

People in Purple

Volume 3

Why, How and what To Do With the Homeless

TABLE OF CONTENT/ANALYSIS

Foreword

Preface

Chapter One: Definition/Terms of Homeless

Chapter Two: 106 Mission Ideas

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. AA and NA Group | 34. Housing First with support service |
| 2. Advocacy Group of the Homeless | 35. Housing for mentally disabled |
| 3. After-Care Service | 36. Housing: Permanent low income. |
| 4. After-school Program | 37. Housing: Rent assistance |
| 5. Anger Management Class | 38. Housing: Search Center |
| 6. Art Therapy | 39. Housing: SRO |
| 7. Assessment and Referral Service | 40. Housing: Tent city |
| 8. Automobile Mission | 41. Hygiene Center |
| 9. Auto repair Mission | 42. Inclusive church |
| 10. Auto Parking Mission | 43. Income generating: Bazaar |
| 11. Bicycle Mission | 44. Income generating: Labor pool |
| 12. Bible study class | 45. Income generating: Thrift shop |
| 13. Career counseling service | 46. Income generating: Vendor |
| 14. Case management service | 47. Income generating: Yard sale |
| 15. Christmas gift of rooms | 48. Job bank & job matching |
| 16. Clothing Bank program | 49. Job Training: Barbershop |
| 17. Community Services for offenders | 50. Job Training: Beauty shop |
| 18. Counseling – Individual & group | 51. Job training: Car repair |
| 19. Dancing and exercise therapy | 52. Job training: Carpentry |
| 20. Day care center children | 53. Job training: Computer |
| 21. Day center for women or men | 54. Job training: Cooking Class |
| 22. Dental Care Service | 55. Job training: Gardening/ landscape |
| 23. Detoxification service | 56. Job training: Housekeeping |
| 24. Education: College | 57. Job training: Massage |
| 25. Education: English class | 58. Job training: Secretarial duties |
| 26. Education: GED | 59. Job training: Sewing/knitting |
| 27. Education: Illiteracy program | 60. Jubilee Court for the homeless |
| 28. Education: Ethics/Value | 61. Kitchen service /Diet facility |
| 29. Field trips / Picnic | 62. Laundry service |
| 30. Food pantry service | 63. Legal service |
| 31. Housing for AIDS patients | 64. Library |
| 32. Housing: Eviction Prevention | 65. Life skill training |
| 33. Housing: Home sharing | 66. Lingerie ministry |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 67. Mail box service. | 87. Shelter for DV victims |
| 68. Material contribution | 88. Shelter for Elderly |
| 69. Meal program - emergency | 89. Shelter for Emergency |
| 70. Mentoring service | 90. Shelter for Ex-prisoners |
| 71. Mobile Clinic | 91. Shelter for Families w/children |
| 72. Monetary contribution | 92. Shelter for Farm workers |
| 73. Money management | 93. Shelter for Pregnant women |
| 74. Music and singing | 94. Shelter for Prostitution victims |
| 75. Offer sites/building/house | 95. Shelter for Respite Bed |
| 76. Outreach service | 96. Shelter for Sub. Addicted |
| 77. Parenting class | 97. Shelter for Transitional |
| 78. Partnership church | 98. Shelter for Youth |
| 79. Partnership Mission | 99. Social Support System |
| 80. Phone service | 100. Special Events Celebration |
| 81. Protective payee | 101. Storage Service |
| 82. Public policy advocacy | 102. Substance Treatment Service |
| 83. Resource center | 103. Transportation Service |
| 84. Retreat for leadership dev. | 104. Volunteering |
| 85. Self-defense class | 105. Women's Support GP |
| 86. Share house | 106. Worship |

Chapter Three: Public Policy Advocacy.

Chapter Four: Sharing My Experience in Homeless Missions

1. Leper colonies in Korea (60s)
2. St. Claire County Community Mental Health Center (70s)
3. Harborview Community Mental Health Center – inpatient (80s)
4. Intensive Community Support Treatment Program (80s)
5. Olive Street Social Club (80s)
6. Health Care for the Homeless – Women's shelters (80s)
7. Church of Mary Magdalene –homeless women's church (90s)
8. Cherry Street Social Club. (90s)
9. National Presbyterian Initiative to End Homelessness (1997)
10. Agape Homeless Church (2001)
11. Pre-conference at National Council of Korean Presbyterian Church
12. National Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness (2004)
13. Korean American Coalition for the Homeless (KACH)
14. Local Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness
15. Nest Mission (for the homeless) (2006)

Appendix: Personal Testimonies

1. From American Dream to Jesus' Dream
2. Gain through Losses
3. Calling through Visions
4. Discipline and Train
5. Speaking Tour – Presbyterian Initiative

FOREWORD

You might have seen the homeless man on the street corner with a cardboard sign or pushing a grocery cart full of their life belongings or asleep on a park bench but didn't know what to do or how to help. Have you ever been asked to serve at a homeless shelter but you were reluctant to do so out of concerns of becoming too involved? Have you ever wanted to open a homeless shelter but didn't have any idea where to start? Or have you just passed up those opportunities simply because you didn't know what to do or how to understand the issue of homelessness.

Pastor Jean Kim outlines simple yet creative, inclusive and comprehensive 106 ways an individual, church/faith community can be involved to combat homelessness in *why, how and what to do* in Volume 3 of her book series, *People in Purple*. Her 106 service ideas were born out of the needs of homeless people whom she has been serving in and through fifteen different homeless mission programs over 4 decades, some of which she herself founded. She has been tirelessly serving homeless people, constantly listening, observing and learning about their needs and the list has grown to 106 homeless service ideas. These are presented on why should we offer each of them (Needs) and why and what we can offer (Mission).

Pastor Kim's 106 homeless service ideas begin with simple tasks/projects such as volunteering, feeding, bicycle program, worship, holiday gift of motel rooms down to more complicated permanent solutions. These are small and large and doable. Pastor Kim says, "the first and foremost important mission would be offering the homeless jobs, job/skill training, education, housing and health care that they may become self-sufficient and end their homelessness." However, the most crucial one of 106 ideas is public policy advocacy asserting that we won't be able to end homelessness unless there is major public policy change at all levels of government.

As an advocate working at the national level on combating the homelessness, I concur with her wholeheartedly.

She suggests that individuals, churches/fait h communities and homeless service agencies work together as a team. Throughout the entire presentation of 106 ideas she challenges churches/fait h communities to open their facilities to welcome the homeless. She suggests those who develop homeless services to first learn what the needs of the homeless are rather than just assuming what they want.

She used to make audiences laugh by suggesting that they go to see a psychiatrist if any church/fait h community or individual will not do at least one of the 106 service ideas.

She eases those who are concerned of becoming too involved to courageously say “I CAN DO IT” by sharing her own experience in founding homeless services with empty hands, nothing but commitment and faith in God as her only tools.

While she was on a speaking tour for 6 years on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA) she was able to visit 155 homeless programs in 65 cities she preached at. She was amazed to see that most were founded by faith communities and many still support them today.

As a long time advocate at the National Coalition for the Homeless I will join Pastor Kim to say that historically faith-based organizations have played an important role in responding to the urgent needs of the homeless population. However, I also join Pastor Kim to urge them to move one step beyond from just charity (band aid) toward the goal of ending homelessness. This means that faith communities must be involved more with developing low income affordable housing programs and living wage jobs and actively engage in public policy advocacy and lobbying. As Pastor Kim says, no one organization can

do this alone; we need faith-based organizations to be part of the local, state and national conversation, and working on a solution. When we work together, we can end homelessness in this country.

This book also challenges each individual and church/faith community's social responsibility and accountability to the homeless population and illustrates practical methods for people of all ages to jointly solve this crisis. This book should be in every congregation's hands, outreach committees of faith communities, homeless service providers, policy makers and all who wish to end homelessness. This book should also be a resource for trainings at churches/faith communities and educational institutions.

After reading this book, no one will ever ask again "What can I do to help end homelessness for both the individual and in our society?"

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PREFACE

Have you ever seen the homeless on the street? What went through your mind? Have you ever served them in your community? Or have you been wanting to help them but didn't know what to do or how to help? Volume Three is all about how to help.

I like to assume that those who read Volume One had their eyes opened to the harsh reality and root causes of homelessness. I also hope that their Christian conscience was awakened to God and Jesus' love for the poor/homeless while they read Volume Two. I hope that many are motivated to do something to help the poor/homeless. Volume Three is an attempt to answer those who are saying "What can I do? I don't know what to do! I am only one person."

While I see many people don't care about the issue of homelessness I also meet people who care about them, want to do something but don't know what to do or where to begin. Many people think that to start a homeless mission they have to be professionals, and have large financial resources and human resources. For that reason many churches are just feeding the homeless because that is easily doable. Although food is important a person cannot live by bread alone. Homeless people face a multitude of needs.

Therefore, in this **volume three**, I present 106 homeless mission ideas, a person or a church can be involved with. A brief description of 106 mission ideas in the form of "Need" (why necessary) and "Mission" (what could be done) is presented. I also share my own experience in serving and founding homeless missions from the scratch. 106 mission ideas in volume three come from my many decades of experience of seeing, doing and meeting the needs of the homeless. They cover emergency intervention, prevention, and permanent solutions. It has been difficult, however, to group them in three categories because many are overlap therefor I decided to present them here in alphabetical order. Admitting to some redundancy in the

106, I believe that each one makes its own point. I suggest those who are interested may pick and choose according to the needs of the homeless they encounter and their ability to help out.

The first and foremost important mission would be offering the homeless jobs, job/skill training, education, housing and health care that they may become self-sufficient and end their homelessness. However, I presented 106 small and large doable projects so that everyone can do something.

The most crucial one of 106 ideas is public policy advocacy. I gave a special attention to it in an extended separate chapter describing it in detail asserting that we won't be able to end homelessness unless there is major public policy change.

I used to make my audience laugh by suggesting them to go to see a psychiatrist if any church or individual cannot or will not do at least one of them. I would like to say that they are not inclusive suggestions however by any means. I applied many of these suggestion in my own missions and will add more when we are able to offer the assistance.

I also share my own experience in 15 different mission programs which I have served, founded or co-founded from their inception. My experience of serving or starting a homeless mission didn't take much professional knowledge or large amounts money or many people. I always started very small and grew according to the needs of people and volunteers' availability. I hope my experience in starting homeless mission small way can be an encouragement to those who are scared of putting their hands on this issue. After reading Volume Three I hope people no longer ask "What can I do?."

In fact, these many ideas were born out of my speaking tour in which I was urging every church open one or a few rooms to welcome the homeless and do the homeless mission in small ways. And I needed to provide them with mission ideas so that they can do

something constructive with homeless people whom they invited to come. I started with one idea, two, ten, twenties and now the ideas have grown to 106 possible missions. It is an easily doable project for the church if they are willing because it has people, resource and some funds. I present these mission ideas as ingredients to bring restoration and healing to broken and lost lives of many homeless people. My understanding, analysis, interpretation and critique of the homeless issue may be basic but it comes out of my experience of many decades in listening, talking and serving people who suffer from poverty/homelessness. I also quote other scholars' opinions who have enriched me, hoping they will do the same for the readers.

I suggest to those who are interested in seeing samples of homeless missions to read Volume Four which presents 103 of 155 mission examples that I visited while I was on a national speaking tour. For me, it was an incredible and awesome experience to see many examples and angels who serve them tirelessly.

Why I am writing about the poor/homeless? I have been serving economically and emotionally troubled and substance abusing/addicted homeless people in the United States for most of my career life (4 decades) as a licensed mental health counselor/case manager/social worker and a Presbyterian minister. My body is wearing out as I near 80. Instead of burying my experience, knowledge and research in serving the poor/homeless with me in my grave, I have decided to leave them in writing before my brain function fades away. These are my last gifts that I am leaving for this world hoping that they will motivate my children, grandchildren as well as the younger generations coming after me to care for their poor/homeless neighbors around them and learn from my experience in serving them. I dare hope that this series of five volumes can serve as a resource for individuals, churches, religious communities and teaching institutions that are interested in and concerned about the poor/homeless in our midst.

I also leave the entire benefits from these books, if they generate any proceeds, for the cost and related cost for the education and

job/skill training of my homeless friends that they may get up and walk toward self-sufficiency and that they may be free from multidimensional homelessness and oppression.

Why five volumes? For many decades, the past 30 years in particular, I have been studying, speaking, writing, researching, and compiling resources on homelessness issues. Summarizing many decades of work, study and experience in one book is so huge that I divide them in 5 stand-alone volumes under different themes in order to present the homelessness issue comprehensively. Even though the focus of this proposal is on the first volume I have given a brief synopsis of the remaining four volumes in the series to put it in context.

Why the title of these volumes is “People in Purple?” I have been called “Woman in Purple.” I earned the title from people who have seen me in a purple T-shirt every day since 1997. I chose purple when I developed these T-shirts with a message, “End Homelessness for all People” as part of the national campaign of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to end homelessness for all people.

Purple is the liturgical color of royalty and traditionally has been used during the season of Advent. Purple can also symbolize pain, suffering, and mourning and penitence. Therefore, it is the liturgical color for the season of Lent: the time when Christians grieve, lament, and repent for Jesus’ suffering, reflect upon their lives seriously in prayer and fasting, repent their personal and corporate sins, and commit to serve the Lord more faithfully. Likewise, in my purple T-shirt, I grieve, lament and repent for having so many homeless people in this affluent country, and commit to love and serve Jesus Christ by serving the homeless and to work toward ending homelessness. It also represents my own personal pain, suffering and mourning for my past hurts and wounds in many tragedies and losses (in Korea as well as in the United States). The color purple has become not only my personal identity but also my homeless mission color. Because the color purple can also symbolizes pain, suffering, and mourning of homeless people

who lost everything including their jobs, homes, families, identity, health, pride, joy and hopes, they deserve to be called “People in Purple.”

I hold the pain of my Lord, Jesus, dear homeless friends, and my own deep in my heart. My love for Jesus is my love for the homeless and my love for the homeless is my love for Jesus. As Jesus participates in my suffering and pain, I too participate in his as well as the homeless. Therefore, every day is Lent for me in my purple shirt. My life is a purple life, and I am called the “Woman in Purple.” I call the Great One “Jesus in Purple,” the service I offer “Ministry in Purple,” and my homeless friends “People in Purple.” Thus naturally the title of this book, this series of five volumes, is “People in Purple” because it is their story. But each volume has its own subtitle.

Throughout all five volumes I have used **the poor/homeless** simultaneously as a single concept because all homeless are poor. Poverty is one of the major causes of homelessness and the poor are at a high risk of being homeless although not all the poor people are homeless.

I am deeply indebted to many local and national coalitions and scholars – economist, and theologians – who enriched and supplied me resources on the issue of the rich, poor, and the homeless. I owe huge thanks to Michael Stoops of the National Coalition for the Homeless for writing the foreword for volume 3. Heartfelt thanks to Mary Margaret Pruitt and Cathy Roper in Seattle for proofreading and editing my manuscript of volume three. Huge debts to Steve & Marcy Hong, Mickie Choi (Hoe), Mia Park in California for offering me a room to hide and write. I am grateful to Chan Hie Park, Cecilia Kim, Paul Han, Jasmine Valentine, Shin Hwa Park & Duk Nan Cho, Esther & Hana Na and Suhm Park in California for providing me with ways and means while I was writing away from home. Huge thanks to Nest Mission staff and Board for allowing me to go away to hide and write these volumes, and their support and encouragement. Last but not the least, thanks to my son, daughter-in-law, all my grandchildren, my nephew and his family for their support in numerous ways for this huge work of writing. This means I didn’t write these volumes alone.

It took a whole community of caring people. Without their support, encouragement and prayer these volumes could have never been a reality. However, above all, it was the special grace of God who motivated and sustained me throughout all these years, especially recent two years while I was writing these volumes.

Brief introduction of vol. 1, 2, 4, and 5.

In Volume 1, I identify 45 areas of direct and/or indirect reality and root causes of homelessness. Only one of them is considered to be the personal and the rest are viewed from sociopolitical, economic and cultural perspectives. Also included are my own interview results on homelessness that includes opinions from 50 professional service providers/ advocates, 50 from the general public and 50 homeless persons. I also identify 45 myths and present facts that challenge these myths and our incorrect understanding of homelessness. I included a brief comparison of the way the United States and Europe deal with poverty issues. And in the end of each volume, I add my personal testimonies because many people ask what motivated me as an immigrant to serve the poor/homeless. I confess that all of our life troubles, tragedies, illness and pains can motivate us to do something good for others and society with the help from God.

Volume 2 is about Biblical (Old and New Testament) studies and/or the theological positions on poverty/homelessness. After learning the troubling truth about how we have created poverty and homelessness in the U.S., readers may now raise a question as to how God sees this reality and if God is happy with the way we do homeless mission in the U.S. Thus, Volume Two is an attempt to discuss that question: what is the biblical position on poverty/homelessness?

I walked through the whole Bible trying to bring to light many deeply hidden insights to poverty/homelessness written in the Bible. The Bible has a multitude of indications of poverty/homeless situations. I reviewed God's and Jesus' position on poverty/ homelessness who challenge, warn, indict, and sentence those who exploit and oppress the poor. Then I add St. Paul,

James, and John's position on poverty/homelessness. The final part of Volume Two is the critique of contemporary church mission including diagnosis and treatment. I hope that readers' conscience may be awakened to the demand of God. Now after reading about the disturbing reality of poverty/homelessness in the U.S. and the Biblical position of them, some readers might ask "what must I do now?" This volume (3) was an attempt to answer that question.

Volume 4: For those who read the first three volumes, some might wonder what others are doing and wish to visit some of them but cannot. Thus, in volume four I introduce the 103 of 155 homeless mission examples that I visited in the United States while I was on my speaking tour (1998-2004). Visiting so many wonderful programs was quite a learning experience. Writing on them is also an awesome and inspiring experience because most of these missions have either started at church premises, or somewhere else by churches/faith communities or by individual Christians. These churches still support many homeless missions in their towns or cities.

Volume 5 is a compilation of my 23 sermons and keynotes to general Christian churches/groups focusing on the theme of the poor/homeless, and 32 sermons to the homeless church focusing on finding self-esteem, pride, hopes and restoration from poverty and homelessness to self-sufficient new life.

And in the end of each volume, I add an appendix to share my personal testimonies because many people ask what motivated me to serve the poor/homeless as an immigrant. I confess that all of our life troubles, tragedies, illness and pains can motivate us to do something good for others and society with the help from God. And I also assert that it is my time to share the abundant blessings I have received in this country, my new home.

I recommend those who are concerned or interested in homeless issues to read all five volumes in order to get the full perspective.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Volume 3: Why, How and what To Do With the Homeless



Jean Kim is a retired minister and a former staff of (national) Presbyterian Church (USA) for the issue of homelessness. She is also a Washington State certified social worker and a certified mental health counselor.

Jean Kim is an immigrant from South Korea to the United States in 1970. Since most of her career life in the U.S. – for over 4 decades - has been serving the homeless people up to the present.

Jean Kim is a graduate of Han Kuk Theological Seminary, Korea (BD in 1959), Dan Kuk University, Korea (BA in 1960), St. Louis University (MSW in 1977) and San Francisco Theological Seminary (D. Min in 2006).

Jean Kim is a founder and co-founder of 10 mission programs: Founder of Olive St. Social Club, Seattle (a day center for the homeless), Cherry St. Social Club, Seattle (a day center for the homeless), the Church of Mary Magdalene (of homeless women), Seattle, National Korean American Coalition for the Homeless, National Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness, Nest Mission for the homeless, Seattle, Regional Presbyterian Networks to End Homelessness (Washington State) and International Ministry at the University of Washington (Campus Ministry), Seattle; co-founder of the Agape Church for the Homeless, New Haven, CT and Korean Community Counseling Center, Seattle. She received 20 Community Service Awards including Woman of Faith Award from Presbyterian Church (USA), Medal of Honor from Korean government and Hero of the Homeless from the Nightwatch in Seattle. She is a minister/social worker/mental health counselor for the homeless, an

organizer, preacher, lecturer, workshop leader and writer on homelessness, domestic violence, women's issues, and clergy sexual misconduct.

Other Books by Jean Kim

1. Jubilee Manual: Jean Kim's End Homelessness (2000 in English).
2. Video: Jean Kim's End Homelessness (2000 in English).
3. Video: Jean Kim's End Homelessness (2000 with Korean caption)
4. Plant the Cross: Reality and Root Causes of homelessness (2008 in Korean).
5. Is Women's Leadership Acceptable as is Now (co-authored, 2009 in Korean).
6. Is Women's Leadership Acceptable as is Now (co-authored, 2012 in English)
7. People in Purple Vol. 1. Why & Who are Homeless? (2015 in English)
8. People in Purple Vol. 1. Why & Who are Homeless? (2015 in Korean)
9. People in Purple Vol. 2. Biblical Position on the poor/homeless (2015 in English).
10. People in Purple Vol. 2. Biblical Position on the poor/homeless (2015 in Korean)
11. People in Purple Vol. 3. 106 Homeless Mission Ideas (2015 in Korean)
12. People in Purple Vol. 4. 155 Homeless Mission Examples (2015 in English).
13. People in Purple Vol. 5. 55 sermons (2015 in English)
14. People in Purple Vol. 6. Articles & Sermons (2015 in Korean).
15. A Woman in Purple Vol. 7. Autobiography (2015 in Korean)
16. A Woman in Purple Vol. 8. Autobiography (2015 in English) and many articles.
17. Clergy Sexual Misconduct (2015 in Korean)

