

Pastor's Letter February 28, 2020

A Trend That Won't Go Away...

Will you help me?



Depressing, heart-rending, troublesome, despairing, alarming, sad... we see people today living under bridges, inside dumpsters, and inside homemade cardboard shacks in downtown cities. We also see destitute people as well (and con artists) on many busy street corners “begging for bread”. 10,000 are homeless in Washington D.C., 58,000 are homeless in Los Angeles and 75,000 are homeless in New York City; well over a half of a million Americans are homeless (1.7 % of the population) with no end in sight.

What does God expect us to do about this curse? Financially we are very limited because ***to really solve this problem...*** we would need to address and ***eliminate the causes*** of homelessness: unemployment, drug addiction, alcoholism, mental illnesses and healing of family dysfunction. Realistically, in the short run and in this society, these problems are unsolvable and historically only a few leaders at the most have even temporarily eradicated homelessness.

In the Bible Job was one such person. He was a man with incredible character and great wealth. In the book of Job, chapter 31, Job stated that he reached out to the disadvantaged. The NLT translation states in verses 15-18 “Have I refused to help the poor or crush the hopes of the widows? No, from a child I have cared for orphans like a father, and all

of my life I have cared for widows.” In fact, Job shared so much of his wealth with his constituents that he stated that where he lived “the widow’s hearts sang for joy”.(Job 29: 13).

Job would have helped the people we see here below



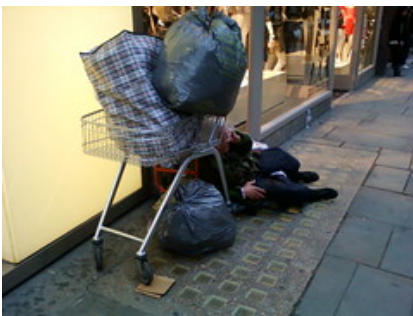
“Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress...” NLT

There will likely be a continual legitimate need to help the defenseless, and the elderly. However when God’s system of tithing is re-established throughout the world, society will be blessed to have a significant safety net of third tithe to eliminate the humiliating conditions we see in the pictures above. If we were as wealthy as Job, perhaps we could do all that he did but we are more like Peter in Acts 3 who stated “gold and silver have I none”. In the long run, we will help the needy the most if we can steer them to *surrender to God’s standards*.

We can care and pray for and teach the destitute to walk the spiritual path of blessings. We can inspire them to renew hope and purpose if they will be willing to harmonize with God. That means that like everyone else, they ultimately should do what God requires of everyone in Matthew 6:33 to seek **FIRST** the Kingdom of God and then their basic needs will be met. Like us, they must “choose life” as God insists that everyone “choose.” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Personal responsibility is key here. Without the needy exercising what they potentially can do, nothing in their lives will change. The poor will still be poor. The street corners will have panhandlers and the addicts will still be unhelped. Granted, time and chance may throw some victims into misfortune. They may need basic food or medicine in the short term but ultimately society needs to increasingly lean heavily on even these people to do all that they can for themselves. **That is the only way their pain can be eventually eliminated.** That means for

some to stop lying about their circumstances to defraud the government, to stop having babies out of wedlock, and to stop excessive spending for what is beyond what they can afford. It means inspiring them to observe God's Ten Commandments. And it means that politicians and leaders must stop being short-sighted by throwing 'stop-gap 'fish scraps' at the problems but rather arrange an educational path out of financial oblivion. What comes to mind here is the adage "*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*" For people to exercise responsibility to do all that they can do, they must get rid of the entitlement mindset that expects help without earning it.



Life is More Cause/Effect
Than Most People Realize



*Fortunately, our Maker has answers to these problems
The day is soon coming when He will implement them*



And people like this guy will have to change

LOCAL ACTIVITY

Speaking this Sabbath are Jeff Lockhart in Ft. Myers, Stan Braumuller in Ocala, and Eric Koester and John Hendricks in Vero Beach. Although Dale Yates is periodically dealing with cardiovascular issues, he very much wants to stay connected with the congregations that he has been able to speak to. He was scheduled in Ft. Myers for Feb 29 but he will eventually be there later on. We appreciate his enthusiasm.

In Ft. Myers we have had the privilege of having three elders with us this winter, John White (Columbus, OH), Greg Thomas (Cleveland, OH), and Jim Kocher (Wheeling, W.Va). I have heard it said that exchanging speakers is spiritual “cross-pollenization” and I think that is true or should be when it is employed.

ANOTHER NEW FEAST SITE

It appears that my family and I have been drafted to help out at a brand new Feast site in Brazil where Portuguese is spoken. It is similar to Spanish but, then again, very different. We will see what segment of the language we can pick up there. One of the Brazilian feast sites is in the north of the country where it was held last year but the new location is on the coast in a resort village with all of the amenities and spectacular scenery of surrounding mountains and the Atlantic Ocean within walking distance. I agreed to go before I learned that the Feast would be in a resort village. I was envisioning being in a mosquito-infested jungle in a hammock out in the Amazon rain forest living on coconuts. I am glad to say that I was dead wrong. Completely.

It is critical that the Americans and Europeans that may attend there set a good example of being friendly to our 20 or so new Brazilian members who will attend the Feast for the first time.

In keeping with this letter's theme, let us strive to care for others, as we are able.

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