

Foreword for Jubilee Manual

"Do you know where to find Jesus?" asks the small, five foot tall pastor, The Rev. Jean Kim. After a pause, she boldly states, "Jesus is on the streets. Jesus is homeless. If you go to the streets, there, you will find Jesus!"

My dear friend, Jean Kim, knows where to find Jesus. Finding Jesus so often in the bruised face of a homeless woman, perhaps the victim of years of domestic violence; or in the eyes of a young mother who turned to selling her body as a way to provide food for her young children, Jean Kim discovered a basic search within us all for a home. Jean Kim learned that we seek that place of belonging and being loved as a valuable child of God, emotionally, spiritually, but also, physically. God's dream that we all live "at home", was the call to Rev. Kim to begin a church for homeless women in Seattle. This church, The Church of Mary Magdalene, has become a spiritual home for hundreds of women and from this faith based center, emotional and physical needs have been met for thousands of homeless women over the past thirteen years.

In 1997, I had the privilege as the Associate Director for Women's Ministries to present Jean Kim with one of the three annual "Woman of Faith" awards at the General Assembly in Syracuse, New York. While this award is known as a great honor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and recipients often come to the celebration breakfast in their finest attire, Rev. Kim received her award in her daily uniform of purple running pants and a purple sweat shirt that reads, "End Homelessness for All Women". Rev. Kim lives her commitment to ending homelessness every day, all day, and even her clothing is a witness to the call she received from God.

It was also during the 1997 General Assembly that the Presbyterian Church accepted an Overture that we would seek as a denomination to "End Homelessness for All Women and Children". At the time, I wondered, what does accepting such an enormous challenge really mean for our denomination.

Several months after the "Woman of Faith" award ceremony, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop Rev. Kim led on "Ending Homelessness". During this workshop Jean mentioned that she was resigning after ten years as pastor of the Church of Mary Magdalene. She said that she felt God was calling her beyond the Seattle streets to spread the urgent word that people of faith much respond to this national disgrace. She also said that while she has no idea what she would be doing next, and even though she was in her 60's and not able or ready to retire, she was confident that God would show her where this new call would lead her.

As the new Associate Director of Women's Ministries, I had been considering for several months what direction God might be suggesting for the women's ministries program area. During the night after attending Jean Kim's workshop, I had a dream. It was such a powerful dream that it awakened me. I sat up in bed and rehearsed the dream in my mind. Then it became clear to me, in some mysterious way, I felt that I must talk with Jean Kim to see if it might be possible that her call to challenge the church in concrete ways to end homelessness might be a program from women's ministries. Feminist theology, could be put into action in an important way as we served the often voiceless and marginalized among us. The following day Jean Kim and I talked and it was clear to both of us that her sense of call to the larger faith community and my sense

of God's direction for women's ministries could be realized in her joining our staff with this mission before us.

Over the past two and a half years, Jean Kim traveled endlessly, visiting churches, shelters, homeless programs, and soup kitchens. From coast to coast Rev. Kim took her message of ending homelessness and offered concrete ways every Presbyterian Church could participate by offering one room in each church to be used for child care, job training, health assistance, shelter, etc. Her proposal was simple, "Every church, One Room". As she preached from church to church she would look out at the congregation and ask, "How many rooms are in your church buildings?" When it was obvious no one knew, she would encourage this thought, "If you do not even know how many rooms you have, surely one could be put to use to end homelessness!"

Many churches, presbyteries, and women's groups and individuals have heard Rev. Kim's challenge and have responded in creative ways. Jean has visited many of these new initiatives to end homelessness as well as the many existing programs she visited on her travels these past few years. This book (Jubilee Manual) is the result of her call to accept God's dream that there are ways to end homelessness. We are people of hope and God has given us the abilities to work creatively in communities of faith to offer a home for every one of God's children.

As you read this book and discover the many incredible ways Presbyterians are responding to this urgent need of our time, I invite you to participate not merely as a detached reader, but to allow Jean's experience to work within you. I believe Jean is right, that if our churches go into the streets, we will find Jesus.

I conclude this forward with deep gratitude for the inspiring and hope-filled ministry of my colleague and friend, The Reverend Jean Kim.

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2000