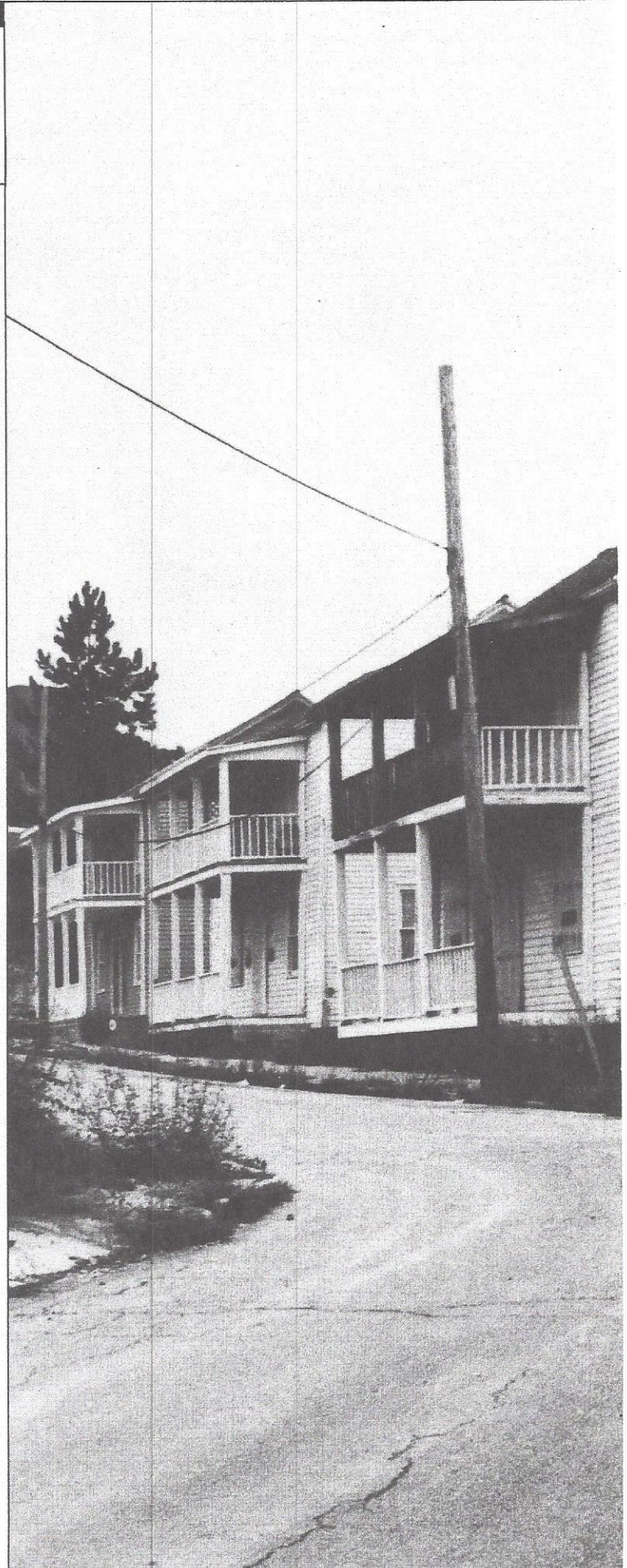
GlenCastle. Most of Atlanta knows it as “the old stockade”—built in 1863 to house prisoners and the destitute, and until recently, an abandoned haunt for teenage gangs and drug dealers. But to the determined group of Atlanta Christians who purchased the building in 1987, GlenCastle is something altogether different. It is prime property—a place with plenty of room to house, nurture and rebuild the lives of scores of Atlanta’s working poor.

Scott is the project manager for GlenCastle, working under the direction of Atlanta’s Family Consultation Services Inc. (FCS).

A few months ago the Scotts sold their house in a comfortably affluent suburb of north Atlanta to move to their new home—which actually, like GlenCastle, is over 100 years old and in need of renovation—in the Grant Park ►

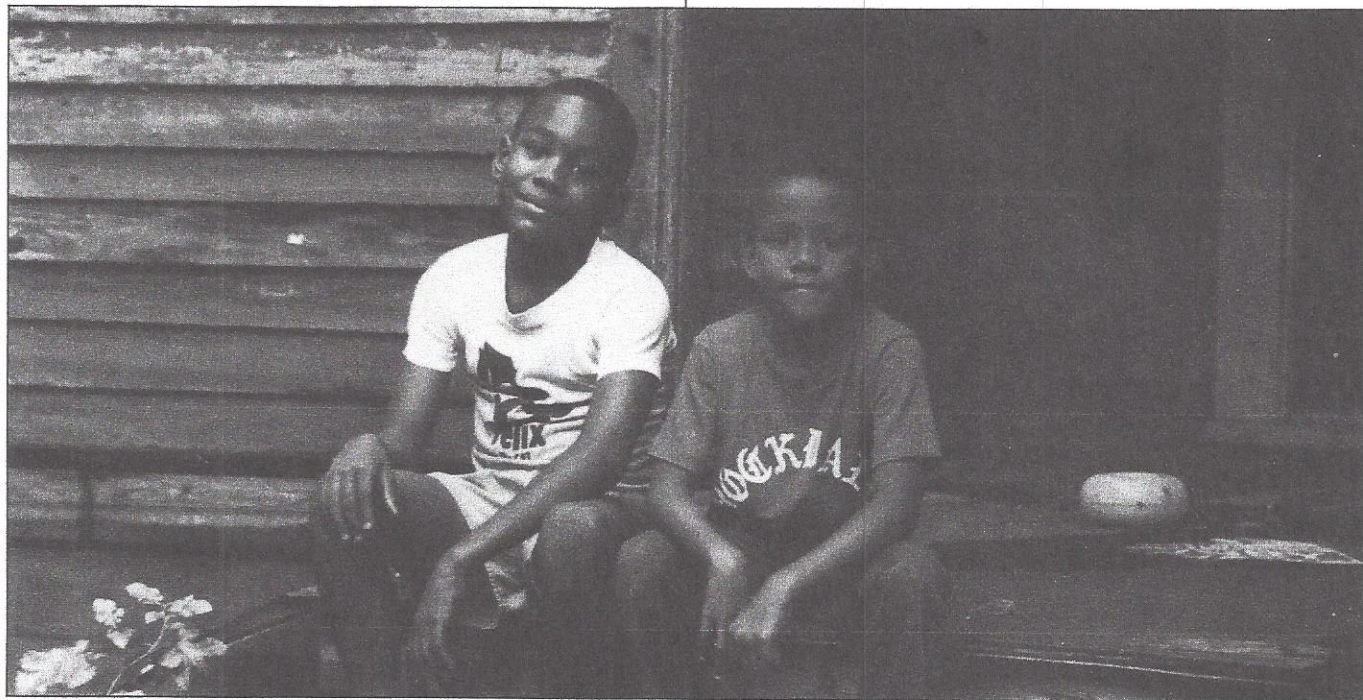
Above: The Scotts at home. The week before they moved in a knife fight took place on their front porch.

Right: A row of dilapidated houses stand boarded up, awaiting the demolition crews.





“They share their neighborhood with drug dealers, prostitutes, the homeless and the working poor.”



► section of Atlanta’s inner city. They share their neighborhood with drug dealers, prostitutes, the homeless and the working poor.

At home now, Scott sits with his wife, Margaret, and their four children—David, 9; Molly, 6; Francie, 3; and Harry, 1—as they talk and pray about the project. “All I am is a *Reader’s Digest*, suburban, middle-class American seeking to serve Jesus,” he says over a cup of coffee. “I’m called to be a servant, and to do that I didn’t feel right about working out of a comfort zone. We had to physically move here, where the ministry is happening.”

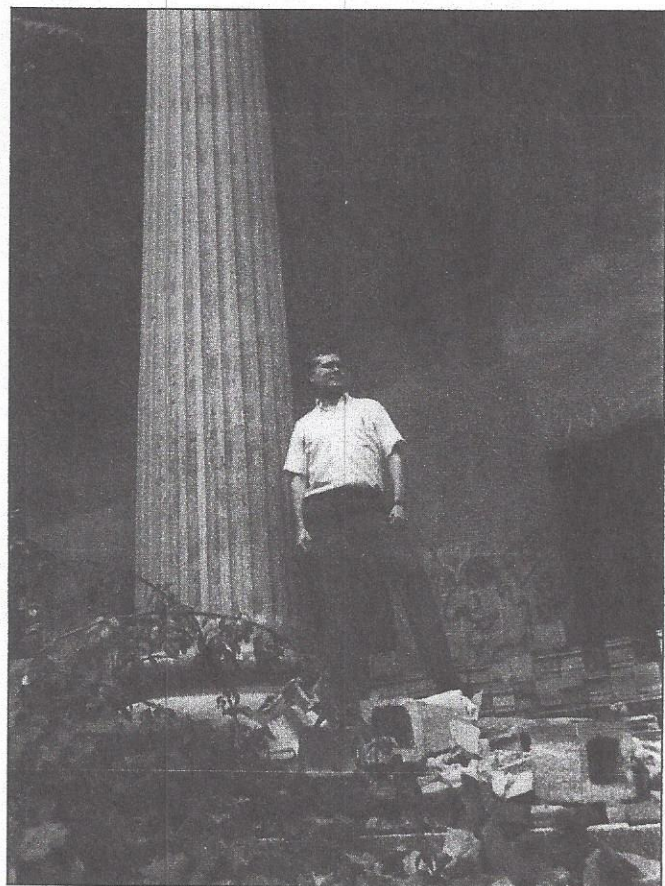
When we told our friends we were moving to Grant Park, a few eyebrows were raised,” adds Margaret, who is home-schooling the older children. “But once they understood our calling, it was almost as if they envied us.”

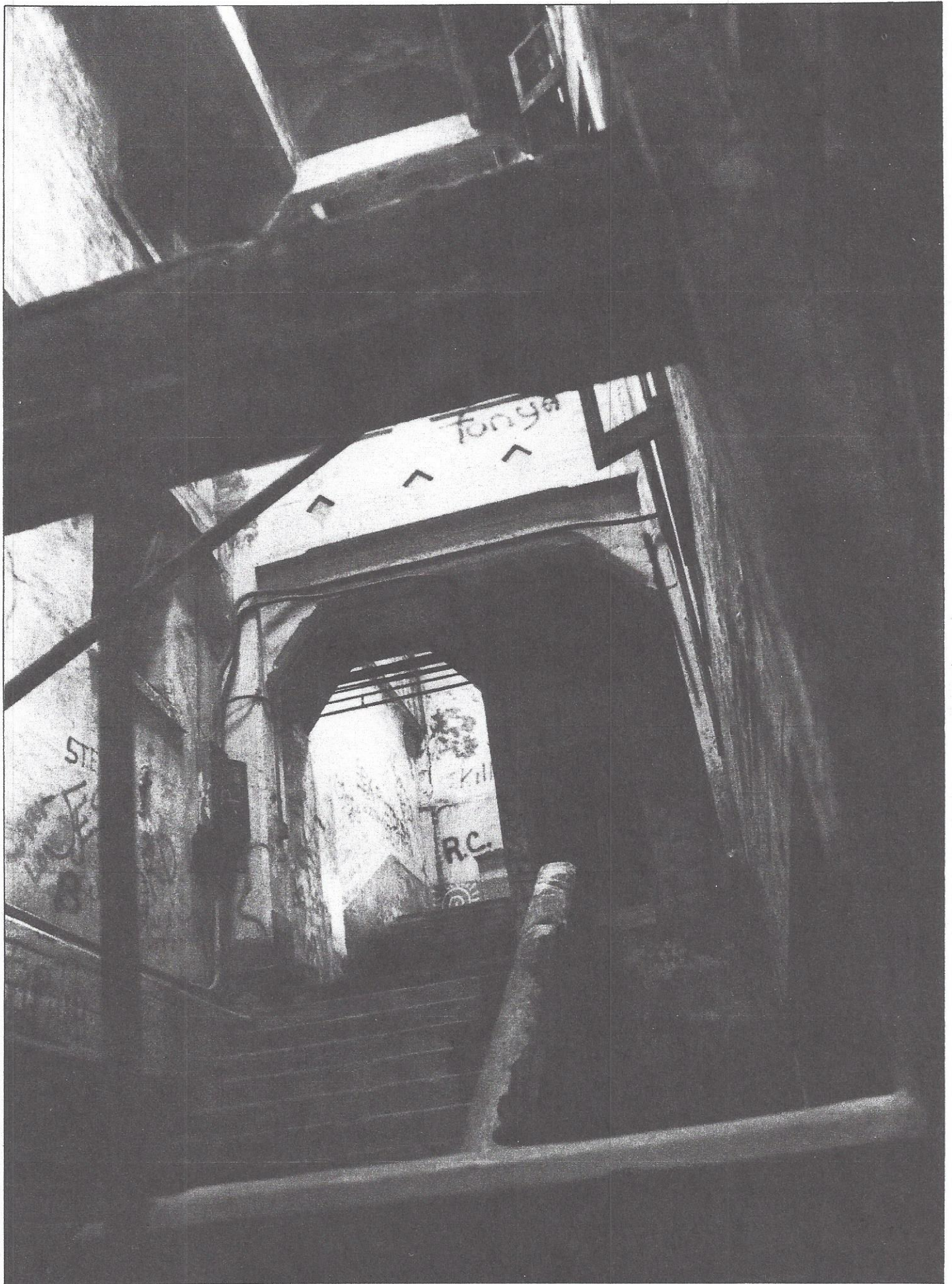
Their decision was not an easy one. The week the Scotts placed their old house on the market, GlenCastle’s security guard was savagely beaten and sent to the hospital. That same week, just before they moved into their house, a man was severely cut in a knife fight on ►

Above: These boys are among those hoping for a decent home in the GlenCastle project.

Near right: Renny Scott surveys the rubble-strewn area with eyes of faith.

Far Right: A formidable task of renovating the former prison faces volunteer crews.





“By 1990, we want GlenCastle to be a permanent, low-cost apartment community for 67 families.”

► their front porch.

“We were terrified,” Scott admits. “We knew we were in for a fight. But once we moved into this house, our fears left and the peace brought by doing God’s work eased our hearts.

“Forty percent of the poor spend seventy percent of the money going toward housing in Atlanta,” he says. “We want to help them—especially those families who find they must choose between paying the rent and feeding their children. By 1990, we want GlenCastle to be a permanent, low-cost apartment community for 67 families. For many, it will be the first secure home they have ever known.”

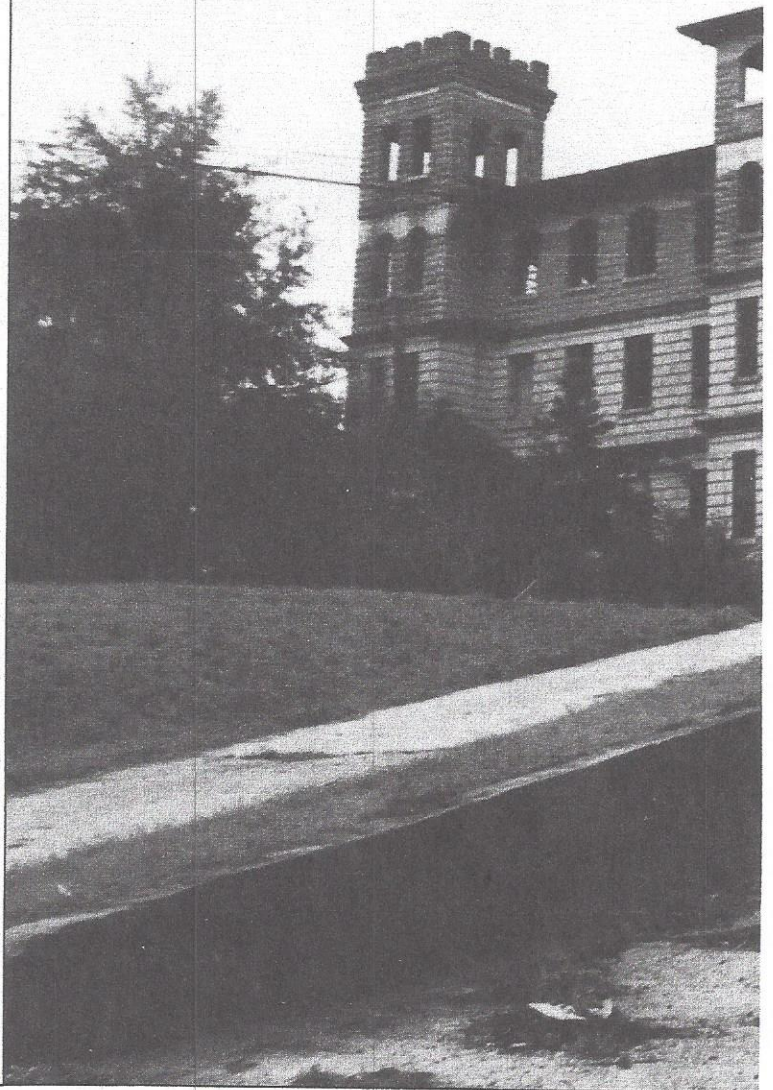
GlenCastle will provide more than just housing, however. Employment opportunities will be provided nearby, as well as non-profit food and clothing stores. An old blacksmith shop adjacent to the prison will become a community chapel.

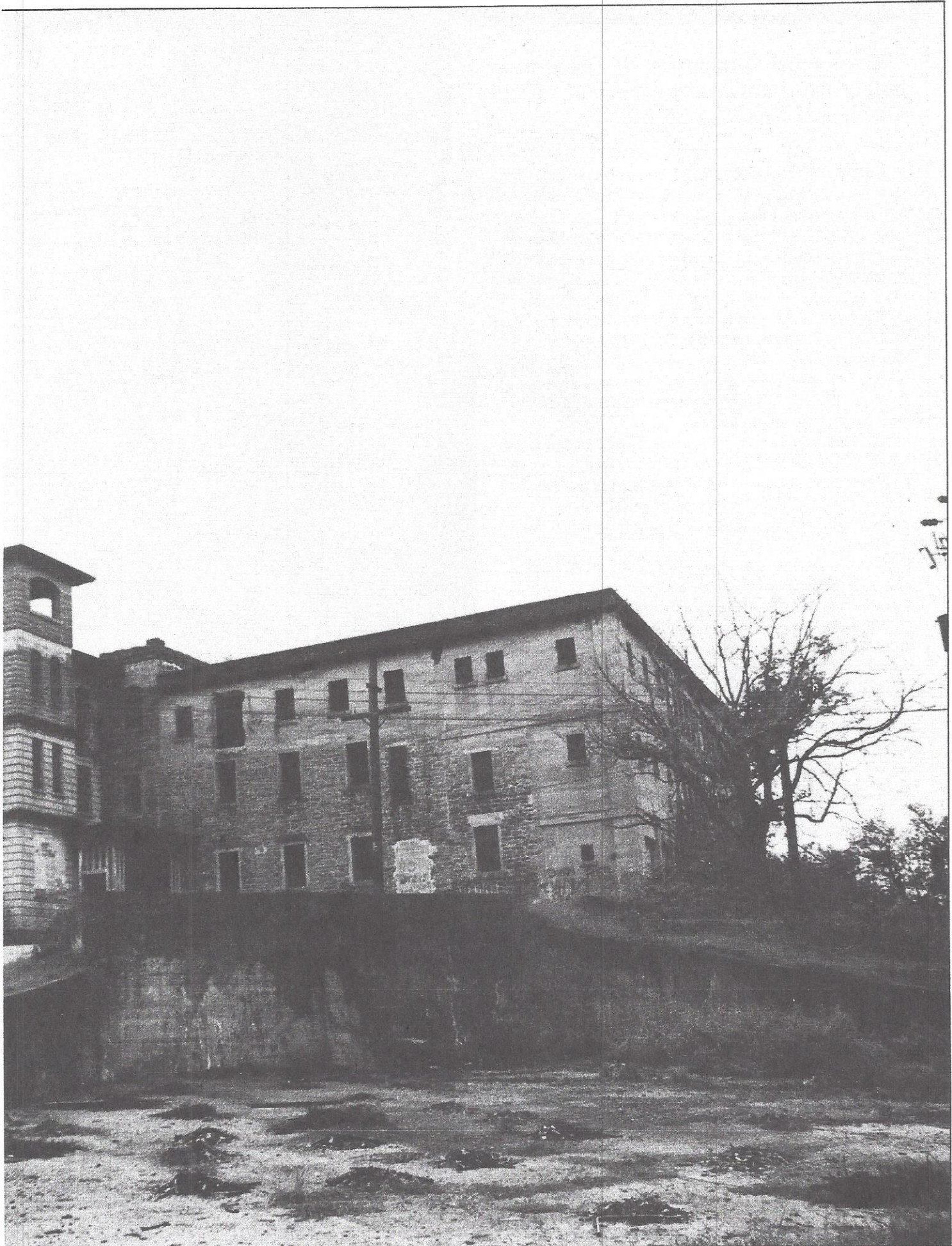
Needy families will be referred to GlenCastle by local pastors.

“We want to teach people that God is the God of restoration,” Scott says. “If we fail to show them that, then Christianity is nothing more than a religious treadmill.”

Scott’s five-point plan for the project’s success is ►

Right: More than 100,000 Atlantans see the old prison daily—soon to become a place that sets people free.





“We’re going to transform this piece of history into a residential community of healing and hope.”

► simple: (1) Plant your life; (2) Surrender your resources; (3) Pray; (4) Never tire of telling the story; (5) Sit back and watch the miracles unfold.

He admits it will take those miracles to make GlenCastle a reality. Amazingly, the century-old building is still structurally sound. But behind its two-foot-thick, graffiti-covered concrete walls, a shell of a building lies with gaping holes in the roof and rusting bars on the windows. Stagnant rain puddles reek with filth. The stench of human waste and vomit is overwhelming. Scott barely notices. He enjoys taking potential supporters through the forgotten facility, opening the visitor’s eyes of faith to see what he sees among the rubble.

“God has given us an ‘impossible dream’ of transforming this stockade into safe and affordable housing for the homeless,” Scott says. “The human need is heartrending and overwhelming. But we’re going to transform this piece of history into a residential community of healing and hope.”

Scott’s immediate goal is to raise \$3.4 million in cash and in-kind contributions from corporations and foundations for the GlenCastle renovation. As of mid-September 1988, he had reached one-quarter of that goal. Several architectural and engineering firms have already volunteered their services. Other national companies have donated labor and materials for construction.

Much of Scott’s help, however, is coming from individual Christians.

“There was a time when I thought ‘lay ministry’ meant to get an architect to usher on Sundays, a lawyer to sing in the choir or a businessman to teach Sunday school,” Scott says. “But working in the heart of Atlanta among the poor, I have discovered a vastly different concept.

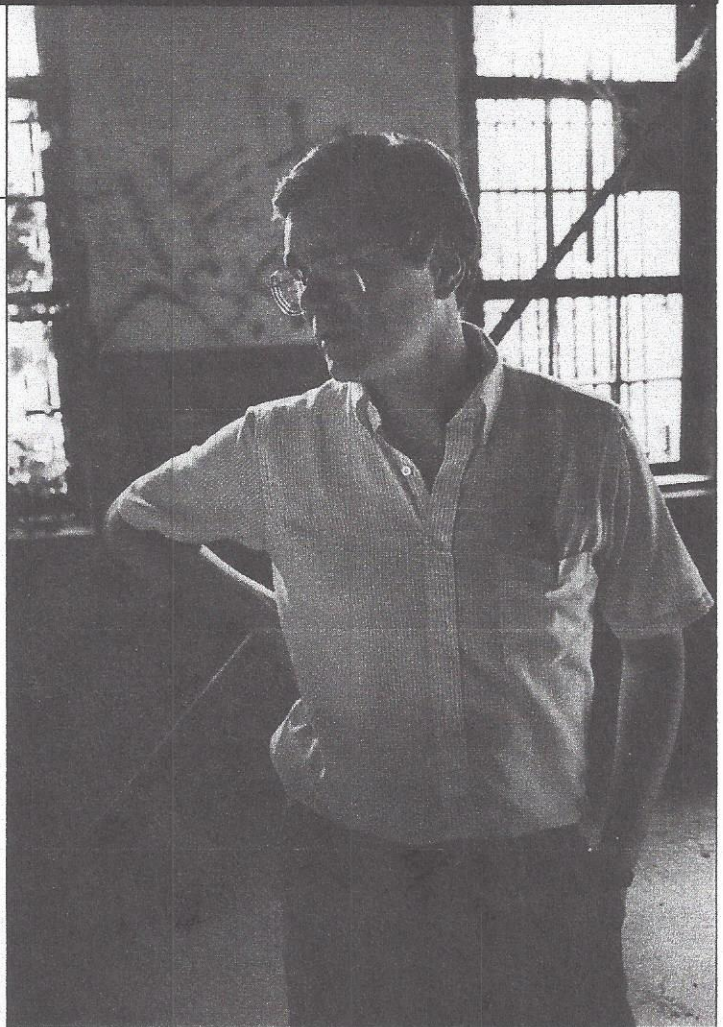
“In fact, we have seen a veritable explosion of lay ministry while working on the GlenCastle project. Folks are using their secular skills not simply to earn money to give to the church, but to actually make visible the invisible things of the kingdom of God.

“People are going to see God’s love demonstrated simply because a few laity were released from the prison of church work to become the work of the church.”

From I-20, over 100,000 Atlantans see the old stockade daily—built as a prison, soon to become a place that sets people free.

“I want to make GlenCastle a parable of God’s love, a showcase of His mercy,” Scott says. “I want it to say to the world: ‘There *are* people who truly care! Christians really do make a difference!’ ”

With hard work, a few miracles and the help of others who share his vision of God’s love and Christian service, he’ll succeed. **M**



GlenCastle and Your Church

GlenCastle serves as a model for similar projects across America. Maybe you need something like this in your city. Pastors are invited to visit this project to learn how to go about initiating a comparable venture with such features as a thrift store, a home-resources interchange and a chapel.

The financial needs of the project are being met by a coalition of compassionate business people and churches. Volunteer work is the key. Some larger churches have taken on the cost of preparing one unit—\$20,000. Members of that church will “adopt” the family occupying the apartment. Some 67 single-family apartments are planned in the old stockade. Rent will run approximately \$150-\$200 per month.

Want to get involved in this distinctive missions project? Perhaps your church could help sponsor a housing unit.

Write: FCS Urban Ministries, GlenCastle,
645 Grant Street S.E., Atlanta, GA 30312.
Telephone: (404) 622-1959. **M**

Above: Renny Scott stands contemplating what it will take to bring his vision to reality.