

Good Works exists to connect people from all walks of life with the poor so that the kingdom of God can be experienced. (Matthew 21:31)

GOOD WORKS, INC.

A PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY by Keith Wasserman

THE PURPOSE OF GOOD WORKS is to fulfill Jesus own mission to "*bring good news to the poor*" (Luke 4:18) by creating a range of different 'contexts' to care for those struggling with poverty in rural Appalachia

"Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all of our soul, all of your mind and all of your strength" Jesus answered the lawyer who questioned him in Luke 10:27 *"and the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself"*. At Good Works, we believe that there is a mystical and inseparable relationship between loving God and loving our neighbors to the extent that it may not even be important to God when we are doing one and when we are doing the other. Indeed, our "good works"—the outward expression of the inward change—flow from our love for God.

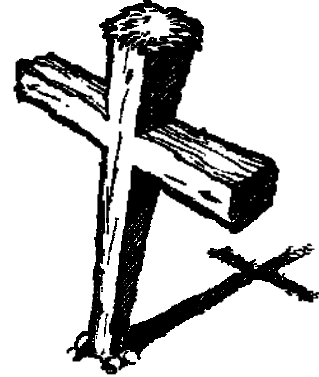
*"I made the widow's heart sing,
I was a father to the fatherless.
I took up the case of the stranger"
(Job 29: 12-17)*

Our mission, therefore, is to **LOVE** the stranger, the fatherless and the widow and in doing so, help others find a place to love and serve them with us – to extend themselves in love and grow spiritually. To do this, we have created and seek to sustain a "Christian care-community" through which we can model **FAITH** in the good news of the power of Jesus Christ to change our lives. Furthermore, in addition to meeting the felt needs of the poor, we seek to instill **HOPE** through acts of service and compassion in partnership with those in the world who are not-yet Christians and in partnership with the body of Christ. In doing this, we fulfill both the great commandment and the great commission and grow as disciples ourselves.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION



It is the vision of Good Works to create and sustain a loving **COMMUNITY OF HOPE** where the homeless and others struggling with poverty in rural Appalachia Ohio can experience the kingdom of God – the central theme in the ministry of Jesus. It is the intention of the community called Good Works to improve the quality of life of those we serve through meeting felt needs, building and promoting trust, strengthening human dignity, providing and promoting education, providing employment experience and encouraging each person to see themselves as their Maker sees them – made in the image of God, fallen, yet valuable, precious, lovable and created to fulfill His purpose in the earth. We seek to nurture those we serve in an atmosphere of love (both tough and tender), compassion, responsibility and community. We seek to develop the kind of community where those once called ‘poor and needy’ have an identity transformation and become those whom Isaiah calls “oaks of righteousness – a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor” (Isaiah 61:1, 3-4) In doing this our HOPE is that everyone connected with Good Works begins to experience the kingdom of God. (Matthew 21:31).



As a Christian ministry, we are compelled by the biblical statement that “pure religion in the site of God is to *visit* widows and the fatherless in their distress (James 1:26-27). Furthermore, “...the stranger who lives among you must be treated as one of your native born; you shall love him as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:34, Matthew 25:31-46) Thus, we seek to live out the love of God as overflow from our life together toward three groups of people that are more likely to be vulnerable and poor in our community: The widows, the fatherless and the stranger. We do this by seeking to live according to the way of Christ's love for all people, and create an atmosphere in which all people are treated with dignity and respect. We do this by receiving the grace to lay down our own social lives. A more extensive bible study called “**With Whom Is God Concerned**” explains the biblical reference points of the people groups we believe God has called us to serve.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor – Luke 4:18

CREATING A CONTEXT

During the past 25 years, Good Works has developed different projects to express our mission. By “project” we mean a “context” which encourages those who want to learn how to serve others to associate with those in need and build trusting relationships. In each

context there is an exchange of ideas and an atmosphere of mutual aid, a sharing of friendship, a teachable spirit, humility and the opportunity to meet the need to be needed.

In each 'context', those who in need and those serving those in need are both clothed with dignity, drawn into community with one another and brought to places relationally where trust can develop.

A CONTEXT

A "context" can be a structured or unstructured event, opportunity or situation where at times there is a mystical line separating those serving and those being served. Each context is characterized by one or more of the following:

1. Relational boundaries and community expectations which provide safety, protection, and predictability. It is this atmosphere which creates the possibility of friendship.
2. An atmosphere where healthy interdependent friendships can be established over time through trust.
3. A place where each person can begin a friendship at "arms length" and slowly come in closer as trust is established.
4. A focal point beyond the relationship (usually involving service of some kind). For example, one small context inside the Timothy House is dishes. Residents and volunteers do dishes together. Dishes are the focal point around which we build trust and establish friendships.

THE MISSION OF JESUS

Jesus mission to "bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18-19) must become our own mission. But this mission raises several issues that the community of Good Works must *continually* wrestle with and embrace.

1. What is the good news?
2. How do we "bring it" to the poor?
3. Who are the poor?
4. What does it look like when the poor have experienced it?

"Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people who are of a low position. Do not be conceited" – Romans 12:16.

Although the good news about Jesus recorded in the New Testament has not changed, the telling of this good news must change for every generation. At the end of the 20th century, there were several movements by the Holy Spirit through God's people which re-formed the "telling" of Jesus' message into a contemporary context. I propose that just as the traditional church moved from a 'traditional' approach to a contemporary approach, and to a seeker sensitive approach and later to an 'emerging church' approach, those of us who care for the poor must also create innovative approaches to touch the lives of those who are struggling with poverty in our communities. At Good Works, we have been led to create seven different "contexts" through which the good news about Jesus can flow.

THE GOOD NEWS IS A PERSON

While it is not my goal to comprehensively define everything related to the good news Jesus reveals when He reveals himself to us, it is my intention to summarize some of the essentials of this mystery that I believe are most important as they relate to the ministry God has trusted us with. The good news, recognized by grace is a God-revealed understanding of who Jesus

the Christ (Messiah) truly is, what he had done and his power to save us from ourselves, from our sins and from those who sin against us in this world. The good news offers each of us an eternal perspective of people, circumstances and life which gives each of us an unrelenting hope both in this life and for the life to come. The good news when received and embraced by faith results in what the scriptures call salvation – a comprehensive rescue from the terrible situation we are in. The good news reveals to us our desperate need for a personal and intimate relationship with Christ as Savior. When we embrace or accept Jesus as He reveals himself through the gospels in the New Testament and as He has been revealed through the prophets and writers of the Old and New Testaments, He gives us the Holy Spirit to live inside us, together with our spirit. His spirit then empowers us to live out His will. The good news always involves Christ's forgiveness which when received results in a desire to change our lives to please God (repentance) and when combined with faith brings about transformation first for the individual and then for the community and the nation. The good news about who Jesus is, when combined with faith produces a new identity and we begin to see ourselves as God sees us – sons, daughters, children of God, blessed with a relationship with God because we were purchased by the blood of Christ; blessed with God's favor, intimacy and companionship which satisfies our deepest longing in this life. The good news when embraced from our hearts leads us to a new community – a community where there is righteousness and justice (Romans 14:17) and where we intentionally attach ourselves to others in the body of Christ at a particular place in our city. Indeed, the good news causes us to hunger to be with other believers who also fear God and want to follow Jesus with their whole lifestyle. The good news can not be fully realized except through community – the sharing of our lives with others who love Jesus and want to grow in their intimacy with Him and with one another through accountability, vulnerability and disclosure. The forgiveness of our sins and the grace to forgive ourselves and those who have sinned against us is the centerpiece of this good news. Christ's forgiveness breaks the power of sin, self and selfishness. Christ's forgiveness along with the body of Christ enables and empowers us to both receive the love of God and to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love our neighbors as Christ loves us. In the end, we love only because He first loved us. But I must say it again: It is impossible to live out the full extent of the good news outside of a particular community we commit ourselves to. The messages we send through our lifestyle about the good news gives credibility to these words: "There is no other name under heaven by which people can be saved" (Acts 4:12). Salvation, the result of believing the good news is the most significant gift ever given to human beings – a relationship with our Maker, through Jesus Christ!

A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

As a Christian ministry, our primary purpose is worship/service, not evangelism. With each person Good Works serves, we seek to place love and not 'an agenda' as the foundation of each relationship. Therefore, we want to both demonstrate and communicate our faith. Our approach is three-fold: (1) we must first *earn the right* (permission) to share our lives, values and convictions with those in need (2) Through integrity, we must work to establish trust as the primary ingredient and foundation of all our relationships (3) We must seek to recognize that whatever we have to say about the good news, our faith and our relationship with God

comes in the context of and builds upon what already exists inside each person we are learning how to love.

Finally, built inside the Good Works world-view are the following core concepts: 1) As human beings seeking to grow, we need to serve others regardless of whether or not they are grateful. 2) Under no circumstances do we believe it is loving for our staff or volunteers to be required to take any form of abuse from those we are serving. 3) All service requires some measure of sacrifice and we should expect to be challenged emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. 4) The personal and community growth of our staff, volunteers and interns is equally important to us as the personal growth of the populations we are serving. 5) Where a volunteer, staff or interns first makes contact with the people Good Works serves influences the level of accountability the Good Works staff will exercise with volunteers in their relationship with those we serve. If a volunteer meets them for the first time at a local restaurant, for example, we will have a limited ‘voice’ into how they conduct themselves. If they meet someone Good Works is currently serving through a Good Works context, we will expect our volunteers and interns to listen and consider our ‘voice’ in their relationship. The purpose of this accountability is to insure the fair and appropriate use of power. Keep in mind that in most cases, the staff and volunteers of Good Works have incredible power and influence over the vulnerable people we serve. At Good Works, we ask every volunteer, staff and intern to make a commitment to use their power for good – for what is in the best interest of those being served and the community at large. Recognizing the wisdom found in those who have been serving at Good Works for a long time is essential for being a volunteer on any level.

The ministry of Good Works has everything to do with people and less to do with buildings, programs, techniques or methods. The titles in the following contexts are only a limited means to convey the larger idea of how the good news flows through respectful, honest and trusting relationships. Indeed, we apply the following lens of ministry over the contexts:

1. **The Timothy House** – a shelter providing a ‘care-community’ for the rural homeless from 9 counties in rural Appalachia since 1981.
2. **The Hannah House** – (LIFE IN TRANSITION) a long term solution (since 1994) for people who choose to work through long term problems by living in a community where tough love and tender love are balanced.
3. **The Good Works Small Businesses** – job experience training opportunities (since 1998) where we pay a living wage to our friends struggling to break out of the cycle of poverty as they work in our three small business: Bed and Breakfast, Good Gifts and Recreation.
4. **The Transformation Station** – an opportunity for anyone struggling with poverty to obtain the things they need (cars, furniture, appliances and food) through a commitment to volunteer their time and skill to serve others in need (since 2004).
5. **Friday Night Life & Kids Club** – a community event and supper (since 1992) which brings together the hungry with those who want to serve them in a weekly sit-down meal followed by a range of fun, inspiring and educational events for children and adults of all ages.
6. **Good Works WORK CAMPS** (now called WORSHIP TEAMS). Worship teams serve on **Samaritan Projects** which are intentional, planned outreaches for groups from our region as well as all over the United States to visit widows in need and disabled citizens at their homes. Our worship teams also help to provide a daily kids camp (**KIDS CLUB**) all summer for at-risk kids in our community. Worship teams also participate in the life of the Timothy House and visit with the homeless. (since 1996)
7. **Good Works Health Care Clinic**—a mobile health care clinic which intersects with the residents of The Timothy House, participants in Friday Night Life and in our Samaritan Project clients. (2005)

These seven different ‘contexts’ are a means to the end. The end is “so that the kingdom of God may be experienced” and the good news about who Jesus is revealed..

A PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Good Works Inc. shines as a testimony to what the body of Christ can do when the church works together and partners with not-yet-Christians (whom I call The Beloved of God) to serve the poor—the most vulnerable and needy of our community. The ministry of Good Works is intended to reveal the glory, mercy, love and goodness of God as revealed in Jesus the Messiah. We believe that our primary role in sharing the gospel is to help people experience God's love and understand his grace. Our part therefore is to help those we serve to see who Jesus really is. Once we were touched by him, we wanted to give our lives to him. When people experience the power of God's grace to rescue them from a hopeless and empty life, they will want to trust HIM for the rest of their lives. The biblical foundation of our ministry comes from Ephesians 2:8-10 where the Bible teaches us that as Christians, we are brought into a relationship with God, not because of what we have done but because of what CHRIST has done for us. We are then told that as believers and followers of Christ, God is working in us to produce good deeds and these acts of loving kindness are the fruit and result of his amazing power to change us. Good Works Inc. is the outward expression of the inward changes Christ Jesus brought into our lives after we came to him because of His amazing love.

The following areas of focus help us understand the calling God has placed on this ministry and the people who serve here.

MINISTRY UNTO THE LORD – BEING TRUE WORSHIPPERS (John 4:21-26)

Scripture commands us in Matthew 6:33 to "*seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you*". It is our conviction that when Jesus changes our lives, he changes our priorities and that life and ministry only takes the right priorities and the proper perspective when it is rooted in the foundation of this verse. Secondly, since Jesus declares that the greatest command God gives us is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with our entire mind and with all our strength, we believe that loving our Lord and *being* a worshipping community should be the first priority of our lives. Our fruitfulness emerges from our faithfulness to first be worshippers ourselves. We cannot even hope to see or love our neighbor properly unless we see and love them through the lens of how God sees them (see Matthew 9:35-38). Worship is one way God develops a holy perspective in us of ourselves and others.

Jesus himself explains to us in John 4:21-24 that the Father is seeking worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. We want to be those worshippers and we want worship to be the primary expression of our lives (Exodus 20:3). We want our program to be our integrity. As a result, our ministry is led by the core value of integrity. Indeed, if we fail at our integrity, we fail at the ministry God has trusted us with. We want our lives to reflect kingdom values so that what we *are* speaks louder than what we say. Therefore, in the end, whether someone is grateful or ungrateful is irrelevant. Our work and service is not for them, it is for HIM. In the end, what we have done "for the very least of these," we have done for HIM. But our worship must be deeper still. When Jesus calls us to himself, he asks us to be

willing to leave all for him (Matthew 10:37-38 & 16:24-28). At Good Works, one of the things we believe God is calling all Christians to do is to lay down our social lives. Indeed, if we claim Jesus as Lord, we believe it is God's will to have authority over who we choose as friends. Therefore, we are choosing to become friends with those who are *poor in the eyes of the world* (as modeled to us in Jesus life) and we believe that by doing so, we too will experience the kingdom of God. God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom of God he promised to those who love him" (James 2:5). To understand the very basics of the kingdom – the central theme in the ministry of Jesus – we must understand something about how God views the poor. It is therefore not enough to learn this information through traditional classroom learning, we must 'cross over' into a different social class and begin to spend some of our time with those people in our society are not the dominant majority but rather the insignificant minority. There are two principles we employ to accomplish this expression of 'incarnation': (1) Intentionality (2) Vulnerability. The 'crossing over' will not happen by accident any more than the incarnation of God becoming a human being happened by accident. Secondly, crossing into friendship with people who are not in our social class (downward mobility) will be a great challenge toward our American agenda of 'being in control' because we, like the baby Jesus, must choose to be vulnerable. Vulnerability is one door to true friendship with the poor. I once heard a prophetic word which summarizes this idea very well: 'I have not given you projects who are poor, I have given you friends who are poor'.

Our service to others is simply an expression of our worship of Jesus. We choose to love the weak and vulnerable because we claim to love Jesus. The character Christ develops in us by His grace is the fruit of our services which is worship. Our spiritual gifts enable us to carry out the power of God to demonstrate, in a small way, the kingdom of God. The ministry God has trusted us with, therefore, is only as strong as the people are in their private and corporate lives in Christ. Our work has become the service of worship.

In order to see the multitudes of hurting and vulnerable people as they really are (harassed and helpless as revealed in Matthew 9:36) we must choose to see them with compassion. It is through the continual attitude of worship formed out of true humility that we are lifted up above our human point of view (James 1:26) to see people as God sees them. It is through the lifestyle of being a worshipper that we can see ourselves and our neighbors from God's perspective. It is through worship that we can truly understand the meaning of the contemporary phrase "one beggar telling other beggar where to find bread."

MINISTRY WITH THE WIDOW, THE FATHERLESS, AND THE STRANGER

In James 1:26 & 27, we learn that God considers true religion to involve the action of reaching out to the most vulnerable of every society in every age and in every nation: the widows, the fatherless and the stranger.

Scripture commands in Isaiah 1:17 to "learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the cause of the widow." As our ministry has grown since our early days, we are now much more aware that God has expanded us

beyond serving the homeless and blessed us as we care for those whom God has consistently identified as vulnerable, lonely, easily taken advantage of and often economically impoverished: the widow, the orphan and the stranger! (Exodus 22:21-24, Deuteronomy 10:14-22, & 15:7-11 & 26:12 & 27:19, Psalm 10:14, 68:5, Proverbs 15:25 & 23:10)

When Jesus announced what the ministry of the Messiah would look like when it arrived (Luke 4:18-19), he quoted from Isaiah 58 & 61 and talked about being healing agents to those who were wounded by sin and by a sin-sick society. He described His ministry as proclaiming the reality of true freedom to those who were in caught in the cycle of sin's consequences and helping people to experience the love of God!

We have discovered that poverty and homelessness often result from a collision course of personal choices which people make and things that happen to them which are beyond their control. One need not look any further than the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11) to see that the problems of this young man's life resulted both from the selfish personal choices he made combined with something he had no control over, a famine. What we often find is that bad personal choices touch 'systemic' issues and explode causing poverty, homelessness and a host of other life-controlling problems.

The people God is teaching and empowering us to love often come to us broken, despised, rejected, vulnerable, confused and in pain. Many arrive at our door wounded from the battle of life. Some are 'walking time-bombs' waiting to explode the inner pain, anger and hopelessness in their lives. Ministry *with* them must have a balance of law and grace, compassion and understanding, tender love and tough love. Our love must endure the antagonism and anger that is often their first response to our intervention, which attempts to address the cycle or 'bondage' they are in. Like Jesus whose love endured the hostility and aggression from an outcast woman recorded in John 4, we must learn how to understand the mind-set of those who feel despised and rejected and *learn* how to love them. One vital step in this process is confronting our own need to be appreciated and thanked and to let it die. By God's grace, we must learn how to live on a higher level than the world's love; we must learn how to BE the body of Christ on earth for those in need and direct them to the ONE who alone can satisfy their innermost thirst. We must ask God for wisdom to recognize that when people are suffering, (see Exodus 6:9) their pain shouts so loud that it drowns out our words of advice or counsel. Sometimes the emotional, spiritual and physical pain people experience, resulting from their oppression, is so intense that they are unable to hear the message of hope hidden inside our love. We are guided by the principle Phillip illustrated in Acts 8:26-39 when he stayed with the Ethiopian eunuch and *waited to be invited* into the chariot to explain God's word. Therefore, we prayerfully wait with a mind-set to build trust until we are invited by people into their lives (given permission) so that we can speak the truth in love. We must first answer the questions they are already asking as a door to build trust and get permission. We strongly value the ministry of presence and recognize that a great deal of impact we will have in ministry results from people trusting us based on our integrity. To maintain integrity and build trust we must be by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18). To live or walk in the Spirit is to walk in the **timing** of God. We embrace the motto of St. Francis of Assisi who once said "Preach the Gospel all the time, sometimes use words." Much of our approach to helping people ((particularly through our residential programs) involves assisting them to embrace a healthy outward structure in their lives so that they can

begin the process of developing healthy inward disciplines. We work to help "rebuild the ancient ruins" (Isaiah 58:12, Proverbs 25:28) in people's lives. Our hurting neighbors need us to have a *flexible response* with them so we rely upon God's wisdom every day in the ministry he has trusted us with. Some need love dispensed only as kindness, some need us to display 'accountable love', some need us to be unwavering and firm with our love and some need us to suffer *with* them as they suffer, dispensing mercy. Many of those we are learning to love need us to be a 'father' (Job 29:16) or 'mother' (I Thessalonians 2:7-8) to them, others need us to advocate or speak for them (Proverbs 31:8-9) and some need us to walk together *with* them as they take on the systems which have abused or oppressed them (Job 29:1-17) To discern who needs what and when, we rely upon the wisdom from above which is pure, peace-loving, unwavering and full of mercy. It is this wisdom (Proverbs 9:10 & James 3:13-18) –given to the community through the gifts God has given his people – that leads us to develop discerning love. Discerning love is fueled by grace resulting from a person yielded to the Holy Spirit!

While the people who come to Good Works have many issues in common, they are often very different from each other. Most of those who are homeless are residents of southeast Ohio (we now provide shelter to the rural homeless in nine counties), although we do serve travelers (or transients) as well. A few have lost their homes due to job loss, relocation and/or domestic disputes. Some are emotionally disturbed; some are struggling with various kinds of mental illness. Some are veterans, some have been recently released from prison, some are struggling single parents, and some are students. Many are consumed by the problems of addiction --of alcohol, drugs, food, sex, and unhealthy dependency. Some are victims of violence in the family; others have been stuck in a cycle lifestyle of poverty for some time. A few have legal troubles and all struggle with the lack of affordable housing. Many are young people in their early 20s, some are middle-aged and some are elderly. All are disconnected. This disconnect is reveal in problems people have getting along with others and with themselves and in their lack of a support system.

It is our intention to help those whom the Lord sends to us to discover and define the root issues in their lives, to assist them (both prayerfully and practically) in understanding what they **can** do about the situation they are in and point them to the hope found in receiving and experiencing the kingdom of God (I Thessalonians 2:8). We believe that movement in one area of their lives will produce momentum in other areas; much like throwing a pebble into a pond will create ripples that affect the whole pond. Therefore, we teach that each person is responsible for his or her choices and each of us must take responsibility to address the life-situation we are in. Our role as staff and volunteers is to help people find a starting place by helping them identify their ability to respond to the situation they are in and to discover the resources they have in the community, through their faith and within themselves to cause change to occur. We seek to help each person work through the sequence of problem identification, problem ownership and problem solution. We intend to come along beside them with love as accountability to motivate, support and empower them not just to start but also to finish what they have said they would do to help themselves.

Finally, we believe it is the breakdown of the family and its many supports in our culture that accounts for one of the major causes of what we now call the poverty of homelessness. Therefore, it is the re-creation of a family which will provide the infrastructure for homeless and others struggling with poverty to take responsibility and gain a new hope and new vision for their own lives. We, the body of Christ form the community of HOPE strive to be such a family! If, as scripture teaches in Matthew 25:31-46, helping these people is a form of worship directly to our Lord, we want to do it to them because He has done it to us. We love because He first loved us. We, as people in process, want to draw others to the source of health and forgiveness that we have found in Jesus, both by what we say and how we live. Therefore, rather than have required worship meetings or bible studies which can border on manipulation that ultimately undermines the heart of the gospel, we rely upon the following strategies to draw people both to a relationship with God and into the body life of the Church.

1. We encourage our friends, volunteers, interns and staff to invite our residents, former residents and recipients of our ministry into *their* Christian community. By 'Christian community' we mean their network of relationships. "To love a person" says Jean Vanier in his book COMMUNITY AND GROWTH "is to welcome them into your network of relationships, your community". As mentioned earlier, this means inviting the poor into our social life. This can take the form of a simple meal at home or in the community, an invitation to a film or social activity like hiking or volleyball, or a worship event. The goal is to invite those who are disconnected to a place where they might make a relational connection with our friends and a closer connection with God. The process should be both slow yet deliberate keeping people initially 'at arms length' then bringing them into our lives slowly. With discernment from God, counsel from friends and faith, the process of inviting the poor into the church will stretch us and yet it is an essential part of the church being the church. Someone once said that the front door of our homes is the side door of the church. We agree.
2. While we don't have any required worship meetings in our ministry, we do have regular gatherings of staff and volunteers where we intentionally enter the presence of God through song, praise, prayer and sharing. These meetings are designed to encourage one another, offer God's perspective on life and ultimately build up the body of Christ. It is in this context that we invite those we are becoming friends with to join us. In doing so, we simply invite them into what *we are already doing and into what we would be doing regardless of whether they came or not*. In essence, this gathering is not a 'show' where we invite the poor to come and be enriched by a performance, rather, it is a meeting of the Body where they can see us as we are for who we are and participate with us as together we encounter the living God. It is here that our sharing is real and we can include those we are learning to love into the context of our lives. It is in these places that our faith and our integrity merge and convey truth that brings about the kind of freedom Jesus talks about when he says "you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free".
3. Intentionally including those we are serving into our volunteer teams serving the widows and the disabled at their homes is another way to build community and ultimately reveal something deeper about the church's mission in the world. In 2004, Good Works launched The Transformation Station so that those in need could volunteer to serve others and obtain things they need at the same time.

4. Friday Night Life provides physical and social nutrition and becomes a place where people's hearts are softened and where people feel accepted and loved. These are the essential ingredients for the gospel to flourish. It is in this context that spontaneous and organized events of prayer, conversations about God and even bible studies can emerge.
5. In partnership other communities of believers, it is our intention to open up opportunities for small groups of Christians from these communities to come to our shelters and offer intentional conversations about scripture and the meaning of the gospel. The Alpha course in partnership with a particular local church is an excellent example.

We are often asked about how much success we are having with the people we are trying to help. The best answer to this question is to explain the 'continuum of success.' One end of the continuum is marked by the words Mother Theresa once spoke—"God has not called me to be successful, he has called me to be faithful." At this end, we realize that our success is attached to our faithfulness (obedience) to love God and our neighbors by doing what we already know we should be doing. As we are faithful to walk in what we know and practice what God has already shown us, we please God and achieve complete success. Then, God 'glues together' our acts of faithfulness and gives them back to us in the form of faith. As a result, we are able to trust HIM for more and more. Our faithfulness *to* Him increases our faith *in* Him.

As we move along the continuum of success toward the other end, we discover it is not enough to provide another human being with food, shelter, jobs, housing, friendship, counseling or help at their homes. It is not enough that we invite them into our Christian community and they come. It is not enough that they become a Christian themselves. We have not achieved success until they become a participating and functioning member in a local Christian Community or church. When this happens, we have achieved success. The most interesting part of this ultimate goal is that it is totally unattainable apart from the willingness of local pastors, church leaders and people from local churches becoming involved in the lives of the poor and others who cannot repay them. In the end, much of the 'success' of our ministry is connected to the willingness of other members of the body of Christ to embrace and assimilate the poor and homeless into their local church.

MINISTRY OF DISCIPLESHIP: BEING AND MAKING

Once in scripture we are told we must be born again. Several times, scripture says we must be saved but 40 times Jesus tells us to follow him. To be a disciple we must be a follower of Jesus. All disciples are Christians but are all Christians disciples? A disciple is one who is under the discipline of Jesus (Luke 4:26, John 8:31, Matthew 16:24). Discipleship will always involve personal discipline. Jesus also commands us in Matthew 28:19 to go and *make* disciples. Therefore, we are compelled by the command of scripture to entrust to others who are faithful what we have learned and seen (II Timothy 2:2). It is our priority to see our ministry with the strangers, fatherless and the widows as one means God grows us into mature disciples. Our ministry is a 'teaching laboratory' of growth through which the body of Christ can have their senses trained to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). The solid

food God wants to nourish us with has something to do with 'using' or 'walking in' what we already know. It is in these places that the Holy Spirit teaches us, strengthens us and builds us up into maturity. Our ministry of Discipleship is four fold: among the staff, to our interns and volunteers, to be a prophetic voice to the Church and to facilitate unity among the body of Christ.

Among the staff: We believe that since God has called to proclaim the message of reconciliation between God and humankind, we as the followers of Jesus must learn how to 'walk out' reconciliation with one another even as we 'talk it out' to others. It is our intention to create an atmosphere inside the Good Works community where our staff, interns and volunteers can practice love and forgiveness on each other as well as proclaim it to a hurting world. We want to create an atmosphere where there is freedom to fail. We want to promote the attitude that it is okay to make mistakes insofar as we can see each failure as a tool for growth and maturity. One US corporate motto says is this way: "Fail often in order to succeed sooner". A theology of failure is therefore essential for the kingdom of God to flourish. We believe that a ministry that creates a 'freedom to fail atmosphere' also creates an environment where people believe they can take risks. When people take risks, they become innovative. Innovation then is the outward expression of faith that produces fruit in ministry. It is our vision through the ministry of discipleship to create a community of people who will care, comfort and at times confront one another to spur each other along in growth and maturity. We want to develop the kind of community marked by humility and teachable spirits so that we can benefit from hearing the truth –the truth about God, the truth about the world and the truth about ourselves –from one another. In the end, we want others to know we belong to Christ by our truth telling love. Therefore, when we are presenting our worship to God and we remember that someone has something against us, we must go to this person in humility and work things through before we continue with our worship or service to others. Being in healthy relationships with one-another is more important than the mission and if we confuse the two, we will miss seeing the kingdom of God.

In addition, because we see the problem of alienation as the root cause of homelessness and reconciliation as the root solution, it is our intention to demonstrate a lifestyle of daily reconciliation and communication both with one another and in our private lives with Jesus. Because of our commitment to live reconciled lives with one another, we have a basis to speak to others about the gospel. It is our belief that if we cannot practice and model reconciliation to one another, then the impact of our ministry will be weak at best and misdirected and harmful at worst. All of us at Good Works believe that as much as the poor need our help, equally so, we, the body of Christ, need to help them. In essence, we are saying that there is a need in the body of Christ, which, if met, will cause growth and maturity and possibly even revival. If we are to grow up in Christ, we must learn to embrace suffering and oppressed people; even to the point of suffering with them. Therefore, when we include the poor into our social networks, we do so both for their sake and ours. Through our ministry of discipleship, we seek to structure both entry level as well as advanced level 'hands on' opportunities for those believers who desire to let God grow in them by serving others. Our goal is to teach our staff and interns to assess and adapt; so that as far as it

depends upon us, we can truly become all things to all men and women that by all means we my win them to the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

To our volunteers and interns: God did not focus our attention onto the poor and homeless for the past 25 years to serve them alone. Clearly the ministry of Good Works exists to teach, inspire, incorporate and disciple the body of Christ to love and serve the poor. In many ways, the world cannot see Jesus until they touch the hands and side of His body as it serves those in need. The principles of ministry the Holy Spirit has taught us have become transferable principals and have ended up becoming practical guidelines to help the body of Christ embrace and assimilate the poor into relational streams in our community. In the end, the kingdom of God and the church Jesus is building is only about relationships. Our ministry of discipleship is intended to assist Christians in their own personal growth as it relates to serving the poor and establishing relationships with those Jesus calls "the least of these." We intentionally want to create a wide range of entry level and advanced service opportunities for the body of Christ to learn and use discerning love. Through our volunteer opportunities, we seek to place people in safe yet challenging situations which cause spiritual growth. Ultimately, we seek to lend balance in the diet of discipleship displayed through the traditional structures of the Church by promoting face-to-face opportunities where Christians can 'use' their faith. But there is more. While half of our ministry is to serve the poor ourselves, the other half is to provide an avenue for others to serve with us. By "others" we mean both the body of Christ and those who are not-yet-Christians. Indeed, by welcoming 'seekers' to serve the poor with us, we are doing the work of an evangelist, providing practical ways for natural and spiritual questions to emerge so that God can draw our not-yet-Christian volunteers into a relationship with Himself.

A prophetic voice for unity in the church: Over the years, God has trusted Good Works to facilitate unity in the body of Christ. Indeed, through this process we have come to believe that Jesus is more concerned about unity than we are. Jesus himself states clearly in John 17:20-23 that he wants His Church to come into complete unity. It is our view that this unity is experienced through worship--OF SERVICE, OF ADORATION, OF SACRIFICE, OF SUFFERING AND THROUGH GIVING. It is clearly God's will to bless the unity of the body of Christ. When Christians from different 'streams' come together to serve the poor, God stands ready to prosper the work of our hands. God has already given the church unity and like many things in the kingdom, there is man's part and God's part (Ephesians 4:1-6). God has given the church unity, it is our job to preserve it. It takes work (especially the work of humility) to preserve the unity God has **already** given us. But, when we are working together to preserve unity, nothing can stop us. **Nothing**. It is here that Jesus promises that *even the gates of Hell cannot prevail against us*. Today, Good Works welcomes Christians across all denominational lines to serve with us. Today, Good Works is commissioned to facility a true spiritual unity born out of a heart of worship and service to others. It is through this kind of unity that Jesus promises that the world might come to understand and believe in Him. Jesus prays in John 17:20-23 that those of us who believe in Him and follow him will experience a special 'unity of the spirit' that will in the end enable the world to believe and know that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Our calling is work for unity with other Christians. We know that we must work towards relational unity before we will understand

and experience any theological unity. We know that unity requires our community to remain teachable and yielded at all times.

MINISTRY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR BEGINS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

The Good Works community wants to be intentional about being good neighbors. We are compelled by the teaching of scripture in Acts 1:8 to first be witnesses in our immediate neighborhood and then to the remotest parts of the earth. Therefore, we possess a strong commitment to model godly behavior in our immediate neighborhood surrounding our ministry sites. For example, all homeless people seeking shelter at the Timothy House must come through a telephone interview. We do not publicize the address of the Timothy House and directions as well as our address are only provided to homeless people after they complete a phone interview. In addition, the Timothy House home rules (The Way We Are) explain that our commitment to the safety and security of our neighborhood is strong and we will not tolerate behavior from our residents that might threaten or inappropriately disturb our neighbors. It is our intention to balance ministry with our homeless neighbors and ministry with our immediate neighborhood.

One practical and loving aspect of serving our neighborhood has to do with the internal culture of Good Works. Many of the homeless who stay in our houses are invited to serve our neighbors throughout the year in practical ways such as snow removal or occasional lawn care. Residents in our shelters are also encouraged to volunteer at our Friday Night community meal—a hot, public sit-down meal each week to an estimated 125+ people. We call this ‘community dinner’ our Friday Night Supper and it is followed by a range of educational and inspirational activities for adults and children each week. We also provide assistance to some seniors (primarily widows) of the community in the form of yard care and labor intensive service (Samaritan Projects) All of this, including our ‘work night’ at The Timothy House and daily chores by our residents provide a wide range of opportunities for the homeless and recovering homeless to return back to the larger community a portion of the goodness they have received. We believe that work is therapy and that voluntary work produces a sense of dignity.

MINISTRY IN THE COMMUNITY

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus urges his followers to "*...let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*" We believe that God has called us and provided us with a strategic place through which we can witness to the hearts of our contemporaries in the helping professions, business community, law enforcement and to all the citizens of our community. Through both short term and long term relationships, God has empowered us to both speak to and learn from many in our community who are working to serve the same people we are serving. Because God makes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust, it is our conviction that there are many who, although they are not-yet-Christians, are nevertheless working with compassion for justice in a genuine effort to help the oppressed. Because of our belief that it is the truth about God and

the truth about ourselves that ultimately brings lasting change, to the degree that our contemporaries in community seek to help people to know the truth, it is our desire to join hands with them and work together. In addition, because we believe that all truth is God's truth we feel privileged to be taught of God both by our Christian and non-Christian friends in the secular field of the helping professionals. We are committed to maintaining the posture of being a teachable people.

Finally, we recognize that "showing" and "telling" the gospel occurs on many different levels and that our witness is the outward sign of our integrity. Some will come to experience the love of Christ through serving the poor. Others will experience His grace by being served. Some need only a simple seed while others need the seed that was once planted to be watered and nurtured. We take the view that we are called to prepare others to be receptive to Jesus (like John the Baptist who gave his whole life for that purpose alone) by giving value to the ministry of plowing: getting the rocks out of the soil of the heart so that seeds can be planted there. And God is concerned with our hearts, with truth in our innermost being (Psalm 51:6 & 17)

MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

The work of our ministry is really the work of Christian hospitality. Our ministry of hospitality operates on several levels:

- To the stranger who is called homeless. We serve homeless men, women, children and families. This takes place at The Timothy House.
- Long term care (up to two years) for the recovering homeless individuals and others with 'life-controlling' problems. This mentoring ministry is currently only for single men or women in our Life in Transition program which takes place on the Good Works Luhrig road property in The Hannah House.
- By providing hospitality to guests (including work groups) who visit Good Works and who visit our community. This takes place on the Good Works Luhrig Road property at The Hannah House. We now host between 400-500 guests each year, most of whom come to participate with our year-round work camps.
- Through the Retreat Cabin. This beautiful cabin is intended to be a place of silence and solitude for anyone seeking a 'quiet place' to be alone and to seek God.
- At our Country Bed and Breakfast. This facility (completed in 2002) is designed as a training ground for residents in the Life in Transition program to develop the character and work skills which will enable them to succeed in other employment opportunities.
- Through the use of our recreational facilities. The Good Works Luhrig Road facilities and grounds have been designed to accommodate groups who want to use our property for a wedding, picnic or other special event.

“REAL RELIGION, THE KIND THAT PASSES MUSTER BEFORE GOD THE FATHER IS THIS: REACH OUT TO THE HOMELESS AND THE LOVELESS IN THEIR FLIGHT AND GUARD AGAINST CORRUPTION FROM THE GODLESS WORKS – THE MESSAGE

THE VISION

By Robert Carter and Keith Wasserman

“Good Works exists to connect people from all walks of life with the poor so that the kingdom of God can be experienced”

For each work of service, reform, revival, and rebuilding that God has called his people to in the history of the church, He has planted in his people a vision for that work. A vision is necessary because it empowers, it directs and guides. Without a vision (a glimpse, a hope of what will be) the people despair and succumb to the status quo. It was the vision of the promised land that God would give the Israelites, that guided them through the desert; a vision of the church cleansed and society transformed by the gospel empowered Martin Luther and others to labor at church reform; a vision of God's coming kingdom of justice and equality (in Christ) empowered Dr. Martin Luther King's work in civil rights and a vision which empowers the ministry of Good Works to carry on with the hard work of loving and serving our neighbors.

God gives his people a vision of what he will bring to pass in their midst, to empower them to partake in His work. Two fundamental components to the vision are **good news** and **justice**. The good news is God's love and concern for his people; He is going to act on their behalf and in their midst to bring about a new relationship with Himself. Justice characterizes how God will act, how he expects his people to live, and what will be accomplished by the vision.

King Solomon sought wisdom that he might do Justice; Isaiah exhorts us to "seek Justice" for the 'throw-aways' of society. In Exodus, God commands his people "not to pervert Justice"; in Deuteronomy we learn that a curse is upon those who "distort" or "withhold" justice; in the Psalms we are told that there is a blessing upon those who "keep" or "maintain" Justice; in Proverbs we learn that if you are concerned for Justice, the Kingdom of God is within you.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."— Matthew 9:35-38

We have been in ministry to those Jesus called the "*harassed and helpless*" since 1981. In Luke's gospel (4:14-19), we read that Jesus chose the place where He was brought up (Nazareth) to announce what the ministry of the Messiah would look like, feel like and how it should be understood. Of all the passages of Scripture He could have selected to announce what the Messiah would mean to the world, He chose Isaiah 61:1-2: "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*" I am encouraged that Jesus clearly identified what the life and ministry of the Messiah would look like: a life characterized by sharing His time with the poor, sharing the hope of freedom with those who had become imprisoned, helping people to see again (spiritually, physically and psychologically) and

enabling the oppressed to be released from the burdens of their oppression. In short, it was a ministry that brought people into the place where they could experience the kingdom of God

As the Father anointed Jesus for this task, so too, has He anointed all who follow Christ! Indeed, He has given his followers the special ability to work with some people who, because of their suffering, can be ungrateful and unresponsive. People who have been hurt often become angry and many times turn their anger into destruction or depression. The destruction can be outward against people or property but often takes the form of self-destruction. Depression can result from unforgiveness and resentments which often produce bitterness. God's grace is sufficient to help those who have become mentally and emotionally ill, consumed by addictions and relationally separated from family, friends and themselves. God's grace flourishes as people experience the kingdom of God.

We cannot fully realize how the Spirit of the Lord is upon us until we give of ourselves to others in need. When Christ lives in us, we follow HIS example by spending ourselves (Isaiah 58) into the lives of those who cannot repay us--for those who have been "*beaten up on the side of the road*" (See Luke 10:25-37). Because of HIS amazing grace to change us, we, like the Messiah, can experience and demonstrate what it means to live in the new reality of FAITH, HOPE and LOVE. **It's called the Kingdom of God.**

THE HELPLESS: In the gospels, we read the story of the man who was lowered in front of Jesus by his friends (Mark 2:1-17) who had cut a hole through the roof of a home where Jesus was speaking and healing people. The friends of the paralyzed man--who was unable to help himself--were pretty innovative. It is this kind of innovation that we envision as we serve the poor. They were willing to take risks and had a passion for getting Jesus to touch their friend. But before this innovation can be born to help the poor, we must acknowledge that there are poor and oppressed people in our communities (our neighbors) who are what Jesus himself calls "HELPLESS"--unable to change their situation without the help of others. This is hard word for many of us, especially Americans, to receive. But this is Jesus' word. The best picture I can provide to further my point is the one Jesus uses to describe the man who was beaten up in the story of the Good Samaritan. The man in the ditch, unable to get himself out of the ditch without the help of another, was called 'half dead' (Luke 10:30). Today, our ministry is involved with people who are helpless and 'half dead.' That is, without the help of ordinary yet willing people like you and I, they are not able to help themselves.

THE HARASSED: In Matthew 23:23, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and teachers of the law for neglecting what God considered most important: Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness. It is my sincere belief that those in our society with religious power – the guardians of the religious institutions – can misuse the power entrusted to them by God and can become the abusers of the poor. No one who has leadership in the body of Christ is excluded from this warning (including us). Indeed, instead of using their power for good, they used their power to harm for their own personal gain. Such was the case when Jesus got angry in the temple and turned over the tables as he said "*How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!*" (John 2:16). This incident, to my limited understanding, represents God's anger at how the leaders of the synagogue created obstacles that the poor had to 'wade through' in order to have a relationship with God. We are very concerned with how the religious culture has created obstacles, which rather than build bridges for the poor to access the personal relationships in the church, have erected walls.

We now know that this kind of ministry (to the harassed and helpless) must be done in the context of community, where the body of Christ can share responsibility (our ability to respond) as we work to repair broken and shattered lives. As we riskily involve ourselves with those who have been harassed and helpless, we endure hardship and at times experience genuine suffering. We need one another in order to stay encouraged, keep perspective and remain clean vessels in this great work of the Kingdom. And we continue to love because HE first loved us. It is the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, poured out into our hearts that provides us with HOPE: the ability to see beyond what our natural eyes see, into the future of possibilities. It is HOPE that carries us along when we become "weary in doing good." It is HOPE that sustains us when we lose perspective.

Good Works, Inc. exists as an agent of God's grace to empower and transform those crushed by the consequences of structural and personal sin who are homeless or struggling with poverty. The mission of our residential programs is to provide a safe, clean and stable structured atmosphere where the rural homeless can be nurtured in responsibility, accountability and the love which Jesus demonstrated for us.

Our TIMOTHY HOUSE,
our HANNAH HOUSE (LIFE IN TRANSITION),
& our COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT programs
are all concrete structures
through which to accomplish our mission.

Good Works is not a shelter. Good Works provides shelter. What we do emerges from who we are. We *are* the people of God, the body of Christ, (scripture calls us 'living stones') providing a care-community for the rural poor and homeless. The ministry God has trusted us with is a building, a program, a technique or a method. Indeed, the ministry God has trusted us with is people and the people we must be first concerned with as it relates to the use and abuse of power and leadership is ourselves. We must be anchored in the fear of God or we are likely to become abusers and oppressors ourselves.

In reality, what we believe God is calling us to do so that the kingdom of God can be revealed is to lay down our lives. We do not believe we can understand what it fully means to lay down our lives (including our social lives) except in the context of community. It is the community of believers, the body of Christ (when organized together), which enables us to go far beyond what any individual, however gifted, could ever do to help people in need. It is in community that there can be established healthy 'checks and balances' towards the use and abuse of power and where the power of the gospel can be completely unleashed.

Many of us have bought into the mistaken notion of radical individualism, that we don't need others to fully experience God's will. In fact, some of us have even been seduced into a way of thinking about ministry like the world runs business, where the strong and powerful with the 'expertise' lead the weak and frail. At Good Works, we have discovered that God will not permit us to fully understand or do His will apart from relying, at times, upon the weak and 'powerless' members in the body of Christ. There are some people the Lord will not permit us (however gifted we think we are) to help by ourselves. He is waiting for us to reach out together--*as a people, as the body of Christ*. When we do this, He will bless us. The process of organizing together the "less honorable" and "unpresentable" members of the body (I Corinthians 12 21-26), and reaching out to them in their need is as important to the Lord as the act of reaching out. There must be more to our faith than a private, internalized

individualism. May God help us as we continue to discover what Jesus meant when he promised, "*I will build my church.*" (Matthew 16:18)

THE INVESTMENT It is our belief that we have received a trust from God. A trust is something that has been committed to one's care—a charge, a responsibility that is to be managed with an expected return. We want to be faithful trustees of that charge, to bring good news to the broken-hearted. We also want to provide you with an opportunity to "invest" in us. Please notice that we said "opportunity" not "obligation." We, as many others, cannot stand to be manipulated by a sense of obligation to give. We are not a ministry you must give to, but people who seek an investment that is freely given, as many of you have already done. Good Works is not a business venture, but an opportunity to partake in the work of Jesus Christ, the most important work in the world. We seek an investment from you not just in an organization, but primarily in people—an investment in people serving people.

THE RETURN We use the term 'investment' because it describes what we see happening when you give. An investment is something committed to a person's care with the expectation of a return, a profit from what is entrusted. I believe there are some definite returns for your investment in us. **First**, you can make a difference in at least one other person's life. Your gift will enable us to 'plant seeds' that will alter the course of a person's life, eternally. In short, you empower us to be agents of transformation. **Second**, you empower us to give courage to the poor and homeless to become a productive part of the community, helping them to integrate themselves, instead of living in complete isolation and dependency upon others. **Third**, you become partners with us (team players) as we care for the poor and thus share in the most important work in the world—the work of Jesus Christ. Please don't underestimate the significance of financial support, which is investing in people in a Christian vocation, especially in God's eyes (see II Corinthians 9: 6-15). **Fourth**, giving is an opportunity to grow spiritually. It is proof of where you are. It is a chance for each of us to break free of our bondage to money. Giving stretches and renews our humanity—our sense of being made in God's image. **Fifth**, God will bless us for that which is freely given; not only materially, but in ways that will enrich our whole being.

THE STEWARD When the word 'stewardship' is mentioned, it is not uncommon for many to immediately think of money. This is unfortunate, because stewardship actually embraces much more than 'giving money.' It has to do with our whole life. A steward is a trustee of what belongs to someone else—a house manager who has been entrusted with the care and use of the house by the owner. What is required of stewards? One thing only: faithfulness. I remember a story about Mother Teresa. When asked about the fact that so many of the poor she sought to help died, her reply was so straight forward. She said, "*God has not called me to be successful. God has called me to be faithful.*" God is pleased with faithful stewardship. What are we stewards of? The one area in particular we need to be aware of is our stewardship of the poor and needy. Remember that stewards are required to give an accounting to their owner of how they have managed their trust. If you don't think you (and I) will be called to account for our stewardship of the poor and needy, think again.

In Matthew 25:31-46, the section following the parable on the three stewards, Jesus gives us a glimpse of judgment. And what kind of criteria does He use for passing judgment? Our relationship to the poor! That is, whether or not we fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the prisoner, gave drink to the thirsty, and comforted the sick. One of the major problems the Israelites were condemned for, by the prophets, was their abuse of the lowly, the poor, and those on the margins of society. God set the people straight on what he

desired: "*Is this not the kind of fast that I chose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bonds of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light will break out like the dawn*" (Isaiah 58:6-8). Our stewardship of the poor is the test of our priorities and even of our relationship with God. May each of us embrace our call to be faithful stewards wherever we are and so please God. May each of us hear the Master say to us "*Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master*" (Matthew 25:21).

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Keith Wasserman, March, 2007