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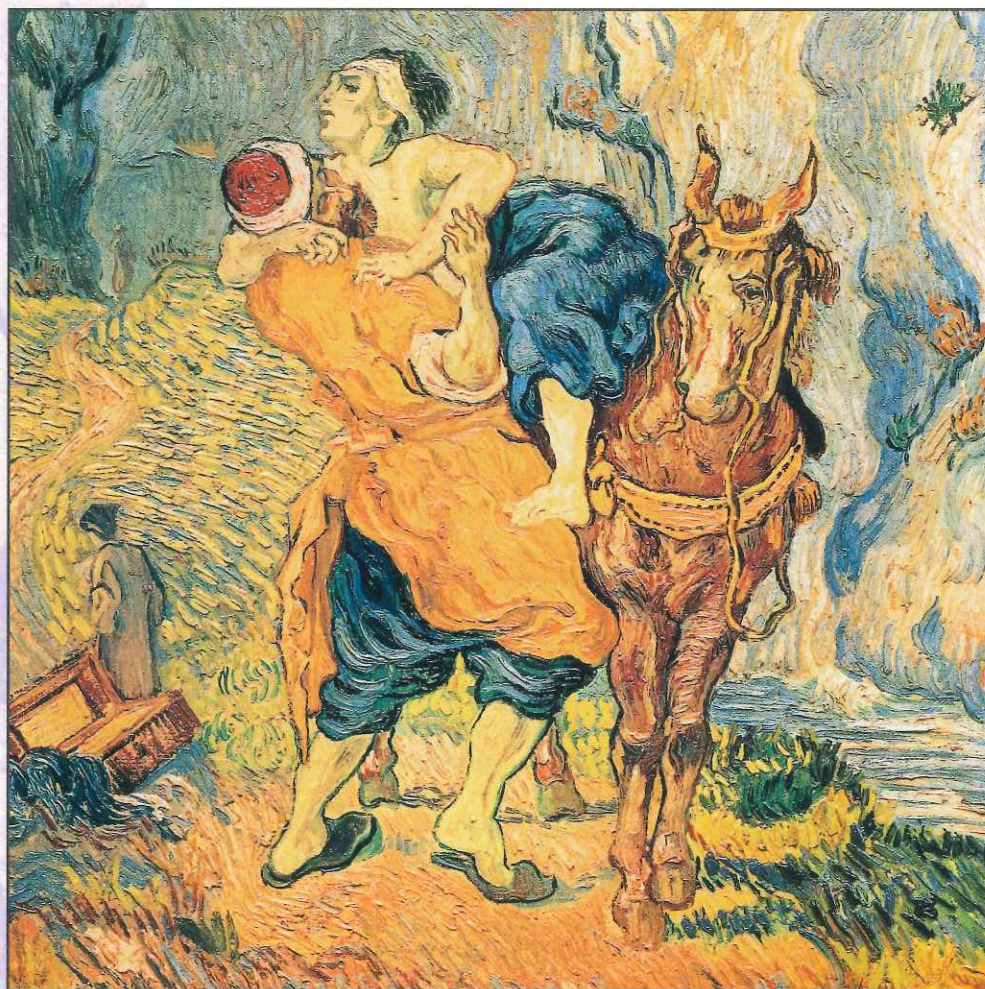
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COMPASSION UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL; EMPOWERMENT AND PEACE; WHERE THE DOORS NEVER CLOSE; A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG DREAM; ASSAULT ON POVERTY

Theology, News and Notes

SPRING 2002

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Empowerment

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY
AFTER WELFARE REFORM

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue of *Theology, News and Notes* began to take shape several years ago, when I joined Dr. Richard Gray (M.Div., '86; Th.M., '91) and a panel of urban specialists to testify before a congressional subcommittee. The committee, headed by Congressman Mark Souder of Indiana, was called the Committee on Empowerment, and operated under the Committee on Small Business in the House of Representatives.

Souder knew that all the subcommittee panelists were believers and that they were motivated in their ministries by a commitment to Jesus Christ and the gospel. The subcommittee's interests were part of a conservative agenda to find ways to demonstrate that their options for urban renewal were better than their liberal counterparts. Welfare had been reformed, and this was a part of the new order.

Could, or should, government actively enter into partnership with the growing number of faith-based ministries that serve marginalized Americans? Before the tragedy of September 11, this discussion had been part of a growing political debate in the halls of the new administration. President Bush had seemed genuinely interested in the discussion, and was supportive of an affirmative conclusion.

Since 9/11, these concerns have been powerfully affected by that fateful day. America has been struggling to find clarity on a number of domestic issues. When the smoke began to clear, the President's cadre of specialists began to retreat to their former preoccupations. Conservatives and liberals were left to glare at each other across the isles, while the administration has been occupied with the war against terrorism. More recently, there have been attempts to get this support back on the agenda, but it has been tough sledding.

Meanwhile, the saints have kept pitching. This issue of *Theology, News and Notes* contains some of their voices, their convictions, and their hopes. H. Dean Trulear discusses the church's responsibility after welfare reform. Trustee Jack Samuelson relates how he re-established his priorities. Former Fuller students present various perspectives from their callings: Larry B. Lloyd redefines compassion for the poor; Steven Pattie observes how mission ministry has evolved, while Ralph Plumb reports from the front lines of Skid Row. Rudy Carrasco welcomes this opportunity to assault poverty. Jean Burch, Robert Lupton, and Matthew Harris reveal how committed individuals can transform urban communities. My discussion on the theological implications of empowerment and peace in our inner cities is highlighted by excerpts from the testimonies of panelists to the congressional Committee on Empowerment.

Surrounding all these key issues is the challenge that we, as Christians, can make a difference in the lives of marginal Americans!

William E. Pannell

The Church's Responsibility After Welfare Reform

BY H. DEAN TRULEAR

President Bill Clinton pledged to end welfare as we knew it. Indeed he did. The question is, What was the welfare that we knew? There are at least three strands of caring for the poor that funneled into welfare as we knew it. And each of those strands has a role to play in the development of care for the poor in this post-welfare era. The three strands of caring for the poor emerge from the *government*, the *community* or neighborhood, and the *church* or community of faith.

The understanding of government as having an important role in caring for the poor comes as a product of Western civilization. One can easily trace caring for the poor on the part of governments from the feudal era in medieval Europe when lords, having removed the peasantry from their land, had to figure out what to do with all the poor people they displaced. Holding them together in ghettos, the feudal lords decided that they would get as much labor as they could from the peasants and, in exchange, they would care for them by providing them with common areas of land. Since their land had been taken from them, the peasants would come together on these common areas, which ultimately were called "commons." That brief history of the neighborhood park system explains why we have parks in our community—not because they're pretty places, but because poor people needed some place to play and recreate.

Today, there is a question with respect to how government, as an extension of the people, should care for the poor. We find wrestling between *structures* that truly care for the needy and the *moral will* to do the same. On one hand, we have the question of structure. What are the *means* by which we will take care of the needy in our midst? Much of what we have witnessed in recent years has been a reordering of structure.

But I believe that the more important question is, What is the moral will? The feudal lords really didn't care about the poor as much as they were resolving the question of what to do with the poor. I believe that much of the public sentiment regarding welfare reform today has less to do with caring for the poor and more to do with that dilemma: "We have to figure out what to do with the poor because they're in the way. They're

draining our resources. They're making life miserable for the rest of us."

Most of us are guilty of what John Raines of Temple University calls "looking up and blaming down." He says that most of us look up when we think about our aspirations or our future. That's why there was a television show called *The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. We look up because that's where we want to go. Then we blame down. For the people who are keeping us from moving up are those below us. Raines argues that a more accurate view would be to look down and blame up. Indeed, most of us have more in common with the poor and anonymous than we do with the rich and famous. It is much more likely that more of us will be poor, or will have been poor, than those who will be rich, or will have been rich. In looking at how Western civilization has cared for the poor, however, there has been a propensity to look up and blame down—and to make policy in keeping with our own self-interest, as people who hope that one day we will be up there.

The second major strand, that of the role of the *community*, comes to me as a child of the African-American experience. There I draw upon my own sense of a communal self—the African *we*—communities that care for one another rather than individuals looking out for their own self-interest. It's less of a dependence on the notion of private property, and more of a dependence upon community.

The third, and one that we all share, is our *religious tradition*, as children of Abraham and Moses. In the Scriptures, care for the poor was a moral imperative in response to a covenant-keeping God. As the children of Israel wandered through the wilderness, they were given stipulations on how to be just people, how to care for the poor, how to enact the year of Jubilee, and how to make a stranger part of a community. Western civilization's understanding of government, our communal sense of self, and our religious responsibility to care for the poor all come together in our Judeo-Christian understanding of how we should care for the poor.

The question today then becomes, How should church congregations take up the slack in a post-welfare era? First, there are several important questions that need to be asked and some important shifts that need to be made.

Western civilization's understanding of government, our communal sense of self, and our religious responsibility to care for the poor all come together in our Judeo-Christian understanding of how we should care for the poor.

The first shift we have to make in this post-welfare era is noting that the powers that be are us, not them.

In an article in the *DePaul University Law Review*, professor James Washington, then of Union Theological Seminary, discussed the history of the institutional configurations that have emerged over the years between faith-based organizations and poor communities and government. When considering government, he particularly looked at the federal government and at education, those two systems which have a major responsibility to care of the poor. Washington's research revealed that the church's primary relationship to these institutions was as a prophetic presence and one that was more confrontational than cooperative—more protest than partner. Washington noted that congregations felt that they had to confront the evils of power in those systems in order to get those systems to deliver social services for their constituencies. At the same time, the prophetic cry against these systems carried with it an assumption that the systems *should* deliver the services. In other words, it was both an antithetical relationship with the system and an assumption that the system was indeed an extension of the people themselves. This is the tension in which we live—that government is both *them* and *us* at the same time.

Therefore, we have to move from a *we/they* mentality to an *us* mentality and see government as an extension of the will of the people. This takes two things: One, it calls government into an accountability relationship with the people. Two, it makes us responsible for shaping the public moral will. We have a responsibility in shaping moral will so that care for the poor is not just a matter of "Where do we put those people so they will cease to be a burden on society?" We have a responsibility to shift the public will into assuming a responsibility to care for the least fortunate among us, rather than to place them in situations that best suit our own personal and community self-interest.

This is one of the geniuses of the community organization movement among faith communities. They make community organizations among congregations a premium. They believe that government is not something *out there*, but that government is an extension of *us*—and that community organization movements have to hold government accountable. So the first shift that we in the communities of faith have to make in this post-welfare era is to reclaim the sense of the truly prophetic by noting that the powers that be are *us*, not *them*.

The second issue that needs to be raised is a shift from reliance on federal and municipal governments as the primary partners to state and county governments. The days of the federal government being the primary partner are over. We have to learn how to interact with state and county and local governments rather than the federal government. Some counties and states are taking

A Neighborhood Conversion

BY ROBERT D. LUPTON

The liquor store that once blighted a South Atlanta neighborhood is gone. Our ministry [FCS Urban Ministries] bought the building and closed it down. Architectural plans have now been drawn to convert the facility into a charming row of retail shops with a spacious multiuse community center in the rear. At a recent groundbreaking celebration, friends and neighbors proudly referred to it as the Gateway Building.

But there was one problem. Abdella, a Muslim merchant who operated a poorly stocked grocery and amply stocked liquor store in one of the three deteriorated storefront businesses in the site, was unwilling to move. And his lease didn't expire until January 2003.

After reviewing our legal options and finding he was in violation of his lease, we found we had legal grounds to evict. Notices of cancellation of the lease were countered by Abdella's attorney's notices to stop threatening and harassing his client. Our counsel advised it could end up being a costly court battle that could take months.

Warnings to Abdella that sitting in the middle

initiatives, but most regions lag far behind.

The third issue to raise is whether or not we need to make a shift from *liberation* as a goal for the poor to *transformation*. I believe that what we need to do theologically is to make a shift from the *Exodus* biblical paradigm to the *Exile*. The difference lies in three particular movements:

One is that in the *Exodus*, the end game was liberation—we get out of Egypt. In the *Exile*, the end game is transformation. We remake Babylon in order to use the resources of Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem. This is why Jeremiah says, "Seek the welfare of the city where I've caused you to be carried away in exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare, you will have welfare." The transformative agenda requires, not so much standing *outside* the system, but working *within* the system and redirecting the resources of that system. This is a corollary, I think, to reclaiming the *we* of prophetic vision.

The second reality in the shift from the *Exodus* to the *Exile* paradigm is in clearly identifying who the enemy is. In the *Exodus*, the enemy is Pharaoh. We don't want to cooperate with Pharaoh. Pharaoh's the bad guy. In the *Exile*, however, the

enemy is both Pharaoh and us. It is both Nebuchadnezzar and the Children of Israel who are being punished for their sins. What this does is remove us from a romanticization of the poor that makes them purely victims of circumstance and removes from them any moral agency. This two-prong strategy both engages the powers that be and also helps poor people to become self-sufficient and helps them to build a community infrastructure.

Nehemiah not only realized that he had to engage the king, but he also had to organize the people. And Nehemiah did his work from the inside. He was a government employee; he was middle-class. His role in the rebuilding of Jerusalem was to take the resources of Babylon back home and rebuild.

I once served under a pastor who was operating under an *Exodus* paradigm. When we spoke of social ministry, he said, "I don't want any of Pharaoh's money." I asked the question, "How about some of Nebuchadnezzar's?" Indeed, when we read *Exodus*, one of the things we discover is that God told the Children of Israel, "As you're leaving Egypt, take some of the gold with you."

of a construction site could compromise the security of his store proved correct. The first night after groundbreaking began, Abdella's store was broken into and looted. But this only stiffened his resolve. Our construction team returned to the drawing board, as the city wouldn't issue a permit for the next phase of the renovation until all hazardous materials were removed from the building—which included the asbestos in Abdella's store. His reaction was an offer to buy him out for six times the amount of his remaining lease. I did not react as a follower of Christ is supposed to act. My wife, Peggy, suggested that we try to see him as a person rather than as an adversary. A respectful conversation over a cup of coffee might lead to a different outcome, she said. Following her suggestion, FCS board member Bob Allen and I decided to pay Abdella a visit. When we entered his dingy store, he appeared wary as he came out from behind a bullet-proof barred area and led us to a back room. Avoiding any reference to the legal issues, we ventured into a discussion about the renovation and the new life that was stirring in the neighborhood. I spread out our master plan featuring more than 300 new homes and a new business center. Abdella seemed genuinely interested. We talked of how the Gateway Building would soon serve the needs of the neighborhood, and how Abdella's liquor store could become an attractive landmark as a well-stocked, competitively priced grocery store. Abdella began to share our excitement. He ventured that if he would build relationships

with his neighbors, stock the foods they needed, and attend local civic league meetings, his store could become a true community store!

By the time we left, Abdella had suggested ways that we could accomplish our mutual goals, even during the construction process. He offered to close his store and move into smaller quarters while the asbestos was being removed from the building. He said he might like a longer-term lease if the neighbors supported him with their business.

Abdella also shared some personal things with us: how ugly accusations had been leveled at him since September 11—yet how proud he was to be an American citizen and proud to have his own business and be able to support his family.

A remarkable transformation is occurring! The sounds of crashing sledgehammers and cutting saws reverberate through the old building. A front-end-loader scoops up heaps of debris into a construction dumpster. But the restoration of more than concrete and steel is happening. It's the sort of conversion that God is most concerned with.

Note: The above experience was excerpted from *Urban Perspectives*, a newsletter of FCS Urban Ministries in Atlanta, Georgia. To learn more, visit www.fcsministries.org.

ROBERT D. LUPTON, Ph.D., an urban strategist and developer, is founder/president of Family Consultation Services/Urban Ministries in Atlanta, Georgia, a nonprofit organization that has developed subdivisions, begun businesses, created housing, and a wide range of services for communities in economically depressed areas.

The third reality is that this job cannot be done by communities of faith alone. We have to get some of the Egyptian gold and some of the Babylonian tablets that will enable us to get to the Cedars of Lebanon. When government is big and we are weak, there's a theological hurdle that keeps us from using government money. The reality is that there needs to be a strategic adoption of practices that enable us to make use of Babylonian and Egyptian resources. So this theological shift from the *Exodus* to the *Exile* calls upon us to use the resources of Egypt and Babylon. It also calls for us to have a different understanding of the role of the middle class. Middle-class congregations in our larger inner-city churches have to understand that their role is not merely to work with the poor, but also to use their strategic positions to influence public policy on behalf of the poor.

I see this as particularly a problematic issue in African-American congregations, which are becoming increasingly commuter-oriented and increasingly middle class. What this means is that we have many African-Americans who are in positions of public influence. These congregations have to refocus their theological identity and see

The transformative agenda requires, not so much standing outside the system, but working within the system.

The true nature of social service in any poor community ought to be teaching the community how to take care of itself and making the community self-sufficient.

themselves not just as public servants, but as people who have access to resources that can be redirected on behalf of the poor.

One of the problems with the integration of the sixties and seventies was that much of it was uncritical. It was merely asking for a piece of the pie. Or as W.E.B. Dubois once put it, "Blacks have asked for a seat on the front of the bus for so long that they forgot to ask where the bus is going." His point was that if the society is sick and all you do is integrate into it, without critiquing the nature of society itself, then you begin to adopt the same sick values, the same consumerism, the same materialism, the same oppression of the poor.

The final question is, How can we develop a system of partnerships between urban and suburban congregations? For years many have viewed suburban congregations as intrusive—ministries that come into the inner city and take over because they believe that they are the ones who know what to do. They come to bring Jesus to the poor, rather than to meet Jesus among the poor.

Jessica Yates, of the Welfare Information Network, poses parallel challenges to the public sector. She calls for state and local welfare agencies to begin the process of involving the faith community. She says states should take initiatives, but then it is up to the communities of faith to follow through.

Yates' second challenge is to identify the legal issues around government/faith-based partnerships. One of the things that the Charitable Choice Amendment has done is that it has enabled us to move from congregation-sponsored social service to congregation-based social service. That's a critical distinction. Congregation-sponsored social service is secular social service that's given by faith-based institutions. We form separate community development corporations or charities or family services. The services delivered may not be different qualitatively from the usual social services. But the more social service we put into a community that emanates from outside the community, the more the community forgets how to take care of itself.

The true nature of social service in any poor community ought to be teaching the community how to take care of itself and making the community self-sufficient, rather than making communities more dependant on agencies, whether faith-based or secular. If congregation-based or congregation-sponsored social services merely repeat the same services that we had in the past, then we will continue to see those neighborhoods disenfranchised—because the communities will be dependent upon services brought in from the outside rather than upon their own resources.

Yates' last challenge is for the partners to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these arrangements. She notes that congregation-based

programs are small and therefore have only marginal impact on a state's welfare caseload. This may be true. However, there is room for growth on the part of parachurch groups, so states should not take this as an opportunity to back away from faith-based partnerships. Indeed, this provides an opportunity to more carefully and effectively monitor such relationships. This can be done through regular government accounting and reporting services and through intermediaries who work directly with faith-based groups in helping them monitor their services.

To summarize our current opportunity, a story is told by Howard Thurman, pastor of the Church for the Fellowship of All People in San Francisco. Thurman tells of being raised in Florida, the grandson of an ex-slave. His grandma was a loving Christian who tried her best to love her neighbors. But her family was rejected because of their poverty, their illiteracy, and their race. One day a neighbor family decided to play a trick on the Thurmans. They gathered a lot of chicken manure and dumped it into Grandma Thurman's backyard to show how the neighborhood felt about the family.

Sometime later, the woman who planned that unkind deed became ill. Determined to respond with Christian love, Grandma Thurman brought some chicken soup and red roses to her neighbor. The woman thanked her for her thoughtfulness, asking, "How did you get your flowers to grow so red and full?" Grandma answered, "Remember the manure that you had dumped into my backyard? God saw it as fertilizer, and he has grown these roses to bless you."

Some people may see welfare reform as a misfortune, but it can be the very fertilizer from which we are able to grow long stems of justice where communities can grow brilliant and full because of the work of God and God's people.

Taken from Dr. Trulear's lecture at Fuller on April 9, 1999. For an audiotape, call 626-584-5227 or E-mail atc@fuller.edu. Or to learn more, write to Dr. Trulear at the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, 101 Washington Ave., Twin Oaks, PA 19014.



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Compassion Is Up Close and Personal

BY LARRY B. LLOYD

One of the major questions in the welfare reform debate has been: What role will religious organizations and churches play? In essence, the federal government is willing to contract with churches and religious nonprofits for the delivery of services to the poor. For some, this is a welcome change in policy that promises to offer resources to churches and religious nonprofits that have heretofore been denied such access. For others, caution is advised before utilizing government dollars for fear that their religious message might be compromised. The Christian church and parachurch organizations that are dedicated to ministry with and among the poor must ask strategic questions as we negotiate this new landscape.

A Biblical Agenda

In our HOPE Christian Community Foundation in the heart of Memphis, we are not sitting around waiting for government grants to do the work of the church. Whether we receive public funds or not is really a nonissue. God has mandated that we proclaim the gospel, disciple the nations, care for the poor—that we identify with the vulnerable, the hungry, the sick, the lame, the prisoner, the drug addict, the unwed teenage mother, and the welfare mom. Can there be any question about God's concern for the "least of these"? Compassion toward the least of these has always been a biblical agenda for God's people.

This has, of course not always been the case among us Western evangelicals. Not too long ago, evangelicals pegged a commitment to social justice as "social gospel." For the last 60 or so years, mainstream American evangelicalism concerned itself largely with personal salvation and personal discipleship. Scholars, activists, and preachers like Ron Sider, Jim Wallis, John Perkins, and Fuller's own Bill Pannell were often suspected of being liberals in evangelical clothing. Many conservative evangelicals moved to the suburbs, started private Christian academies for their kids, and retreated from the front lines of ministry in the city. Those involved in social ministries like tutoring, job training, or affordable housing were carefully scrutinized for evangelical orthodoxy. (I was often asked the question in my early years of ministry

whether or not I was still "preaching the gospel.") It was incredulous to some that the proclamation of the gospel and the doing of the gospel could be kept in balance without sacrificing either.

In *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, Marvin Olasky outlines the church's history of compassion. Compassionate ministry among the poor has not always been marginalized, but once was part and parcel to the everyday life of the believer. Olasky cites John Wesley's advice to "Put yourself in the place of every poor man and deal with him as you would have God deal with you." But somehow the evangelical church strayed from its early roots in America. But we're coming back—or at least many are. A year ago, I heard a conservative evangelical pastor say, "God is specially concerned about the poor, and we need to be as well, if we would be like Jesus."

The Limitations of Government

In the past some in the church failed. Some retreated and let the government take over what the church was best suited to do—and had done unhindered and unfunded until quite recently. Actually, government programming for the poor is fairly new. But government programs cannot provide people what they need. To be sure, the poor need goods and services, health care, and so forth—but what they really need, and what we all need, is compassion. I'm not talking about sentimental or romantic pity for the poor but a gut-wrenching identification and relationship with those in need and in pain. Compassion is seeing as Jesus sees. It means entering into the mess of life, getting involved, and becoming neighbors. Bureaucracy is incapable of compassion. Only people can be compassionate.

This is what the church, the people of God, offer. No government program in the world can compare! Compassion means involvement. It means relationship. If I enter into a relationship with a homeless person, then I don't want to see him or her homeless. I am willing to hear his or her story. If I enter into a relationship with a young gang member, then I am less inclined to condemn him and more likely to provide alternatives. I am more likely to be his friend. If I identify with the

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The poor need goods and services, health care, and so forth—but what they really need, and what we all need, is compassion.

Touching the Lives of God's Children

BY JACK SAMUELSON

A Builder's Report on How He Re-established His Priorities

I have spent almost a lifetime acquiring an education, raising a family, hacking out a career, and trying to get to "the top of the mountain." Along the way I have promoted and supported some worthy causes. Today, I see these as normal activities of a socially conscious person. Were my priorities in the right place? It seemed so. Several years ago, however, I suddenly realized that I had confused my priorities and missed dozens of opportunities for Kingdom work.

THE CHALLENGE

In the late eighties, I heard a sermon in my church by Bob Seipel, president of World Vision. His message: "Use your God-given gifts to reach out and touch the lives of God's children who are in need of a helping hand." I asked my partner-brother, "What can we do? We're not doctors or teachers or social workers. Could we possibly serve God using our talents for building?" We had been in the construction business for over 50 years. Could we bring unique solutions to the homeless and struggling people in transition?

During my 30 years as a Fuller trustee, I listened to countless speeches issuing a challenge to all the trustees (which I took personally) to help the unfortunate. The emphasis was often on the need for education, an economic boost, and decent housing. Sometimes the attention to inequities among the races seemed to be a hot topic of discussion and nothing more. I frequently expressed my conviction that to be effective, leadership must exemplify what it believes and says.

FAILURE AND SUCCESS

By the early nineties, I decided it was time for me to do something. A group of friends and I looked for opportunities to build, remodel, or renovate housing in areas close to our offices in Los Angeles. We launched an effort, knowing very little of how it might work. Looking for examples across the country, we visited several cities. We learned about the impressive work of Habitat for Humanity and of other outstanding housing efforts. We attempted several projects using those

models, but our first efforts were failures.

Our first success was finding and renewing a 6,000-square-foot, three-story, craftsman-style home in Highland Park, a Hispanic neighborhood in Los Angeles. The house was in terrible condition, so the conversion required a complete renovation. We named the restored building *Casa de Alegria* (House of Joy). Today, this haven for women and children who are homeless or suffering from domestic violence includes nine bedroom suites, private bathrooms, a community living room, dining area, play space, and a kitchen with five separate cooking stations. The facility houses eight single women and 15 children. We provide educational, social, and spiritual development opportunities with the help of donors, volunteers, and service organizations. (*Casa* has even received awards for its accurate restoration of a 1900s home style.)

We also have received unexpected rewards from time to time. One we particularly value came from 11-year-old Anthony, who said at a Thanksgiving gathering, "I'm thankful that we could come here when we had nowhere to go." Anthony, his two brothers, and mom were living on the streets in Pasadena in 1999. Today they have "graduated" from *Casa* and moved into an apartment a few blocks away. Mom has a job and the boys are earning honors in school.

ENLARGING THE VISION

Our next project was much larger—a 52-unit apartment complex, which also needed renovation, located in the heart of Pasadena, three blocks from Fuller Seminary. The building formerly was home to drug users, prostitutes, gang members, and families that could not afford to escape. This building required another complete renovation. We created 42 units and saved space for a homework club, student tutoring, a computer lab, and a teen room. As part of our Christian outreach, we also included a chapel and adult meeting room with a fireplace. Residents hold their own worship services there on Sundays and participate in Bible studies and prayer meetings during the week. We called the building "Garfield Agapé Court," in the hope it would have a Christian influence on the residents and neighbors. We believe God is at work at Garfield.

As our projects grew, it became obvious that we needed to bring our efforts under an umbrella, so we formed Beacon Housing, a nonprofit entity for creating innovative, renovated facilities. Since Karen Mitchell, who has a heart for the homeless, came on board, we've added five facilities, including two that will open in March. One, in Altadena, is called "Harvest Time," where 15 single women, recently released from prison,



work on finding their niche in today's world. Sister Gladys, an African-American minister, runs that program.

We are also currently completing "House of Hope" in the Watts area of Los Angeles, where the devastating riots of the sixties and nineties occurred. House of Hope will house larger families and will have up to three bedrooms per unit.

As we have become more involved, a vision has begun to form—one that bridges the gap between homelessness to home ownership. The first step—transitional housing (for people next to homelessness); the second—housing for the working poor; and last and most important—assistance toward home ownership.

OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to providing affordable, acceptable, and assured security in all seven of our projects. In most cases, the cities where we have established Beacon facilities have come forward in a supportive role, including financial assistance. We have reluctantly accepted this help, knowing it will be more difficult to witness about God's love to each resident family. However, our dream is to expand the number of facilities so we can serve more people.

We are praying for a group of supporters among members of churches in our area and from other philanthropic groups with the same goals and commitment. Beacon Housing has also formed an association with Southern California Presbyterian Homes. Soon the construction will start on "Rosewood Court," which will provide seniors in Altadena with 75 units. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is financing that program.

We believe our commitment to *affordable, acceptable, and assured* safe housing sets us apart. What do we mean by affordability, acceptability, and assured security?

"Affordable" means different things to different people. The consensus is to establish affordability by the average income of people in a specific area. Beacon Housing makes a deliberate effort to provide rent that is below what government housing efforts establish as *affordable*.

What is meant by "acceptable"? Samuelson Brothers has always been synonymous with commitment to excellence in construction. For over 50 years we have delivered *product* with consistent quality. We are committed to acceptability.

What do we mean by "assured" security? In today's world, we take steps to provide security fences and gates. But our real commitment is to guide residents to band together as a responsible, safe community. We make every effort to demonstrate responsibility, accountability, and integrity, and we encourage residents to participate, volunteer, and become

leaders in our Beacon Housing programs.

Have all our efforts been successful? No. Has it been easy? No. Some new residents have had little guidance in terms of respecting the property and rights of others. Others, however, are amazingly eager to demonstrate their gratitude for a helping hand. Is the overall effort worth it? Absolutely. Today, we have approximately 300 living spaces, mostly two-bedroom units. Altogether, we have provided a place to stay and the hope of a better life for over 500 people.

BRIDGING THE GAP

We envision replicating the Beacon Housing continuum throughout the Los Angeles area, thereby helping to reduce the housing crisis, strengthen families, and improve neighborhoods.

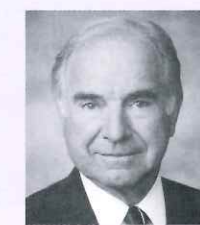
There are many ways, however, to help bridge the gap between poverty and hope. If you are challenged to make a difference in *your* community, you may wish to contribute in one of the following ways:

- Contribute a specific amount for use by a local service organization according to its discretion.
- Establish a special fund for work close to your heart.
- Set up a scholarship for a deserving student.
- Volunteer your time and expertise to a needy organization.

My experience as a trustee at Fuller Seminary has been joyful, but often I have felt inadequately prepared to participate in theological issues. So I hope I will be excused if I quote from the "Gospel According to Jack":

*I was hungry and you gave me food.
I was wounded and you healed my wounds.
I was imprisoned and you visited me.
I was naked and you gave me clothes.
I was homeless and you gave me a place to live—
A place where I learned God loves me.*

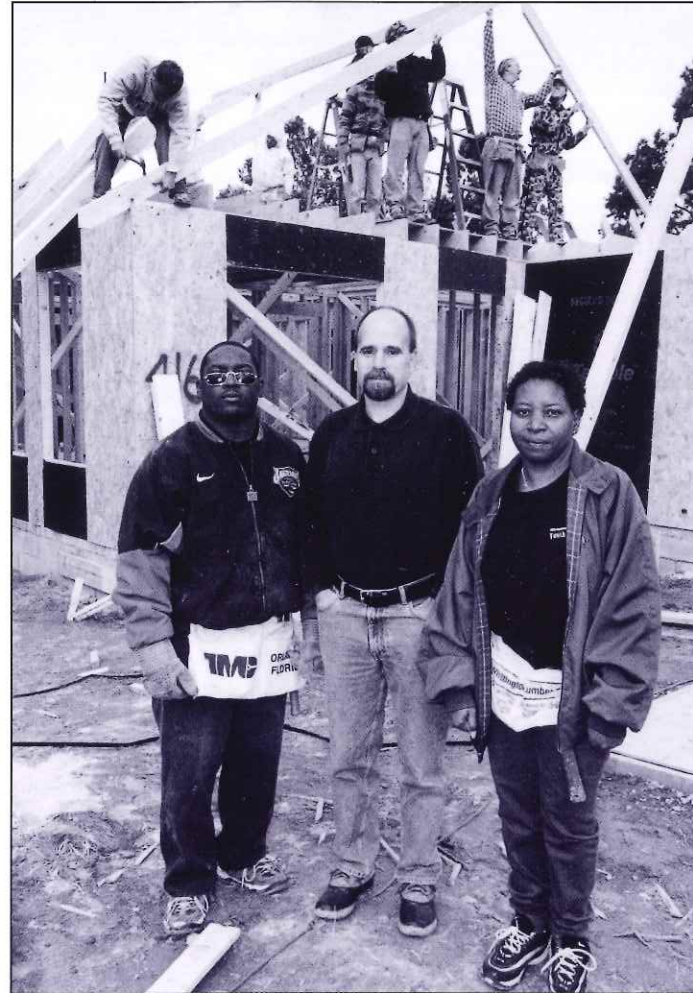
For more information about Beacon's affordable housing and spiritual, educational, and social programs, or to tour the facilities, or to learn more about how your church can share in an opportunity for Christian outreach, write to: Jack Samuelson, Beacon Housing, 5000 Edenhurst Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90039



JACK SAMUELSON, a Fuller trustee, commercial and general contractor, and real estate developer, cofounded Samuelson Brothers and has served as its president and chair of the board since 1957. On behalf of the Samuelson Development Groups, he has received numerous awards and honors, including knighthood investiture to the Royal Order of St. John, conferred by Queen Elizabeth in 1977; the Service Award from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; and the CASE Educational Medal Award.



teenage unwed mother, then I may be more likely to help her through the situation and provide hope for her and her baby, rather than condemn her for her "immorality." But if I leave the poor behind and I move away from the city, from the "prob-



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lems," then these individuals are no longer my neighbors, but instead become my clients, or "those people." Compassion is not like distance learning. It is up close and personal!

The tragedy of suburban/urban sprawl is that it allows me to isolate myself, if I desire, from that which is undesirable. I can drive around the ghetto or Little Saigon on the freeway and never come in contact with life there. I can live my whole life without a relationship with someone who is destitute, only coming into contact with him or her at the Union Mission's annual Thanksgiving dinner. If I am disconnected and distant from the poor, then I have to be intentional about compassion—I have to be intentional about neighboring.

Compassionate Relationships

This is what the people of God bring to the table. We offer ourselves, our time, our talent, and our treasure. And, most importantly, we bring our rela-

tionship with Jesus Christ to the table. Just as Jesus "became flesh and dwelt among us," so too we enter into relationships with the vulnerable.

We evangelicals must engage the city. We must engage the poor. We must identify with their struggles, needs, and concerns. We must enter into relationship with them and get involved. We must love our churches, our mission agencies, and our friends to incarnate the love of God in the depths of needy communities. We must because we are people of compassion. We are people who follow Jesus. We are obedient to his call on our lives. We don't get involved out of guilt or out of paternalism, but out of deep gratitude to God for his grace and forgiveness. We intentionalize neighboring because it's at the heart of what God in Christ did for us: "He who was rich for our sakes became poor that we might become rich in him."

But when we get involved in the lives of the vulnerable, the poor, the homeless, it is important to keep the following principles in mind:

- *We are Christ-centered, first and foremost.* Our ministry, whether here or abroad, whether in the city or the suburb, is motivated by our love for Christ and his love for the world. It is his compassion that compels us. Apart from this, then we can fall prey to paternalism, serving the poor because we feel sorry for them or because they need us. It is Christ's love that compels us. It is his love that motivates us. It is compassion that moves us to engagement in the lives of the "least of these." If partnership with federal or local dollars forces us to compromise this principle, then we say, "No thanks."
- *Because we are Christ-centered, we will be people-centered as well,* becoming personally involved with others. People need people more than they need programs! Unfortunately, most of the tax-funded programs I've seen in the past 30 years are just that: programs, with people treated like numbers, not faces. Jesus touched lepers who no one else would touch. He engaged a Samaritan woman of questionable moral character. He was a friend to tax gatherers and sinners. He took time out to speak with a woman who had been sick many years—long enough to hear her story. Programs need to be run well, but they are only means to build relationships.
- *Our ministries must be empowering when it comes to people in need.* While we must proclaim the gospel, we must also empower. If a teenager can't read, then we figure out how to solve that problem with him. If a person is homeless, then we figure out how to help her

get a job so that person can put a roof over her head. Getting them to the homeless shelter is only the first step. Empowerment means helping them toward some sort of economic stability as well. If a whole community is poor, then not only do we need to teach people to fish rather than give them a fish, but we have to work with them in helping them to own the pond! Empowerment takes time and lots of it. We must take a long view. There are no quick fixes here!

- *Our ministry must seek to empower indigenous leadership.* We must seek to strengthen and support the leadership already in the trenches. The most effective, systemic, and lasting change in communities of need will be developed and sustained by the leaders in those communities. This means asking rather than telling, listening rather than dictating top-down. It doesn't matter who gets the credit. Or, to put it positively, we must collaborate with churches, other nonprofits, and local government wherever possible, thus leveraging our resources many times over.

There are other principles we might cite, but these are important for anyone involved in the current debate of the church's role in welfare reform. If we are committed to these principles, then when we partner with government, we have our ground rules already in place.

The government at all levels most definitely has a role in social justice and welfare. Our government should do what it can. Our tax dollars make government work, and we should demand that they be as concerned about the desperation in our cities as we are. Government has a role for the common good and is one means of common grace. But in the area of partnership, government cannot expect churches and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to quit doing precisely what they are designed to do—which is the proclamation of the gospel.

Faith is the ingredient that is peculiar to us. And with faith comes hope. And with hope comes changed lives, changed values, changed worldviews. If faith is what makes us unique and effective, then to jettison faith in order to partner with government will, in fact, doom us to failure. But when you combine that faith with personal relationships with people in need, the prospects for life-changing ministry are dramatic.

Government dollars cannot be used to fund evangelism, Bible studies, preaching, or what we

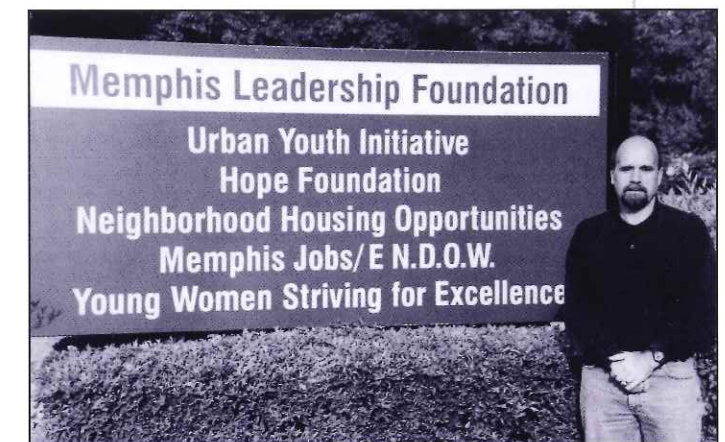
might call "direct ministry." Those dollars can be used for services like food, clothing, job training, medical care, and other services. But these services cannot be tied directly to the proclamation of a religious message. Therein lies some of the problem. Our message and our actions should be inseparable. How can they not be?

It is a new day. Welfare reform has opened up a conversation about how the church and FBOs can partner with government without totally compromising the latter's faith commitments. And I think we ought to enter the dialogue and look for possible partnerships. We know the church is committed to the poor, the oppressed, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, the strangers. Welfare and other public programs have let us off the hook far too long. After all, we *are* our brother's keeper.

So what is the church's responsibility? Could it be that the well-intentioned debate around welfare reform may be God's wake-up call to his church? Could it be that we have so capitulated to personal wealth and success that we've lost sight of compassion? Will the church step up to the plate and do the work of compassion for the "least of these," whether or not it gets government assistance to do so? These are the real questions we must answer.

God is giving us a second chance—a chance to be on the front lines of compassion. As the poor get poorer, as the gap between rich and poor grows greater, we face a huge challenge, particularly in our nation's inner cities. Or is this our opportunity?

LARRY B. LLOYD (M.Div., '83; D.Min., '89) is the founder-director of HOPE Christian Community Foundation, a supporting arm of the Memphis Leadership Foundation, the largest nonprofit homebuilder in Tennessee. To learn more about Dr. Lloyd's holistic ministry in Memphis—that also includes evangelism and discipleship, health and education, racial reconciliation, and community development—write to: HOPE, 5100 Poplar Ave., Suite 2412, Memphis, TN 38137.



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Empowerment and Peace from Palestine to Cincinnati

BY WILLIAM E. PANNELL

When we hear words such as "welfare" and "affirmative action," we tend to think of "them"—black people and brown people and poor whites—who, according to popular myth, have bled the government and public coffers dry in order to stuff their inner-city hovels with TVs and get their kids an education at Stanford. It would rarely occur to us to include American and multinational corporations and research faculties at major universities under this rubric. Socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the poor? No way, we would argue. But the truth is, our country has a built-in welfare system. Welfare, in some form or other, is a system our society has never gotten beyond. It is part of the way governance takes place. As I.F. Stone commented years ago, "It is one thing for poor people to march on Washington; it is another thing to remember that the rich have been marching on that great city since its founding as the seat of power in this nation, and they march every day of the year."

This is one of the realities that leads to our ongoing difficulty in understanding the issue of power. It is so elusive and probably something of a myth as it is popularly understood and sought after. (Or is it Machiavellian in its practice? But then Machiavelli and Nietzsche are cultural icons to many of today's world leaders.)

Defining Realities

For a historical perspective on the issues involved in empowerment and peace, I flipped through the pages of the U.S. Commission Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, the so-called Kerner Report. Released during President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration in 1968, it was the product of an intense search for the causes of the violence that shook major American cities in the sixties. It contributed to the country's understanding of the relationship between institutional racism and economic deprivation in these cities. It has been nearly 35 years since that report was issued, yet a cursory look at the text reads like excerpts from the pages of any current newspaper.

Earlier, Michael Harrington published *The Other America*, which galvanized the Kennedy administration to launch a war on poverty. Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed* continues this tradition, making

the same points in 2001 as Harrington made in the early sixties. If we have made such significant progress in race relations, in urban-related issues, and we have; if we are more informed about the relationship between institutionalized discrimination and poverty, and we are; then why is there the awesome persistence of these issues after 35 years? How do we explain the racial explosions that exposed the ever-present culture of denial in Cincinnati last year? Or the hurried attempts of religious and secular leaders after September 11 to assure the Muslims among us that we are truly a nation of tolerance? Waging peace in Cincinnati sounds very much like a similar challenge on a larger scale facing Colin Powell in the Middle East. In the world's cities, torn between warring factions, communities are divided into mutually hostile *casbahs*—the *haves* versus the *have-nots* versus the *have-a-little, want-mores*.

Recent decisions at state and federal levels to restore monies to alleviate the suffering of people in high-risk areas, especially the children, reinforce the hope that leadership is present to lead our communities beyond ideology to reality. Some of our leaders have begun to agree with Max De Pree, leadership expert and trustee at Fuller Seminary, who argues that the first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. Former Senator Daniel Moynihan made an attempt to do this when he called the 1996 welfare reform bill the greatest gamble in social policy in the twentieth century. It is this gamble that sets the argument for empowerment among the poor.

Richard Riordan, the former mayor of Los Angeles, in announcing his Targeted Neighborhoods Initiative program for community development, attempted to define reality by asking, "Can government truly empower?" The adverb is crucial here. What does "truly" mean? As over against what—*false* empowerment? Or is there a reservation hidden in the question which provides a way out if the cost is more than government is willing to pay? Even President Clinton seemed to back out of the welfare reform proposal at this very point.

What Is Empowerment?

What would empowerment look like? Do we even understand the meaning of the term? We know the jargon, and Fuller scholars have both worked on the theory and its practice for some years, although not,

it seems, in the context of American urban life. So we can speak about "power elites" and "power encounters" and "powerlessness" with some degree of understanding. But does empowerment work among *powerless* people whose adversaries and potential allies are absent? And what is the relationship between powerlessness and violence? Is this the real cause of urban unrest from Los Angeles to Cincinnati, from Palestine to Kandahar?

Rollo May observed years ago that to the extent people are rendered powerless, their tendency toward violence increases. To this renowned psychologist, violence was not an expression of power, but of powerlessness. The report of the first Black Power conference held in Newark at the end of the sixties concluded that the agenda for black people in America was headed by a need for *identity, community, and power*.

I agree with Michael Parenti's understanding that "power is used not only to pursue interest, but as a crucial factor in defining interest or pre-defining the field of choice within which one must define one's interests." It seems clear that there are at least two kinds of power: There is the kind that enables people to effect change in their lives and in the lives of others; the kind that enables people to take charge of their lives and to say yes and no and make it stick; the ability to define a group's field of choices and to effect the actions of others in pursuit of those choices.

es. Then there is that form of power that Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rick Bragg describes when reflecting upon his childhood in the rural Appalachian South. He says that he wanted power "not so much to do a thing as having power to stop things from being done to you."

The Role of Government

At root here is the deeper political question of the relationship between powerlessness and the future of democracy itself. If our cities are divided into war zones, into mutually hostile *casbahs*, not unlike the cities of Northern Ireland, then what does empowerment mean? Larry Lloyd, of the Memphis Leadership Foundation, suggests that empowerment does not mean simply teaching the hungry how to fish, it means teaching them how to own the pond. That sets up an inevitable clash between those who have power and those who don't. Former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan asked: "Can government truly empower"? Many Americans—especially those we seek to empower—when viewing the role of government, agree with Lisbeth Shorr, who wrote in her recent book that "the moral underpinnings for social action, especially by government, are not powerful enough in the cynical closing years of the twentieth century to sustain *what* needs to be done on a scale *that* needs to be done." She elaborates by saying that

To the extent people are rendered powerless, their tendency toward violence increases.

What Leaders in the Field Say

Quotes from the Congressional Field Hearing before the Subcommittee on Empowerment of the Committee on Small Business, House of Representatives, held in Fort Wayne, Indiana, September 19, 1997

At the heart of our discussion is exploring the role of faith-based organizations and why they provide such a critical link to the present and future development of urban families and communities. I believe there are four primary reasons for their effectiveness:

- Many leaders and workers like myself live in the communities they serve.
- We approach the task of urban ministry from a sense of calling, not obligation.
- Residents of urban communities are not projects, but people, and their needs are not simple, but complex and holistic.
- As privately supported nonprofit organizations, systems of accountability and responsibility can be enforced at all levels of involvement.

[President] George W. Bush says, "Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in our hearts or a sense of purpose in our lives. The government cannot bring peace of

mind. It cannot fill the spiritual well from which we draw strength from day to day. Only faith can do that."

Kathy H. Dudley is president of Dallas Leadership Foundation (an organization that links affluent communities to less fortunate ones), and the founder of the Voice of Hope Ministries in Dallas, Texas.

I suggest that the greatest loss to these communities is hope . . . and the missing link in the formula for empowerment is hope. How do we encourage hope? When all other organizations have come and gone, churches and faith-based organizations have remained in these communities. These organizations have been the few enduring entities. Businesses have closed or moved out, houses have been built and torn down, government programs have come and gone, but the church and faith-based organizations have remained. I suggest that the government work with these organizations that are experts in hope building.

Joseph Jones, Ph.D., serves as associate professor of justice education and Senior Fellow of the Center for Justice and Urban Leadership at Taylor University in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The faith community is particularly successful. Faith-based programs work. We get results when it comes to

(Continued on next page)

How do we explain the racial explosions that exposed the ever-present culture of denial in Cincinnati last year? Or the hurried attempts of religious and secular leaders after September 11 to assure the Muslims among us that we are truly a nation of tolerance?

empowerment because of our anthropology—that is, we know that humankind is spiritual and physical, theological and economic, moral and cultural. We take a holistic approach to *empowerment*. By "empowerment," I mean helping people to understand who they are as valuable persons created in God's image and objects of his grace and mercy while, at the same time, working with them so that they might be a blessing to others. We know that at the very core of our existence, we are relational. Given this understanding, the faith community ministers to the whole person and to the whole community. We never divorce the spiritual from the physical, the theological from the economic, the moral from the cultural. We evangelize and we create small businesses. We conduct Bible studies and we build housing. We teach abstinence and we teach English as a second language. We do good works and we proclaim our faith.

Larry B. Lloyd, *D.Min.*, is founder/director of the HOPE Foundation, a supporting arm of the Memphis Leadership Foundation, the largest nonprofit homebuilder in Tennessee.

Truly the government has the best deal going, in that it has faith-based agencies doing so much without public-sector funding and financing. The people who support faith-based agencies from the private sector are people who are also paying taxes. Government is getting a double blessing in the kinds of things that faith-based agencies are doing, because

tax dollars fund government efforts and, at the same time, those same taxpayers are tithing or sending private support to faith-based agencies offering what I believe to be some of the most effective services in the country. Faith-based agencies also demonstrate a phenomenal ability to be efficient and effective.

David E. Bates is executive director of the 150-year-old Olive Branch Mission, an agency that provides food, shelter, and community planning in Chicago's South Side neighborhoods.

There is a broad concern that for neighborhoods to flourish, they must have streets that are safe, schools that educate, an economy that is viable, spiritual and ethical leadership, and an active political life. We know that a community will not remain healthy if it is not economically viable. We also know that a community will not remain healthy if it does not attract, foster, and retain capable leadership. We know, too, that a community will not remain healthy if it is devoid of spiritual and moral moorings. Our challenge is to inspire visions and create realistic strategies to reweave the fabric of community with the very kinds of neighbors that once made our neighborhoods healthy places to raise families.

Robert D. Lupton is president of FSC Urban Ministries in Atlanta, Georgia, a ministry that works with local residents and businesspeople on the renewal of economically depressed areas.

only if all concerned parties develop concrete, doable, long-term goals with built-in accountabilities for results, will public doubt be dissipated.

So what are some of these long-term goals for empowerment? And how do we ensure a large measure of accountability for their results? The issues are so large and so many. I think of schools, of health care, of families and children especially. Then there is the matter of jobs, especially for wage-earners who are in jeopardy in direct proportion to their inability to provide for their families. And these are often the working poor. There can be no long-term empowerment without economic viability. There probably needs to be special empowerment focus groups aimed at these distinct publics. One role an empowerment committee could assume would be to help Americans, especially middle-class Americans of all hues, to see how all these lingering issues are all connected and how they affect all our lives if left unattended.

Establishing Partnerships

As a starter, we must identify the "villages" within our urban centers, recognize the leadership in place, and listen to its realities. There are such communities where families are intact, kids learn in spite of their schools, Dad is in the house—and when he's not, neighbors stand in as extended family members. But these communities are under siege by

gangs, drug dealers, and economic deprivation. Furthermore, they have no experience in dealing with government bureaucracies. These communities cannot make it on their own. They need to become connected with outside resources. And these outside sources need to learn how to listen to the expertise found in these neighborhood-based networks. This is the stuff that creates partnerships of integrity.

At the Christian end of such partnerships, this means establishing a presence within these villages. Empowerment cannot be done by commuting. Even God could not empower our distressed race from a distance! But government has a problem here. It does not have the flexibility or the idiosyncratic style needed to serve these communities. For instance, the tendency of government is to demand compliance—when flexibility is what is needed. This is why millions of dollars earmarked for urban needs do not "trickle down." The money gets absorbed in departments making surveys and gathering data in order to apply for the next grant.

When he began his administration, Mayor Richard Riordan told local minority communities not to expect anything from government unless they first got their act together. When asked by community activists what city government could do for them, his standard answer was, "Nothing, period. They have to get together and have a will to improve the quality of life within their own neighborhoods. Unless they come together, there is nothing govern-

ment can do for them." The citizens of Los Angeles' minority communities could only gather that they had been counted out as participants in the democratic process—that they simply didn't count.

Later on in his administration, however, Mayor Riordan changed his formula. A subsequent initiative, while still demanding local self-help, was an effort to seek out communities, offer assistance, mobilize leadership, and provide financial assistance. It was a radical shift for the mayor's office, but one that is currently being mirrored in cities throughout the country. In many ways, this is really at the heart of the issue of empowerment, the very nature of a democratic society. Where local leadership is powerless or nonexistent, government can take the initiative to seek out potential leaders and train them for leadership. Such training is a necessary part of the process of empowerment.

Government must also partner with communities to assist in creating jobs. Citizens in urban villages, now relieved of the burden of welfare, are in desperate need of employment. This has worsened since the events of September 11, but the downturn had begun before that day. Now there are thousands of middle-class Americans without jobs, and the trauma that this induces goes far beyond what the poor live with every day. Many people now have the feeling that "we" have become "them"—that somehow *we* have fallen from grace in our own country. Without careful and courageous leadership at all levels of our society, there will be hard times ahead as pressures increase to mount a return to a welfare system disguised to serve the interests of the newly marginalized middle class.

It is not likely that the President can ignore these realities while urging Americans to continue to be united in the war against terrorism. Local businesses, suffocating under a pile of government regulations, have reduced their willingness to get involved in hiring nontrained people. Government needs to assist by providing incentives for them to get involved. If there are no factories, office buildings, stores, or banks in these communities, someone in government needs to ask why. They also need to ask how government can help in assisting capital formation in poor neighborhoods.

Then there are the issues of schools, and health care for the poor, especially the children, and matters surrounding the courts and the judicial system as they affect the poor, and policing. Surrounding all these issues is the challenge to government to demonstrate that it can make a difference in the lives of marginal Americans.

We Americans have a vast storehouse of goodwill. Yet many today think that no good thing can come out of the Nazareth by the Potomac—as evidenced in the political jokes told by popular talk-show hosts. But people of goodwill must come together, not just in cynicism, but in Congress,

where a concerted attack can be mounted to counter public distrust. Today, many in our country have a "trust deficit," as Lisbeth Shorr calls it. We need to address this problem.

Our Responsibility as Christians

The entire issue of empowerment has strong evangelical implications. We are all parts of each other, and we operate out of the same theological and spiritual paradigm that takes its starting point from the cross of Jesus Christ. For if power means anything, given the human condition, it means transformation of lives through the energy of the gospel. If Jesus preached the gospel to the poor as a certification that he was the Promised One, then that act was more than words. It meant that he was part of the proclamation and that he followed his sermons in solidarity with his people.

We see Christ hanging there on the cross, an outcast in large part because he took sides with outcasts—widows, orphans, the politically disenfranchised. There is a powerful series of lessons here for all of us, and one of them raises serious questions about partnerships between faith-based communities and government.

How are Christian believers to understand power in the light of the cross and the contention of Scripture that Jesus was crucified in weakness, then raised in power? What are the implications of this for Christian behavior among the dispossessed in our land? As Christians, we behave according to our measure of faith. And faith keeps us at these struggles long after others have left the field. *We have* to believe. We believe because unbelief dooms us to cynicism, despair, nihilism, and other devastating forms of personal and corporate suicide. We Christians are among the few who believe that the age of miracles is not past. It is inconceivable to us that a society as rich in resources as ours cannot find ways to empower its people. It is time for us, as believers in God, in America, and in its people, to get together—beyond ideologies. The future of democracy and the integrity of our Christian witness is at stake.



WILLIAM E. PANNELL, *D.D.*, senior professor of preaching and special assistant to the president of Fuller Seminary, is the integrator of this issue of Theology, News and Notes. Dr. Pannell was a member of the seminary's Board of Trustees from 1971 to 1974 and has been a member of the Fuller faculty since that time. He served as the Arthur DeKruyter/

Christ Church Oak Brook Professor of Preaching at Fuller from 1992 to 1999. Among his widely read writings are *Evangelism from the Bottom Up* (Zondervan, 1991), *My Friend, the Enemy* (Word Books, 1968), and *The Coming Race Wars? A Cry for Reconciliation* (Zondervan, 1993).

If power means anything, given the human condition, it means transformation of lives through the energy of the gospel.

Where the Doors Never Close

BY STEVEN PATTIE

From the beginning, rescue missions in every city have provided "soup, soap, and salvation" to all who entered.

More than likely, there is a rescue mission in your city. Even likelier, someone in your congregation knows a man, woman, or child whose life has changed because of their encounter with this urban outpost. Perhaps it was even a member of his or her own family.

People who come to missions have exhausted every imaginable resource and have nowhere else to turn. They are folks like Mary. With no means of support, she left a physically abusive husband and found a safe haven for her and her two children. But she also found a faith in God she had never known. Or Henry, who scuttled a great career in management with a cocaine addiction. He is living proof that a new beginning can be found through faith in Jesus Christ. And then there was John who "should've been dead a hundred times," but whose life was changed by the challenging Christian love at a local mission. His renewed life and commitment to Christ helped him leave the streets, rise above his addiction to drugs, reunite with his family, and build a good career as a carpenter.

They are folks like you and me. A Gallup survey a few years ago revealed that one in six Americans fear that they are as vulnerable as Mary,



Henry, or John. When you realize that 73 percent of today's homeless are on the streets for the first time, the reality hits that the person pushing a reluctant shopping cart packed with his worldly belongings, scrounging for food in a dumpster, or with her back

against a cold wall mumbling for a handout, could be you.

From the beginning, rescue missions in every city have provided "soup, soap, and salvation" to all who entered. Not infrequently, they were easy to locate in every city's Skid Row district by the neon "Jesus Saves" sign proclaiming the gospel from the rooftop. Their light, neon or otherwise, has never been kept under a bushel.

The Rev. Stephen Burger, executive director of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, has noted that the model for missions is the story of the Good Samaritan. He was one who not only rescued the victim from the ditch where his assailants had left him, but took him to an inn for long-term care and treatment. The rescue mission treats the whole person, body and spirit.

The good news is that "three hots and a cot"—the nutritious meals, the hot showers, and the warm beds—are still faithfully provided at these "inns" around the world. And the gospel is still preached. However, the even better news is that what were once small operations with limited resources are now frequently the leading urban evangelists in their respective cities. As the needs have increased, so also have their services exponentially exploded, with many rescue missions having budgets that annually exceed \$5 million. In addition to providing the basics of food and shelter, most rescue missions offer numerous services to help the poor finally break out of the homeless and/or addiction syndrome. These include extensive rehabilitation programs, Christian education, vocational opportunities, youth and family services, prison outreach, medical clinics, and legal and literary services. They also offer a host of specialized programs for women and children, the mentally ill, the elderly, street youth, people with AIDS, and the urban poor.

These 275 rescue missions across North America and around the world are part of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions. It is rooted in a movement founded by a man named David Naismith who began the first city mission in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1826. It was the beginning of an urban evangelistic movement focused on the unreached poor that the churches were unable or unwilling to reach. The movement went on to sweep through Europe and North America and

eventually moved on to such far reaches as Australia. The movement has its roots in the command that has been fundamental to the work of the church from the beginning—to rescue the poor, the powerless, the lonely, the suffering, the sick, the drifters, those without families, homes, or work, and often without faith or hope. Serving "the least, the last, and the lost," they hold fast to the command that "whatsoever you do to the least of your brothers and sisters, you do unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

An ex-convict with a history of counterfeiting and robbery named Jerry McAuley is regarded as the founder of inner-city mission work in the United States. In the wake of his conversion and release from the infamous Sing Sing Prison, he established the Walter Street Mission in 1872 (now known as the New York City Rescue Mission) that remains to this day the oldest rescue mission in the United States. Like other missionaries around the country, the commitment of this extraordinary disciple was to set up missions "where I am most needed and where no one else wants to go."

Men, women, and children—with and without faith and almost always without hope—come through the doors of the mission in your city every day. They include the innocent "throw-away" kid, the threadbare widow, the old veteran down on his luck, and the poor immigrant, all for whom we are sympathetic. But these missions also serve what McAuley originally termed the less likeable "unworthy" poor—the alcoholics, addicts, ex-cons, criminals, and prostitutes. The missions serve everyone who comes because, like McAuley who once "was one," there is hope for each and every person.

As Burger recently noted, America's homeless "no longer wear the face of the 55-year-old alcoholic man; they look more and more like young crack addicts, battered women and children, prostitutes, gamblers, and AIDS sufferers." On any given day, about 600,000 people are living either on the streets or in shelters, trying to stay alive.

Remarkably, when combined, these 270 rescue ministries make up the sixth-largest charity in America. Their cumulative budgets annually total more than \$440 million. Most of the funding comes from individual donations and churches. Each year, these ministries serve more than 30 million meals and provide 12 million nights of lodging to the homeless and the poor in the inner cities of the United States, Canada, and overseas. That translates to more than 82,000 meals served every day and 33,000 nights of lodging provided every night to men, women, and children. Most important, each person is challenged with hope and the

opportunity to begin anew.

Last year, missions graduated more than 12,000 men and women to self-sufficiency from long-term Christian-based rehabilitation programs. And the best news of all is that graduates of these programs have a better than 50-percent chance of achieving self-sufficiency. In fact, many missions boast success rates much higher than that.

Increasingly, the government acknowledges that faith-based programs are almost always more demonstrably efficient and successful than their government-run counterparts, which by definition must exclude a vital spiritual dynamic from their rehabilitation agenda. They also know how to stretch a dollar more effectively than anyone can possibly imagine. "Skid Row is not a geographical location," says the Rev. Mickey Kalman, a former alcoholic and addict that now heads the Bridgeport Rescue Mission in Connecticut, "it is a heart condition. Unless you change a homeless individual's heart—not just



his mind and body—he will remain homeless."

We live in an age where personal accountability often takes a back seat to blaming someone or something else. However, the call from each mission's pulpit every night is that each person must take individual responsibility for the need to change, but that he or she can only make that change by an act of God's mercy and grace.

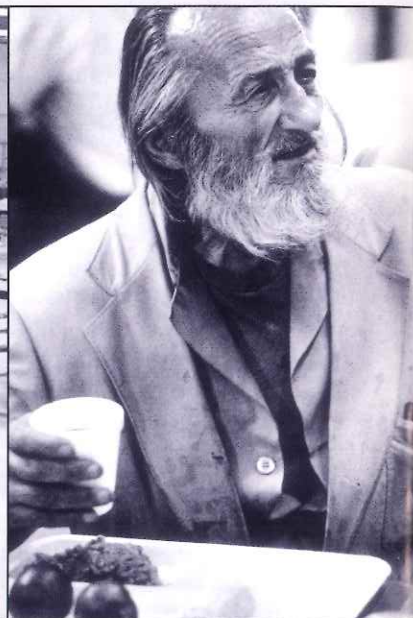
Rescuing one life at a time, these urban ministries are nurturing each person's journey in a social environment that empowers each person with the means to abandon a season or, in many cases, a career of homelessness, hunger, and addiction. These ministries are making an indelible mark on people's lives all across America. Change and recovery is fundamentally an affair of the heart. And changing people's lives is at the institutional heart of every rescue mission.

For more information about the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, or to find out more about the one nearest you, call 816-471-8020 or visit the website at www.rescuemissions.org.



STEVEN PATTIE (M.Div., '78) is management supervisor at the Russ Reid Company in Pasadena, California, the largest marketing and communication firm in the United States that specializes in working on behalf of nonprofit organizations. Pattie has spent most of the past 14 years focused on development efforts in behalf of rescue missions across America. The former president of New College Berkeley, he is also a visual artist and writer.

"Skid Row is not a geographical location, it is a heart condition. Unless you change a homeless individual's heart—he will remain homeless."



The View from Street Level

BY RALPH E. PLUMB

Beatrice showed up at our door with three beautiful children, including baby Isaiah. Unlike other women who come to us fleeing domestic violence or those with substance-abuse issues, she was simply unable to pay her rent any longer. Not having a wage-earning spouse and with a 33-month wait in Los Angeles County to access affordable housing using a Section 8 voucher, her option was the street. Once on the street in the central city—Skid Row—her only option was the 110-year-old Union Rescue Mission (of which I am privileged to serve

as its president).

Of the four major missions and many other social-service providers in downtown Los Angeles, we are the only facility that accepts women and children on an emergency-services basis "24/7" [24 hours a day, 7 days a week]. It is a dark, dangerous, and wonderful place to serve in ministry!

Over the last few years, we have experienced an alarming 1,040-percent increase in homeless women and children. All our beds are full. All our overflow cots are full. My monthly report from the Program Ministry Division shows these sobering statistics for "nights of shelter" during just the month of January 2002:

Guest women	3,576
Children	2,999
Program women	1,228
Families	1,353
Guest men	5,612
Program men	3,811

It's not right that anyone in America should live like this! These are wonderful people—each with a story, each with a simultaneous look of longing and despair in their eyes. And from our vantage point "at street level," welfare reform *has* played a contributing role to this escalating human misery. In 1996 when AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) metastasized, not reformed, into TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)—resulting from the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act" the benefit level for a

(Above) Union Rescue Mission guests enjoy nutritious meals; receive much-needed clothing and supplies; are tutored in the Learning Center; and (left) are given clean and safe places to spend the night.



family of three dropped to one-third of the U.S. established poverty level. Thus, contrary to policy intentions, welfare reform does not provide relief from poverty and declining welfare rolls. It simply means that fewer people are receiving benefits without becoming more employable or better off financially.

But if this sounds like government-bashing liberalism—it isn't. Like many Americans, I truly believe that reforming our pervasive welfare mentality was and is a necessary national goal. What needs to happen *now* is a *war on homelessness* with the galvanized national commitment of our war on terrorism. I am not suggesting the likes of a Johnson-era "war on poverty"—federalized and bureaucratized—but rather an awakening of the church to its mandate and blessing to once again serve the poor and needy with the compassion of Christ. For one to serve requires one to be aware. Thus, we all need to guard against the "NIMBY" disease ("not in my backyard"). If it isn't—then we don't. How we need to embrace 1 Corinthians 12:25-26, understanding that we are all part of one body, and that when one suffers, we all do.

"The Lord is full of compassion and mercy" (James 5:11). Redemptive history overflows with expressions of God's mercy, chronicled in Scripture and in the writings of the church over the centuries. Mercy is one of the distinct attributes of God's nature and an integral part of God's relationship with his creation. Throughout history, God has reached out compassionately to humankind. And, as Christians, we are called to be *Christlike*. Thus, mercy is an important expression of the character of God, which he desires to see manifest in his people—in the community of believers. The tangible outpouring of God's mercy expresses itself through the ministry of compassion. Therefore, mercy and compassion represent two of the most important themes in the

mission of the church. It is vitally important that we in the church remain committed to the ministry of compassion. Yet works of compassion in the mission of the church have varied in theological commitment and practical intensity over the years.

I believe that God is speaking to us in the Fuller community, as well as the larger Body of Christ, to serve in ministries of compassion. These ministries provide unique avenues to inaccessible or underserved people. They help break down walls of isolation. Ministries of compassion bring our incarnational Christ from liturgy into places of pain and need and opportunity.

As someone wisely said, "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." Join us on Skid Row in lighting a candle and, thus, see your own reflection in the eyes of a homeless child of God!

To learn more about the Union Rescue Mission, visit www.unionrescuemission.org. To learn how you can help in its ministry, visit www.urmvolunteers.org or call: 213-347-6300.



RALPH E. PLUMB (M.Div., '79) currently serves as president of the Union Rescue Mission, the oldest mission organization in Los Angeles and the largest of its kind in the U.S. His 30 years of ministry to the needy have taken him to 90 world countries in the development of humanitarian aid programs in areas as diverse as California, South Africa, Honduras, and Vietnam—while serving as president of International Aid for 10 years and as a director of both World Vision U.S. and World Vision International for 11 years. During those years, he also served as president of the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations.

The Small Church with a Big Dream

BY JEAN BURCH

What they lacked in experience, they made up in determination, hard work, and a lot of faith.

Several decades ago, the Community Baptist Church in Pasadena, California, founded by Jesse W. Coleman in 1938, took seriously Matthew 25:40: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me." Among Pastor Coleman's ideas on how to help those who were less fortunate in the surrounding inner-city community, was his dream to build affordable housing for low-income families in the northwest area of town. It became the dream of that small African-American congregation for many years.

The congregation had no experience on how to develop a nonprofit corporation, nor did they have any experience in how to operate a 133-unit apartment building. What they did have was faith in God's Word that they could do all things through Christ who strengthened them. What they lacked in experience, they made up in determination, hard work, and a lot of faith.

The Realization of a Dream

First, the church formed a committee to begin the project. Two years later, the church members had organized a nonprofit corporation and



received a grant of \$100,000 from Inner-City Housing Corporation. Then the real work began. After many meetings and negotiations with HUD, the city of Pasadena, architects, contractors, realtors,

developers, property owners, consultants, and neighbors, the first apartment construction began. The dream of the church was about to become a reality.

The Community Arms Apartments' dedication and Open House took place in 1974. With 133 units and 400 residents, the Arms became a successful, affordable housing property that provided safe and adequate housing for members of the community. It was planned, organized, developed, and controlled by the church members, and run by the church's corporation, with a nine-member board of directors and a resident manager of the apartments.

Since that time, in its nearly 30-year history, the Arms has housed more than 22,000 people. But the facility has accomplished more than that. The Arms corporation has been instrumental in enabling the career training of over 450 youths. In addition to a state-of-the-art computer center, a mini-library, a Bible club, after-school programs, and art, music, and dance classes, the corporation provided many social services for the Arms' residents over the years. Among its many success stories, it has produced a medical doctor, a pharmacist, and an ordained minister with Doctor of Divinity credentials.

The Formation of New Partnerships

I watched the Community Arms being built as I was growing up, and I saw the transformation of its residents that occurred. Consequently, 29 years after the building of Arms and the resulting increased membership of the Community Baptist Church, I returned to the church to serve as an assistant pastor under my father, John W. Burch, the church's third pastor. And four years later, I became the church's fourth (and first female) pastor.

The church's congregation has continued to expand its heart for taking care of those in the community. In 2000, the church became the faith-based partner of a housing development called King's Villages, a property that houses 1,200 residents in 313 units and spans six city blocks. Located just a few blocks from Community Arms, the huge property is nestled in an inner-city community that had become pockmarked by crime, gang activity, and drugs. For several generations, the

King's Village residents had lived in what seemed a prison-like environment. The property was surrounded by dreary iron-rod fences and had no yard irrigation. The apartment dwellers had lived with broken plumbing, deficient heating, damaged walls and ceilings, and an unconcerned landlord. It seemed like there was a voice crying out in the wilderness for someone to care.

The Pasadena Villages corporation became the corporate group that cared.

The Transformation of Lives

After the corporation's purchase of the King's Villages, efforts began on the physical renewal and rehabilitation of this property that had gone unattended for decades. The work in progress included providing most units with air-conditioning, repainting, carpets, blinds, hot-water heaters, new counter-tops and appliances, kitchen and bath vinyl flooring and cabinets. The entire project was repainted and enhanced by landscaping, adding an irrigation system, and repairing an out-of-commission apartment pool.

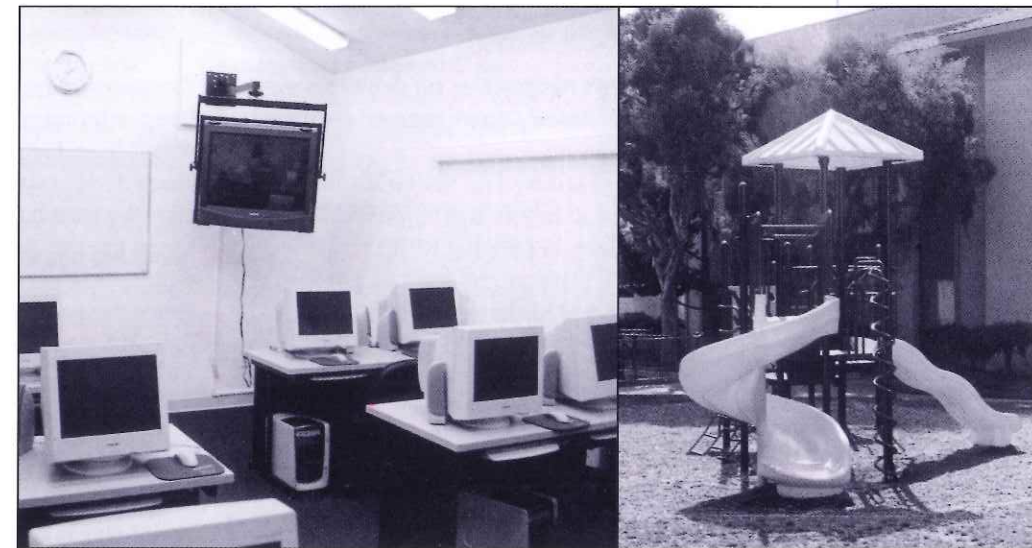
In the vision of the Community Baptist Church, however, physical rehabilitation was only the means to an end. As Pasadena Villages' faith-based partner, the church believed that transformation had to include the families of King's Villages. Consequently, last summer, the church brought in ministry interns to work with the children of King's Villages. They organized a Fun Zone that included sports and crafts programs, Bible study groups, and swimming activities. As a result, many children participated in the church's Vacation Bible School and some joined the church with their families. At the holiday season, needy families from both the Community Arms and King's Villages received Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas toys.

As pastor of the faith-based partner of the corporation's renewal project, it has been my job to help affect the everyday lives of the residents of the community by identifying, developing, and implementing social service programs that will transform lives. The programs scheduled to begin this spring include job training and interview preparation, after-school activities, sports programs, English-as-a-second-language instruction, health-care services, and—most of all—spiritual guidance.

Fortunately, in our city of Pasadena, we have had the participation of Fuller Seminary, the city's unified school district, local churches, church

alliances and councils. And as other organizations have expressed an interest in participating in these programs, a number of new programs are scheduled for the coming year.

Even though I grew up in the neighborhood watching these properties being built and seeing how these programs began to transform lives, I had



no idea then that God would bring me back to the place of my beginning and position me to become part of his plan for the renewal of lives. Yet today, as the pastor of this small church congregation, I praise God for uniquely positioning our church to impact the lives of more than 1,600 middle- and low-income families who occupy these 446 units of affordable housing. But more than that, our congregation continues to be excited about the opportunities we have to reach beyond our walls and lend a helping hand to our neighbors. Although it's hard work, we love every minute of it!

In every city, there are affordable housing properties filled with hurting people who need our help, support, and love. And in every city there are churches that can rise up and heed that call for help. Even though our church was small, it had a big dream, a great big heart, and a great God to help make the dream happen. To God be the glory!



JEAN BURCH ended a 20-year career in the legal profession several years ago to become the senior pastor of the Community Baptist Church in Pasadena, California, and founder/director of Jean Burch Ministries. She also serves as a vice president of the Interdenominational Alliance; as a chaplain for the Pasadena/Altadena Chapter of the National

Black Child Institute; and as a board member of the Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Area Churches, the Northwest Pasadena Corporation, and the JGM-National Prayer-Life Institute.

Even though our church was small, it had a big dream, a great big heart, and a great God to help make the dream happen.

A Welcome Assault on Poverty

BY RUDY CARRASCO

A Hispanic Leader's Perspective on Government Funding for Faith-Based Organizations' Programs

Last spring I received an invitation from the White House to join a group of Latino religious leaders in meeting with President George W. Bush on the topic of government support of faith-based initiatives. The initiative is, in the words of the President, an effort to "allow faith-based programs to compete for taxpayers' money if the services they provide are necessary and the results are positive." It has been described in other

ways, however, including as a potential violation of church-state separation, or as a way to buy off Latino and African-American voters. Given the nascent controversy, I was grateful for the opportunity to hear the initiative defended by its principal supporter. The appointed day included separate gatherings of 120 Latino religious leaders from around the country, a private meeting with nine of those leaders and the President, and a public press briefing. At day's end, four points stuck out. First, *the initiative is not merely a Republican issue.* Susan Anderson, of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation in Los Angeles, wrote in a *Los Angeles Times* editorial that the initiative is a payoff to the Republican Party's right wing. But the fact is that many Democrats are keen supporters of the initiative. Representative Tony Hall (D-Ohio) cosponsored the bill through the House of Representatives. Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Connecticut) shepherds the Senate version. The President's original appointee to direct the White House Faith-Based Office, John Dilulio, is a vocal Democrat. Even California's Democratic Governor Gray Davis jumped on the bandwagon.

Second, *the faith-based initiative does not favor religious institutions.* Rev. Luis Cortes, executive director of Nueva Esperanza Community Development Corporation in Philadelphia and organizer of the first-ever White House Hispanic prayer breakfast, clarified this misunderstanding when asked by the Latino pastors last spring. "All this initiative does is allow faith-based organizations to compete on equal ground for funds," Cortes said. "That's it. It doesn't favor us. There are no set-asides, just fair competition, that's all." Not only is there no favoritism toward religious groups, the advent of the level playing field far from guarantees funding.

Third, *Latino communities stand to benefit greatly from the faith-based initiative.* In his public remarks at the presidential press briefing, Cortes stated that approximately 80 percent of Latino churches and faith groups are located in low-income barrios around the country. The initiative is "an opportunity for all barrios in this country because it means that funds will get to the people who know the barrio best," he said. Cortes was not just talking about government dollars. He was referring to other provisions of the initiative that received very little press, including a provision to allow people who do not itemize deductions on their tax forms to nevertheless itemize their charitable contributions. This provision was weakened by the House version of the bill. The Senate version, however, might contain a provision for not penalizing charitable contributions made from Individual Retirement Accounts, which could translate to billions of dollars going directly from individuals to charities, with no government involvement necessary.

Fourth, besides adopting legislation, *the faith-based initiative has been an effective bully pulpit.* A White House blueprint titled "Rallying the Armies of Compassion" set the stage for a campaign to convince businesses and corporations to increase their giving to faith-based groups and quit acting like they have church-state conflicts that forbid them from giving to faith groups, when in fact they do not. The White House has initiated numerous gatherings of industry leaders to press this point.

As a director of a Christian nonprofit organization, it is these last two provisions that are the most encouraging. At Harambee Christian Family Center, we do not receive government funds, nor any funding that restricts our mission. Anything that encourages more private individual and business donations will greatly benefit us.

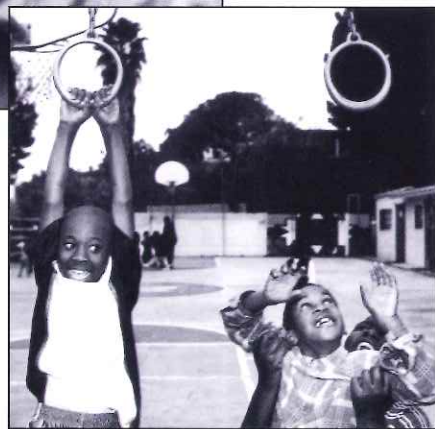
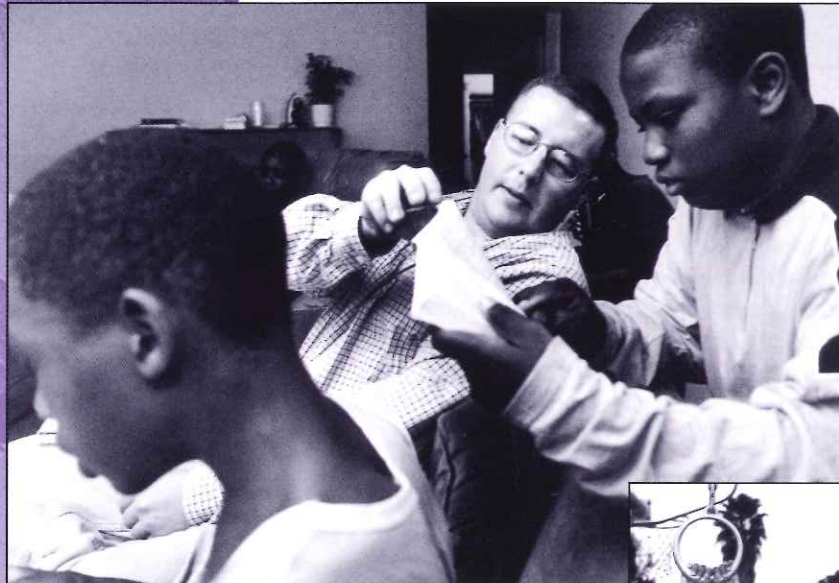
My observation from that day at the White House is that something has been lost in the media coverage on this initiative: The initiative is drafted and promoted by seasoned poverty fighters who emphasize results. The President himself mentioned

poverty more throughout his inaugural address than any other inaugural address in recent memory.

Though folks may be sincere, sincerity has its limits. One can be sincerely wrong. Hence the insistence on measurable results. "Results, not religion" has been the mantra on Capitol Hill. Results orientation means that if something is tried and does not work, you throw it out and try something else. Results orientation is what we private citizens do most of the time with our own personal finances. Now we are applying it to government funding. It's about time.

RUDY CARRASCO is associate director of Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, California, founded by Dr. John Perkins. Besides his role as a full-time urban youth worker, Carrasco free-lances for Christianity Today, writes a regular column for the Pasadena Star News, and maintains an urban ministry weblog at urbanonramps.com. To learn more about Harambee Center, visit www.harambee.org. For more information about government funding of faith-based programs, E-mail: rudy@harambee.org.

Below from left: Daniel de Leon, President Bush, Rudy Carrasco, and Pedro Windsor.



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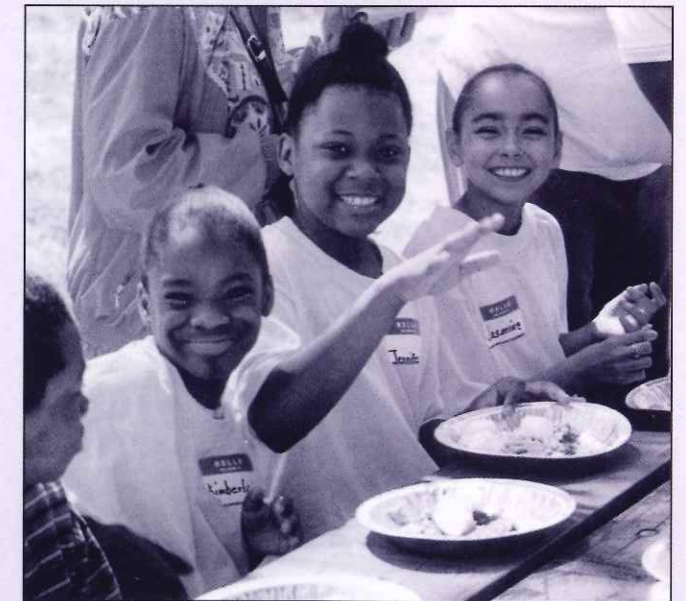
A Case of Stealth Ministry?

BY MATTHEW HARRIS

When it comes to welfare reform, the church's ministry is hardly noticed. I remember hearing one preacher offer his solution to welfare reform: "One way to help poor folks is not to be one!" Well, that's one way to look at it! However, I'm afraid it's not that simple! For many, welfare is not a safety net, it's become a hammock—a way of life.

Working with at-risk youth and families every day takes more than good advice to move them from a welfare mentality to a "work-fare" mentality. It requires relationships! It requires someone walking them through the paces of their development and success, helping them to develop good habits and "unlearn" bad ones. It is here the church stands to make its greatest contribution.

We are a culture that loves to give good advice. By doing so, many of us feel absolved from getting involved. But if our gospel is to be transformational, then we must become relational—we must get involved! One way to participate in the best welfare reform programs in your area is to contact the local Department of Public Social Service (DPSS). Let them know that your church or organization would like to work with the local "Welfare to Work" programs and help mentor youth and assist adults in gaining and maintaining employment. The DPSS will be happy to give you a list of local Welfare to Work programs that you can contact who would love to work with your group. In doing so, you will be able to develop meaningful relation-



ships, meet felt needs, and open the door, in a very practical way, for the love of Christ to be shared.

MATTHEW HARRIS (D.Min., '01) is the founder and president of Project Impact, an inner-city youth intervention program that is being replicated in cities throughout the United States. Through school dropout prevention, juvenile counseling, job training, parent education, and mentoring programs, Harris teaches churches and organizations how to work with schools, courts, police departments, and local businesses to transform inner-city neighborhoods. To learn more about Impact, E-mail: mharris160@aol.com.

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