

Chicago's homeless thousands

The number of homeless people in Chicago—those who literally have no place of their own to sleep and must find what shelter they can in abandoned buildings, autos, packing boxes or some corner out of the wind—is somewhere between 12,000 and 25,000. Chicago is believed to have the highest homelessness rate of all big cities, not because it is economically worse off but because less provision has been made for unsheltered people. It seems to be assumed that the need has already been met.

In fact, the need is unusually severe, thanks to the current combination of high unemployment, a groggy economy, slashes in welfare funding and lack of affordable housing. And the last thing that should be added to that mixture is complacency.

Ald. Marion Kennedy Volini (48th) is calling for action on behalf of the homeless; her efforts are fervently backed by a coalition of community groups and social service agencies that try to help them. An amendment to the 1983 budget introduced by Ald. Volini would set aside up to \$2 million for the Department of Human Services (DHS). The money, to come chiefly from economies in DHS and other departments, would be used to fund and supervise shelters for the homeless throughout the city; the actual staffing and work would be done by volunteers,

of which there are plenty.

Emergency shelters are available in Chicago. Between 500 and 700 beds are provided by various private-sector groups, and DHS has a voucher system to reimburse single-room occupancy hotels for putting up destitute people. But the numbers of homeless far exceed the space available, particularly since much of it is "programmatic" shelter for people with special needs—battered wives and their children, for example.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless argues that the \$2 million appropriation would be a cheaper, more efficient answer than the voucher system because the city's involvement would be minimal. Its main obligation would be providing walls and roofs and some administrative oversight; private agencies and volunteers from churches and temples would do the rest.

The estimate of 12,000 homeless came from city officials a year ago. Unquestionably the number has risen sharply since then. But the yearend deadline for action on budget amendments is approaching fast. What is most urgent is not to establish exact statistics on shelterless people; it is to do what needs to be done to keep them from freezing. The City Council should keep that in mind as it considers Ald. Volini's amendment.

WORDS OF LOVE CASE STUDY No. 1

What should the individual christian (in the light of God's call to "Love your neighbor as yourself") do in response to the problem outlined above? How should christian families approach the problem as a family? How should the local church approach the problem? How do we decide who should get our help in situations like this where it is clearly apparent that we won't be able to help everybody? How should we allocate scarce resources between our own and others (do we take food out of our own children's mouths in order to feed the poor? Do we skip giving to the poor in order to buy our sixteen-year-old a new Caddillac? How do we decide where to draw the line?)?

Should the destitute of the city be supported by voluntary contributions at all? Is it perhaps not more equitable to allow the government to tax the populace so as to spread the burden more equally among all responsible tax payers? Is it not appropriate that those who reap the advantages of being able to prosper in this great nation be required to return a portion of their gains to support those less fortunate than themselves? Or, does that rather smack too much of socialism and/or communism?

And, if monetary help is disbursed by the government, who is disbursing the love of God? What comes first; food or the Gospel? Can they be separated? Should they be? What other questions need to be asked and answered concerning this issue?

WORDS OF LOVE

If you are planning to join me for the Words of Love Adult Sunday School Series starting next Sunday (January 16th), it's important for you to get a little bit of a head start.

One of the things we will be doing in class is Case Studies. You will find the first one on the other side of this sheet. Each Case Study will begin with the statement of the situation (which may be from a newspaper article like this one is or may be from any other source).

The situation will be followed with a list of several thoughts and questions of my own concerning the subject situation.

You are to examine the situation before class and think of how you would answer the questions and/or think of your opinion of my thoughts about the situation.

In class, I will present the general lesson I have prepared and then, after prayer, we will get down to discussing the cases. Don't restrict yourself to the questions and thoughts I have put down about the case. If you have any other questions and/or thoughts, please share them with the class too.

Learning what the Bible says about Love is important and we will certainly try to do that. But the knowledge won't be of much use if we can't practically apply it in our daily lives. I hope that we will be able to accomplish both of these goals in this ten-week series.

I plan to start promptly at 9:30 am (I know that doesn't conform to our habit of starting a bit later but there is much to cover and not that much time to do it in - Please help me squeeze it all in by being in your chairs by 9:30 each Sunday). My presentation will be about 35-40 minutes long each week and that will allow us 20-25 minutes to discuss the case. If we get done in time, extra cases will also be available.

Please don't think we have to stick to the cases I'm providing either. If you have something the class would be interested in, you can either bring it to me and I'll see if I can work it up as one of the cases, or you can just bring it up for general discussion in class if you wish.

For your convenience, the class schedule is:

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subjects</u>
1	01-16-83	Introduction; I Corinthians 13:1,2,3.
2	01-23-83	I Corinthians 13:4; The Hebrew HESED.
3.	01-30-83	I Corinthians 13:5; The Hebrew 'AHAB.
4.	02-06-83	I Corinthians 13:6; The Greek EROS.
5.	02-13-83	I Corinthians 13:7; The Greek STORGE.
6.	02-20-83	I Corinthians 13:8; The Greek PHILEO.
7.	02-27-83	I Corinthians 13:9,10; The Greek AGAPE.
8.	03-06-83	I Corinthians 13:11; Love and Pain.
9.	03-13-83	I Corinthians 13:12; Love and Small Groups.
10.	03-20-83	I Corinthians 13:13; Love and Biblical Counseling.

These subjects will be our starting points but we will actually be roaming throughout the scriptures picking out points that illustrate and amplify the concepts.

Remember the order our Lord and Master gave us in John 13:34 & 35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." I hope to see you next Sunday.

M. David Johnson