

From volume 3, People in Purple: 106 homeless mission ideas.

## **Report on the Speaking tour for the Presbyterian Initiative to end homelessness:**

### **Background**

I was called to carry out the “National Presbyterian Initiative to end homelessness,” for the Presbyterian Church (USA) on the national level.

When I reflect upon the past, it is an amazing work of the Holy Spirit how she guided me to start this mission of ending homelessness right after the General Assembly passed overtures “End homelessness for all women and children” which I helped Seattle Presbytery to submit to the [National annual] General Assembly. Something was happening with me way before that. Here is the background story:

In those days I was serving as a Board member of the Church Council of Greater Seattle. The Church Council sent me to a couple of national and international conferences. Whenever I returned from these large conferences I ended up writing a confessional statement on behalf of the Church Council. In 1988, when I came back from the World Conference on Peace and Justice in Korean peninsula held in Seoul, Korea, I wrote a confessional statement on behalf of the Church Council of Greater Seattle on the hatred of the U.S.A., on peoples who hold different ideologies from ours. In 1990, when I came back from Pacific Peace and Justice Conference held in Hilo, Hawaii, I wrote again a confessional statement on behalf of the Church Council of Greater Seattle on the sin that the U.S.A committed toward people in the Pacific Islands. Both times I was sent to these conferences as one of those who represented the Church Council of Greater Seattle. The Council published both statements in its monthly newspaper.

Before and after the 1997- General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USAS) held in Syracuse, NY, I wrote the following confessional statement for homeless status of women. The Church Council published it in Church Council newspaper. The Executive Director of the Church Council read the confession at the Christmas service of the Church of Mary Magdalene. When I wrote this statement, I never dreamt that I would be called to go on a national speaking tour to motivate Presbyterian Churches to participate in the mission of ending homelessness. I was retiring and was not looking for another job. I want to share it with my readers because that confessional statement became the base and root of the motivation and strength to develop the homeless mission for the whole denomination of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

### **Background of the Statement**

We are at a crucial point in time when welfare reform and economic policy in this nation throw more women and children into homelessness. Having a place to live is a fundamental human right which God gave everyone in this world, and yet this affluent democratic country allows too many human beings, especially women, to suffer in homelessness. Leaving so many women and children in homelessness is an absurd sin we, as a people and a nation, commit together. Homelessness is an assault and violence against our human dignity which is the image of God. Federal, state and city governments and religious or secular agencies are trying to do something. But their efforts and programs fall far short of the goal to end homelessness.

A serious question is, how long we will keep on providing the insufficient level of support and keep on producing and increasing homelessness, especially for women and children? Are we going to perpetuate this problem for 200 or 500 more years? At some point we have got to stop it by attacking the root causes of homelessness.

I have experienced unbearable pain and frustration every single day when I face a critical shortage of housing for the new or chronically homeless women, who are sick on the rainy cold streets. I have been sharing anger and rage with many women who ended up sleeping on the streets or in temporary shelters. Out of this pain and rage, a new vision was born to develop a mission of ending homelessness for all women in this country.

***NOW is the time to move beyond the temporary band-aid programs*** toward the final solution. And thus, we make this strong appeal to our sisters and brothers, regardless of your religion, to join with us in developing this movement of ending homelessness for all women in this country and in this world as a clear CALL from God, who created all human beings in his/her own image and blessed them equally to have homes on earth.

At that time I developed and served homeless women's church and therefore, the following confessional statement focuses on homelessness of women and children. Later we change it to "end homelessness for all people."

### **Confessional Statement**

We believe in the liberating and healing Jesus Christ whose purpose of coming to this world was to be incarnated with God's heart to deliver (salvation) human beings from poverty, sickness, yokes, oppression and sins (Luke 4:18-19, Matt. 4:23-25, Luke 14:15-24, John 3:16).

The statement of Shared Principles on Welfare Reform was signed by 47 religious and Social Welfare Organizations. Leaders stated that "*as people of faith and religious commitment, we are called to seek justice for people who are poor. Central to our religious traditions, sacred texts, and teachings is a divine mandate to protect the poor. We believe that people are more important than the sum of their economic activities.*" Robert Bohl, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA stated that "*as Christians, we must set before all our leaders their responsibility to promote the common good. We must remind them of the clear biblical message that God judges harshly those nations that ignore the cries of the poor and the vulnerable, and we must hold our leaders to that standard of accountability. Indeed, it is worth noting that in the scene in Matt. 25: 31 so familiar to all of us, it is the nations that are called to stand before the judgment seat of God and answer for their treatment of the poor.*"

Scripture tells us that Jesus accepted, recognized, healed and restored poor sick women; examples are Mary Magdalene, the bent-over woman, the woman with a bleeding problem, the woman caught in the act of adultery, gentile women, Mary and Martha and many more. St. Paul described equality of women in Gal. 3:28; "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

**Whereas:** the housing and welfare policy have affected the poor, there are approximately 3 million homeless and many more million people including women and children are at risk of becoming homeless in this affluent country,

**Whereas:** in Seattle alone we have more than 5,000 homeless in any given night, and it will be increasing with the present welfare reform and housing policies,

**Whereas:** the Federal government allocates 1% for social service and nearly 50% for the military spending,

**Whereas:** homelessness in this affluent country is an absurd sin we commit together as a society. It is a gross human rights abuse and violation that must end here first before we target the human rights abuse in other countries,

**Whereas:** we believe in the Creator God who made all human beings, men and women, in God's own image and blessed them equally to live on earth in harmony with each other and enjoy the abundance on earth (Gen.1:26-30) and therefore, all humanity and all the resources belong to God and everyone deserves to share the blessings,

**Whereas:** we believe in the Blessing God who commanded the blessed to bless others (Gen. 12:3b) and to care for the poor (Lev. 19-9-10, 18),

**Whereas:** we believe in the Exodus God who could not sit in a remote heaven watching people suffer and die and came down to the earth to deliver people out of their misery and pain (Ex.3: 7-10),

**Whereas:** we believe in the Healing God who binds up the broken hearted, comforts the mourning, brings good news to the poor and frees the oppressed and captive (Is. 61: 1-3),

**Whereas:** we believe in the Liberating God who proclaimed Jubilee year, the year for the poor to restore what they lost and for the rich to return to whom it originally belonged and both become liberated( Lev. 25:8-12),

**Whereas:** we who have homes, families, jobs, financial resources, sense of pride, self-esteem and dignity are wealthy and powerful in the eyes of the poor and also in the eyes of God,

**Now therefore, we confess** that the Christian church follows the modern day economic ideology and values as our principle, we are engulfed by them rather than being reformers and allow the gulf between the rich and poor to become wide and deep.

**We confess** that we make the church as a club to meet our own needs and comfort instead of becoming a giving, sacrificing and dying church as Jesus Christ did and therefore, we create a big gulf between Jesus and the Christian church by losing the ideology and the cross of Jesus Christ.

**We confess** that we lock God up in heaven and leave no relationship between God and the reality of human suffering in homelessness.

**We confess** that we theologize wealth as blessings from God, claim its ownership and adopt apathy and indifference as our guard to blur our conscience and greed.

**We confess** that we have been seeking complacency and security of our own by closing our eyes toward needs of the poor; sleeping in warm beds while the homeless sleep in rainy alleys, under the bush and in crowded shelters; eating juicy meat while the homeless chew stale bread; riding in heated cars while the homeless walk on wet and cold streets with no warm cover.

**We confess** that we keep silence when we should speak the truth about the injustice of degrading, abusing, raping and murdering homeless women in cold, wet, violent streets.

**We confess** that we allow poverty to drag God's people, especially women, into homelessness and play deaf and blind when the homeless women look to us and cry out for help.

**We confess** that we give basket charity to the poor at Thanksgiving and Christmas to ease our guilt and greed, and forget about their existence for the rest of the year, and never want to look into the root cause of the homelessness.

**We confess** that we blame the poor and a few people in the White House for the poverty and homelessness in this country and forget that we are part of the problem and refuse to own it. We confess that we must share the responsibility of dehumanizing and demonizing the poor and homeless women by leaving them in substandard human conditions.

**We confess** that the Christian community is losing our home address, identity and the standing ground as a Christian church in this particular historical and

economic context of our day.

**We confess** that we, the Christian churches are facing a crisis by losing the message of Jesus Christ, therefore losing our direction, losing our responsibility and Jesus' command to love and care for the poor and needy neighbors as ourselves.

### **We Call Upon The Churches For Action!**

**As people of God**, we must examine what we do with our faith in God and what we do with our blessings.

**As individuals**, we must examine ourselves and our life style and begin to simplify them and learn to share our blessings with those who are in need.

**As a Church** we must honestly examine how thick our wall is from the outside world and also examine where our funds go. We must urge the church to share a substantial portion of our resources with the poor.

**As a local government and state**, we must honestly examine where we spend our funds and urge local governments to spend more funds for the homeless rather than on the sports stadium and war.

**We must develop a policy of ending homelessness** and make it a major goal of local, state and federal government. We must develop a rehabilitation program to help the poor and homeless recover from poverty and homelessness as well as disabilities.

**We call upon the Church** to investigate the situation of homelessness and adopt ending it as its major mission goal. We call on the churches to work ecumenically to overcome the homelessness crisis we are facing in order to recover our identity and ideology as Christ's Church through our courageous action of delivering all suffering people of God from their homelessness.

**We call upon all** the faith communities to respond to the homelessness in our own city and State and work together to achieve our goal of ending homelessness in this country.

**All the religions** on earth must commit to be the healing, sharing, liberating, acting, sacrificing communities that have a courage to take a risk, stand up for the powerless and homeless and to die for justice.

**We declare that** we won't tolerate this injustice of homelessness in our society any longer and that NOW is the time for all churches to speak up, take responsibility and leadership to end poverty and homelessness.

**We request** that the statement of this confession be published in the denominational / other religious papers.

**We also request** that this statement of confession be used for bible study and worship in churches.

**Note:** This confessional statement was prepared in 1997. But if I write it again today, I will write the same confessional statement except some information and statistics might be different today.

In 1995-1996 my chronic asthma got so bad that some mornings I woke up half dead because overnight it turned into acute bronchitis. I thought my end time is coming near since I had been sick with this asthma and acute bronchitis every winter for all my life since age 5. Besides, I didn't want to be in sick position and do the ministry. I also wanted to be a pastor who knows when to come and when to go. I was determined convinced 1998 was my time to go if God allows me to last that long. So I submitted to my Board the request of retirement as of January 1998. I wanted to prepare my homeless sisters to let me go without feeling being abandoned. I gave them a year to prepare for separation from me.

While I was preparing my retirement, around October 1997 a few things were happening:

1) One event was "Women of Faith Award" came to me from the National Women's Ministry Program of the National Presbyterian Church (USA), and I had to attend the General Assembly held in Syracuse, NY in June 1997 to receive the award. 2) On the basis of the confessional statement as introduced above, I motivated Presbytery of Seattle to submit overtures to the national Assembly. The detail of the overture is introduced below. So I had to go to Syracuse to kill two birds with one stone; see how the overture goes and to receive awards. 3) Around October 1997, I happened to be invited to Presbyterian National Consultation on poverty to do a workshop on homeless issue, which was held in Louisville, KY. In that workshop someone mentioned that their church cannot host homeless women because it is "risky." I responded that 1) life is full of risks. If we are scared of risks, we cannot live this tough life. 2) I have been taking all the risks while I have been serving homeless people for several decades, working very closely with them, and taking them around in my own car, but God protected us and nothing happened. But I don't need to take that risk any longer because I am retiring in two months.

Who would ever imagine that Rev. Barbara Dua, then director of Women's Ministry Program of National Presbyterian Church (USA) was in the audience? After the workshop she introduced herself to me and invited me to talk with her sometime during the workshop.

She confessed what happened to her that night: Rev. Barbara Dua writes,

*"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."*  
(From the Foreword, Jubilee Manual, 2000, by Jean Kim).

Thus I was hired as of February 1, 1998 by the Women's Ministries Program instead of preparing to die. I thought



“God is calling me again, and is this the second call? I couldn't resist the call and said “yes.” The job was to travel around the whole nation, speaking to the Presbyterian Churches to urge them to be involved with the mission of ending homelessness. You never know how God guides you. First, God inspired me to write the confessional statement (above); God inspired me so that I could motivate the Seattle Presbytery to submit overtures to end which was my mission. I authored introduced below. I never dreamed national policy for a huge never dreamt that “I” was going to statement and overture around the to open rooms for the homeless? I speaking tour started February 1998.

homelessness for women and children the content of the overture which is that the overture could become a denomination such as PC (USA)? I be the one to carry the confessional nation and urge Presbyterian Churches could neither die nor retire! Thus, my



After 6 years of travelling I wrote the

following report and reflections.

### **Final report and reflections on the speaking tour**

I usually said to people who gathered to hear me: “I am standing here as your mission product in Korea. I am also standing here as one of millions whose lives were saved by the sacrifice of 54,000 U.S. soldiers in the Korean War. I lived through the era of Japanese oppression in Korea as a child, a refugee, war and an exile as a teenager. I lived in poverty in my 20s, suffered the devastation of losing a child in my adult and immigrant life, in my 40s, experienced healing in the abundant grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and recommitted myself to serve the Lord by serving homeless people, in my 50s. Therefore, I am standing here as a friend of the homeless. I carry their voice. I am grateful to the grace of God who inspires, guides and uses me for such an important mission as the ‘Ending Homelessness Initiative.’ I am grateful to Jesus Christ who has been the model of the best host welcoming the poor, sick and homeless. I am grateful to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that adopted overtures to ‘end homelessness’ as a denominational policy that resulted in the ‘Homeless Initiative’ for which I was gratefully called. I am grateful to Rev. Barbara Dua, then Director of the Women's Ministries Program Area for having the vision to include the overture to ‘end homelessness for women and children’ as part of the mission of Women's Ministries Program Area of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). I am grateful to Rev. Gary Cook, who joined the Initiative of ‘ending homelessness’ from the early stage and finally inherited the Initiative and kept it alive through December 2003 and played the role of a midwife in giving birth to the Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness in 2004. This allowed me to serve one more year as an interim director of the Network. I am grateful to 430 groups in the nation for inviting me as a speaker and 116 hosts including 95 families who welcomed me into their homes while I was traveling. My daring six years of experience was a wonderful learning opportunity more than what I shared with people. I am grateful to many people who devote their lives for the mission of bringing many homeless Americans home. I grew, matured and humbled through meeting them, visiting many wonderful homeless programs and hearing many moving stories. Therefore, I am compelled to share them by formulating this final reflection as my gift to those who supported me to carry out this mission.”

Reflecting upon the ministry with homeless women in Seattle and speaking to Presbyterians to end homelessness all meant “planting a cross,” as God commanded me to do in my dream in 1988; planting motivation, the original image of woman God created, dignity, self-esteem, and hope, love, forgiveness of Jesus Christ in the souls of homeless women and planting his value, life and commandment to love “the least of these” in the hearts of the Presbyterians. We all are called to plant the cross, Jesus Christ, in every one's soul and life.

This writing goes beyond reporting/reflecting my journey with the Homeless Initiative. I share resources as well for those who seek new ideas. I have many stories to tell and it was hard to restrain myself from writing so much. Details may be found in the Jubilee Manual which was written in 2000 and from my five volumes titled "People in Purple." Shalom to all who are involved in the mission of ending homelessness!

### **Ending Homelessness Initiative of 1997 and 1998**

**This was the time I got to be involved deeply: The Overtures that General Assembly adopted became the cause of Ending Homelessness Initiative for the Presbyterian Church (USA). The 209<sup>th</sup> and 210<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies (1997 and 1998) of the Presbyterian Church, (USA.) adopted "Ending Homelessness for All Women and Children" as a denominational policy both of which were submitted by the Seattle Presbytery.**

**Overture (97-51):** In response to this overture, the 209<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (1997) approved the following resolution:

1. Commend the Presbytery of Seattle for bringing this critical issue of homelessness of women to the attention of the greater church and religious community at this time.
2. Urge the appropriate program areas, such as the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Urban Ministries, Rural Ministries, and Women's Ministries, to continue their work to combat homelessness and produce resources that outline the successful models used by congregations that have sponsored ministries for homeless women and homeless women with children. In addition, make these resources available to local congregations. [To meet this requirement, the Hunger Program published my Jubilee Manual which was a 300 pages report and reflection along with 77 mission ideas I developed; it also created a 20- minute video with my report and reflection of the speaking tour carrying the Initiative].
3. Call upon and challenge all presbyteries and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to promote awareness and education about ways to alleviate the homelessness of women. [To meet this requirement the General Assembly's Women's Ministries and Hunger Program hired me and sent me out to all congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA) ]for 6 years.
4. Urge Presbyteries and congregations to call attention to the impacts of the recent changes in welfare reform, especially on women, and how these changes may increase homelessness.
5. Urge presbyteries and congregations to work cooperatively with other churches, religious groups, and charitable or governmental entities to help provide safe and secure shelter for homeless women in times of crisis. [I sure did cry out for this].
6. Urge members of the church and the Presbyterian Washington Office to continue working toward the enactment of public policies that have the stated goal of eradicating the conditions that lead to homelessness. [I worked with the Washington Office very closely].

**Overture 98-55 was approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) as a supplemental overture to 97-51 passed by the 209th GA (1997).**

1. 98-55 was passed "as a concrete process of moving one step toward achieving the goal of ending homelessness for all women and children." [I prepared the supplement for Seattle Presbytery to add items being missed in overture 97-51 I prepared the year before on behalf of the Seattle Presbytery].
2. **"Open One Room"** was approved as our national campaign and urge all Presbyterian churches to **open at least one room** for ministry to the poor and homeless *[and to further ask all Presbyterian churches to encourage other denominations or churches in their own communities to do likewise or to partner together for this ministry, to magnify the results of such a campaign throughout the United States.*
3. **Approve: the "Shirts Drive"** with the message "End Homelessness for All Women" or "All People" printed on them as our national campaign and encourage Presbyterians to wear them and spread the message to end homelessness for all women and children throughout the nation.
4. Call upon Presbyterian churches to work with policy makers to create fair and just economic and housing policies, and to create funding to implement those policies, which will benefit every citizen of this nation, not just the poor and

homeless. [I carried the items 2, 3, and 4 in my head, in my heart and on my shoulders wherever and whenever I spoke in the nation].

**The Women's Ministries Program Area was motivated to move the Initiative into action:**



After the General Assembly adopted an overture (submitted by Seattle Presbytery) to “end homelessness for women and children” in 1997 as reported above, the Initiative” was moved into action by the Women’s Ministries Program Area (Director was Rev. Barbara Dua) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

To achieve the goal, the Rev. Barbara Dua, then Director of the Women’s Ministries Program Area, hired me, which I hadn’t dare to dream –although I was involved in preparing the overtures with congregations in Seattle –to travel around the whole nation to motivate Presbyterians to join the Women’s Ministries Program Area to work toward ending homelessness for women and children. In fact, I had already started the campaign to end homelessness in Seattle after experiencing frustrations in repeating emergency intervention for shelter rooms for the homeless women and children while I was serving the Church of Mary Magdalene. Although it was the denominational Initiative, I was carrying it deep in my heart. And thus, I was absolutely excited about the unexpected call and was ready to roll.

At first, however, I was anxious thinking, what if no one invites me to speak. Publicity went out through Presbyterian Women’s newsletters and other publications. Word got around. To my surprise and shock, invitations began to pour in for speaking engagements.

Later after I started to travel with the Initiative, I realized there were a couple of staff (one was ordained minister and the other was lay person) on General Assembly level who were already working with issue of poverty and homelessness in the department of Urban Ministry. They could have been much better speakers with English as their native tongue, longer experience of working with homeless population and still better with community development. Somehow, mysteriously person like me, the least was hired. One thing I would be better than they were my deep compassion for homeless women’s plight and thus, I could cry with them.

### **Presbyterian Women were excited about the Initiative**



with cardboard boxes Center exhibit hall Assembly. The room the care of homeless “bricks” are labeled ministry. On the blue churches can do to

**In 1998 and 1999, I Women’s Ministries.**

**In 1998,** I spoke unduplicated cities and in 16 different states, getting on the plane 50 different times.

**In 1999,** I spoke to 125 groups in 45 different unduplicated cities and in 19 different unduplicated states, getting on the plane 58 different times. Of the total 430 groups I spoke to, 94 were Presbyterian Women’s group (22%) including

At the 1998 General Assembly’s exhibition hall, Women’s Ministries Program Area and Presbyterian Women highlighted building ONE ROOM in the church with cardboard blocks to encourage churches to host homeless women and children.

Horizons magazine, September- October, 1998 issue included the photo and story and once again emphasized “every church open one room” campaign which was a call of the overture: As the Associate for Ending Homelessness of Women, Women’s Ministries Program Area, sat



inside a room built by visitors in the Charlotte Convention during the 1998 General symbolizes space devoted to people in the church; the with my 77 ideas for homeless poster my 77 ways that help the homeless are listed.

**worked full time for the**

to 72 groups in 27 different

Korean Presbyterian Women. It was absolutely non-stop flying. How in the world that could happen? Only thing I knew then and now is the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way to explain this non-stop fiery movement.

I am grateful to the planning committee of the 2000 Presbyterian Women's Statewide Gathering for accepting my recommendation to give the half of the offering to homeless women's projects in the nation. Thanks for using my homeless litanies in the worship service and allowing me to plead to the whole group of five thousand women for generous giving. I am grateful to 5000 Presbyterian women who gave so generously that the total offering amounted to \$87,000 which was the highest the Presbyterian Women ever gathered at one conference. Loud outcry of the Homeless Initiative was echoed through the ears and the hearts of 5,000 participants.

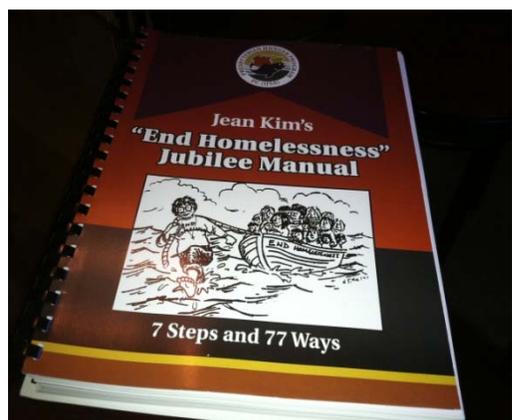
**Picture:** Presbyterian women at 1998 General Assembly supported the Initiative by wearing purple shirts.



Homelessness Initiative," which continued

Many hungry people are homeless and most hunger not only physically but in every aspect of are caused by poverty. Therefore they are twin

From the beginning I began to write my own homelessness, which turned into a 330-page Hunger Program published the material under the



drive by replacing the logo of the Church of Mary Magdalene that I started in Seattle with the logo of the Presbyterian Church.

### The Hunger Program inherited the Initiative.

#### I created a slogan:

*"Hunger and homelessness are twin children of poverty."* My supervisor liked it!

After I worked for the Women's Ministries Program area for two years, the Presbyterian Hunger Program inherited (2000) the vision of the "Ending through December 2003.

homeless people experience life. Hunger and homelessness sisters of poverty.

handouts on the issue of resource. I am grateful that the name "Jean Kim Says End Homelessness". I named it "Jubilee Manual" as a subtitle because it was written in the year



2000 when the Presbyterian Women were celebrating jubilee and the whole purpose of the Initiative was to liberate people from hunger, poverty and homelessness (Jubilee). The book includes 77 ways that churches can act and 127 program examples I visited in two years throughout the nation. I used to make people laugh by saying "if any church cannot do any of the 77 ways, they should see a psychiatrist." This book needed to be updated. The five volumes I am writing at this moment is just what I am doing.

The Hunger Program encouraged me to talk about my experience in my speaking tour and did a wonderful job in editing it into a 20-minute Video."

It also inherited the t-shirts



The Hunger Program sold these three items through the Presbyterian Distribution Center to serve as resources for the whole church.

In 6 years of speaking tour, I spoke to 430 groups (small and large) in 96 different cities and 31 different states at synod, presbytery, congregation, and Presbyterian Women's events, seminary classes, national and local ecumenical events and others:

1998 -Full time: I spoke to 72 groups

(7 were Korean speaking groups - 10%). (50 trips)

1999 -Full time: I spoke to 125 groups (15 were Korean speaking groups- 12%). (58 trips)

2000 -1/2 time: I spoke to 55 groups (15 were Korean speaking groups- 27%). (20 trips)

2001 -1/4 time: I spoke to 60 groups (33 were Korean speaking groups - 55%). (15 trips)

2002 - ¼ time: I spoke to 75 groups (20 were Korean speaking groups – 27%). (21 trips)

2003 - ¼ time: I spoke to 43 groups (11 were Korean speaking groups – 26%). (20 trips)

**Total 430 groups (101 were Korean speaking groups - 23%).**

**I boarded a plane 184 times in total.**

It didn't matter whether I was paid full time or part-time, I responded to calls, got on the plane and flew wherever was needed. People joked by saying that if God calls me home I would say "*wait a minute, God, I got to go to speak right now.*" With the help from the Holy Spirit, gradually the number of Korean congregations were increased as the figure shows above, with interests in the Initiative to end homelessness. The Initiative awakened many Korean congregations that have deeply been involved with overseas missions rather than local missions. When they realized the cause, they turned out to

be very generous in purchasing homeless t-shirts, other resources and making contributions. Dots on the map denote number of speeches or groups I talked to, not the number of trips. As the map shows, I have gone to the East coast more frequently. This means that I had to fly out there from Seattle, WA – from one end to other end - which was a long distance!

Without the support from the staff and Rev. Gary Cook, the Coordinator of the Hunger Program, I couldn't have done it. All of them are a wonderful and deeply committed bunch of people. I also enjoyed working with Hunger Action Enablers in many parts of the nation. They are the life-line of the Hunger Programs out in the field.

We need to salute the 430 groups because they truly became our partners in moving the Initiative into concrete action. Without their partnership we couldn't have done it.



### Host families:

From the beginning I was determined to stay with families while I was on a speaking tour. The purpose was three-fold; (1) I wanted to stand in solidarity with homeless people by living a simple life. (2) I wanted to build close relationship with people by sharing their housing and meals. (3) It was a way of saving cost for the Presbyterian programs I was working for as well as the hosting churches. I used to spend more than the travel budget allowed due to the high demand for a speaker. But it wasn't hard at all to find host

families when they understood my reasons and motives. Had I stayed at hotels, the financial burden for the hosting parties could have been severe. If we add up the cost for lodging with meals and local transportation that host families provided the figure would have been huge. 116 hosts were significant partners of the Initiative. I am deeply grateful to those who offered me warm hospitality with a free room and board and local transportation while I was on my speaking tour.

### Thanks to 116 host families:

Some of them welcomed me several different times. It was a very enriching experience to share their home and culture. I remember every one of them by name and their home environments. I treasure my relationships with them, gifts from God that no one can erase from my heart. But sadly quite a few of them passed away.

### There are some stories; just share a few:



I went to Barrow, Alaska to speak for the Presbyterian Church there. I am standing in a jaw bone of a whale. I could hardly imagine the size of the whale if its jaw is that big! It was November but the Arctic Ocean was frozen. I was thinking of Jonah's story. Considering the size of jaw, a whale could have swallowed the whole person of Jonah without being hurt. And he could have been in the whale's belly for three days.

Lynn and Ted Coons (Picture below) were my hosts in Columbus, Ohio. Lynn cooked a feast of vegetables and fruit dish for me because since Ted traveled (on business) they understood well what I was missing.



Tom and Mary Evans welcomed me 3 times to their home whenever I went to Atlanta (this picture was taken in front of their church after I preached there).

The host families became wonderful mission partners due to the close relationship developed with me even in short time. When we share housing and meals it binds the

relationship closer and deeper. There are many such stories in the Bible when Jesus shared meals with the poor or rich, the relationship deepened and their eyes were open for new visions. The Women's Ministries Program Area and the Hunger Program are deeply indebted to 116 hosts for their warm hospitality for me. It was heck of a job for them to care for my total needs while I was in their area.

Although some of them moved or retired, I feel they are the true partners of the Initiative who helped us to carry out the mission. Without their partnership, reaching out to 430 groups in 31 states could not have been possible. The whole denomination of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joins me to salute to them all.

#### **I have observed:**

**National trend:** homelessness is growing everywhere; new faces of the homeless are working poor and families with children most of whom are headed by women; most service providers have experienced funding cuts; more housing providers focus on developing permanent housing than emergency shelters; more service providers have turned to faith-based communities for help.

**Already an amazing number of individuals and congregations are involved** in helping homeless people as being reported by the America's Second Harvest, the umbrella organization for most of the nation's food banks that supply 26,284 local food pantries, 5,721 soup kitchens and 4,120 emergency shelters, witnesses that approximately three-fourths of the pantries and soup kitchens are faith-based.

**Some statistics show that 70% of American families** make contributions to at least to one charity program. More than half of those who earn less than \$10,000 a year participate in giving for the poor. Low income people give 11% of their income for charity while the rich give 3.5%. Those over 65 give 25% more than the average giver.

While many churches do simple charity work, many programs are very comprehensive and have grand scale missions such as feeding, emergency shelters, transitional and permanent housing, job training, counseling, case management, health care and public policy advocacy.

**Few churches seemed to have a concept of "ending homelessness."** Most churches seemed to feel satisfied with charity they offer, some financial contribution, food and clothes, etc. Few people seem to realize charity is just maintaining homelessness although some offer shelters on their church premise but few are developing transitional and permanent housing.

**Few churches seem to be aware of root causes of homelessness.** Most of them tend to blame the homeless for their own plight. (Refer to volume one: Why are people homeless?). The *blaming the victims* attitude seemed to weaken their motivation to be involved with a mission of ending homelessness.

**Most churches appeared to be "quiet" about public policy issues** and few seem to deal with policies that create poverty and homelessness because they appear to believe that government policy is something that the church should not be involved with from the perspective of church-state separation. (Refer to Public Policy Advocacy in Vol. 3).

**NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) within and without the church seems to be still strong:** Poor hospitality in too many cities for the homeless was apparent; urban camping ordinances, the absence of public toilets, the police sweeps before large public events, the new gates and fences all over town, even around churches, the security guards at the church door, locking up churches, setting up burglar alarm systems, and the constant pressure on the homeless to move are all indicators that show a strong NIMBYism in churches and society at large; the homeless are not welcomed anywhere and are wanted to be removed from sight.

**Every Church Open One Room was a challenge to many churches:** As mentioned above, while some congregations offer shelters, many are resistant to the Initiative of “Every Church Open One Room.” Many of them expressed FEAR of “liability” in case homeless people fall in the building more than normal people or more violent than gangs, which is not true at all. Most churches seemed to be willing to give charity or help community services or other churches delivering services, but not welcoming homeless people to the church premise as their guests.

This leads me to share the following 3 different models of the churches I observed:

**Country Club Model** tends to be exclusive, other worldly, focused on spiritual or personal salvation and blessings, and locks up the church to keep “the homeless” away.

**Send a Check Model** tends to repeat what the country club model does but sends checks to charity programs. Although we need checks to do programs, but they are too removed from the harsh reality of homelessness. These two groups both tend to FEAR relating to homeless people and choose to retain misconceptions about the root causes of poverty and homelessness in the United States (Refer to Jubilee Manual P. 25-41). The first two groups tend to believe that a church is a sacred place and that smelly and dirty homeless don't belong there.

**Christ Model** seems to be inclusive, welcoming, and open church space to invite the homeless in. These churches of Christ model offer shelters, transitional homes, day centers, soup kitchen in church. People in this group seemed to be FREE OF FEAR and RISK-TAKING and are willing to share whatever they have with the homeless.

**Many churches, especially Korean congregations,** tend to support overseas mission more than local mission and close their eyes to the dire needs of homeless people in their own communities. Korean churches cited language barrier and fear as reasons for their reluctance to approach homeless people.

**General response to my message** appeared to be a mixed one of resistance or overwhelming standing ovation. I received quite a few of the latter. While many are reluctant, many other congregations seem to be thirst for ideas. Strong motivation to do homeless ministry was also apparent.

**It could have been better** if the Initiative accompanied funding for homeless projects although Presbyterian Hunger Program and Presbyterian Women offered grants for many homeless projects in support of the Initiative. I am going to share a couple of inspiring stories:

**When I was in Chicago downtown once,**

I was passing by the 4<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church. I tried to peek in the church because the church door was open. I saw a homeless man sleeping in a pew. I quietly closed the door and left. Later a staff of the church confirmed that was a daily norm for the Fourth Church. This was very unusual and surprising as most churches lock up their doors during the day.

**When I was in San Francisco I heard a story of a man, Larry Boyce.**

He knocked on 11 churches in San Francisco saying “I have AIDS. I will paint your church for a place to stay.” All eleven churches said NO. The 12<sup>th</sup> Church he knocked on was the Old First Pres. Church. The Old First said “YES” and offered him a bed. It turned out that he was a very famous conceptual artist. He left gorgeous artwork in the church ceiling and passed away 9 months later. I have seen the painting myself. While many churches lock up the church door out of fear of having the homeless in the church, many others opened their church free of fear.

**People in Florida were sharing the following story:**

“One day Jesus was passing by a church. A woman was crying outside the church. Jesus asked, ‘sister, why are you crying?’ She answered ‘this church wouldn't let me in because I am a smelly and dirty homeless.’ Jesus told her, ‘sister, don't worry, they wouldn't let me in either.’”

## **Impact/achievements of the Initiative “End Homelessness.”**

The Initiative kept the vision of “ending homelessness” alive in the Presbyterian Church.

The Initiative aroused an overwhelming interest in churches touching 430 groups in 96 cities and in 31 states, in congregations, presbyteries, synods, seminaries and others. Some people commented that “*it was hard to bear but we needed to bear it. Thanks for challenging us.*” The Initiative raised consciousness about the reality and root causes of homelessness in the United States and challenged congregations to do something about them. Presented materials for Biblical ground to end homelessness and 7 steps and 77 concrete useful program ideas and a couple of hundreds of program examples for churches to use. A resource book, a video and t-shirts on “End Homelessness” were produced by the Hunger Program. These resource materials are used widely by the congregations and individuals. I was able to offer several thousand consultations to churches and individuals through phone calls, e-mails, letters, in person and writing articles in the church magazines and newsletters. Gained over 3,000 people on our mailing list who are concerned about the homeless. The Network’s core group may be born out of this larger group. Gave birth to “Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness” to keep the vision of ending homelessness alive in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Initiative motivated an unknown number of congregations to start or improve their homeless ministries. Although it is hard to know an accurate number of churches that were motivated to do homeless ministries, I frequently ran into people who shared with me the following news:

A Presbyterian pastor from Pueblo, CO., shared that his church responded to the Initiative by starting a meal program.

The Presbyterian Church by the Sea, a 15-member-tiny congregation in a small town, in Washington State, responded to “open one room” Initiative by setting up a clothing bank for the community.

The Presbyterian Church by The Sea in Fort Myers Beach, Florida, responded to the Initiative by welcoming homeless people into the church and offering them meals and showers.

First Pres. Church in Greensboro, North Carolina responded to the Initiative by opening up several rooms to serve as an Interfaith Hospitality shelter and opened a house across from the Church as a day center for the homeless.

Northminster Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington responded to the Initiative by operating shelters for the mentally ill.

On the same day I was preaching, the First Presbyterian Church in Decatur, IL., voted to purchase an apartment building adjacent to the church parking lot to expand church’s parking space. However, the church responded to the outcry of the Initiative not to tear down the low income housing. The church renovated it and turned it into a better low income housing and is now operating it jointly with a local social service agency.

Lake Burien Presbyterian Church in Seattle also responded to Initiative by developing a Hospitality House, a permanent site for an Interfaith Hospitality shelter, for women being released from jail or prison usually at midnight.

A student in Greensboro, North Carolina was deeply inspired by the Initiative. He decided to go to Seminary (McCormick) and work for the homeless population.

The Initiative was expanded to Korean congregations. Many training events, pre-conferences- were offered prior to General Assemblies of National Korean Presbyterian Church (PC, US.A) in Princeton, NJ and Honolulu, HI. Anaheim, CA. etc. Korean clergy, their spouses and laity attended the conferences.

A core Korean working group for the Network to End Homelessness was born out of this group. The Pre-conference lasted for a few more years and Korean American Coalition for the Homeless was born out of this conference: This was a coalition of Korean-Americans operated service for the homeless in many different states.

A Korean Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia, responded to the Initiative by engaging in a local homeless program.

A Korean ecumenical group in New Haven, Connecticut, responded to the Initiative by developing a homeless program naming it "Agape House," and operating a day center, clothing bank, and developing a worshipping community by inviting homeless people to a bilingual worship service at a Korean United Methodist Church and later at the Trinity Lutheran Church.

Another Korean Presbyterian Church in New Haven, Connecticut, responded to the Initiative by participating with funds for an overflow shelter.

A Korean Presbyterian Church pastor from Denver, Colorado., responded to the Initiative by motivating his congregation to do a meal program.

A Korean church pastor from Columbus, Ohio, responded to the Initiative by determining to add a special room for homeless people before he finishes his church construction.

A Korean Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida, responded to the Initiative by developing a meal program for homeless people.

Dorcas Group and Canaan Korean Pres. Church women in Orange County, California, responded to the Initiative creating DorCanaan Mission (ecumenical) and cooking meals and delivering it to women's shelter.

A student of the McCormick Seminary, who attended practicum class I taught responded to the Initiative by deciding to do an internship at a homeless project and asked me to be her mentor.

There might be many more responses but without their telling us there was no way of knowing who responded and how.

The Initiative encouraged the Presbyterian Women to allocate half of the offering of the 2000 PW Statewide Gathering for two domestic homeless programs. It was done so.

Numerous Presbyterians have been wearing homeless t-shirts. There might be many more of such examples. I just ran out of time to get into the research for the impact the Homeless Initiative might have made. This is something to be pursued in the future. I can confess that the strong power of the Holy Spirit of our Lord, Jesus Christ flew me around the

nation. The Spirit always walked with me and was my strength in my deliverance of the message and my outcry to end homelessness.

### **Some comments from other colleagues:**

Rev. Gary Cook, Director of the Hunger Program of PC (U.S.A.) commented:

One of major impacts has been that congregations and presbyteries have had a resource to work with while it had been just consultation offered by the national church in the past. [He might be referring to a book and video and Jubilee Manual]. I wrote it but it was done solely by his effort.

People working sacrificially in this field (working on homeless issues) experience support feeling that now someone else understands the issue and share the burden of frustration in carrying out the mission of ending homelessness.

A long term impact could be that a solid Biblical ground to end homelessness has been developed for the whole church.

It's been a real joy to see growing involvement of Korean churches in carrying out the Initiative.

**Rev. Trey Hammond commented:** (He was the former Director of Presbyterian Urban Ministry and now serves as a pastor for La Mesa Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico). Urban Ministry helped me financially when I ran out of travel money.

Placed homeless issue in front of the church as a compelling place for ministry.

Touched hundreds of congregations with ideas, stories and vision of ending homelessness.

Published "Church and Society" magazine (Presbyterian Church, USA) of the May/June, 2001 issue solely focusing on homelessness issue as a resource for the whole church.

**Rev. Phil Tom**, the current Director of the Presbyterian Urban Ministry states:

The Homeless Initiative has lifted up to the church the issues of homelessness and how they especially impact women and children in our communities. The Initiative has also provided excellent resources for congregations as they learn about and respond to the issues of homelessness.

**Dr. William Cate**, former director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle and **Dr. Janice Cate**, one of the founders of the Church of Mary Magdalene state:

Since we have known and worked with the Rev. Jean Kim she has been courageous and persistent in her work for human rights. The opportunity to work for the homeless through the Initiative of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the support they have given her has helped not only the Presbyterians around the United States but many in our national ecumenical church community to become more aware of those who live from day to day not knowing where they will find shelter and food. Jean is a prophetic voice for the homeless and neglected people in our time. We thank God for her ministry among us.

**Rev. Paula Parker**, Executive Director of the Daughters of Zelophehad, a transitional housing for homeless women and children in Richmond, VA.

The PCUSA Homelessness initiative has provided credibility and validity of the need to address homelessness and its related issues. (Both within the denomination and the public at large).

Networking support for solutions and resources.

Financial support from different programs within PCUSA e.g. Hunger Program, Presbyterian Women.

Publicity/exposure of new and existing programs.

**Comment from Rev. Dan Fullerton**, former Hunger Action Enabler of Grace Presbytery, Texas.

The Homeless Initiative encouraged the Hunger Action Committee of the Grace Presbytery to continue to work on hunger and homelessness issues.

I left Grace Presbytery 17 months ago and am in the Indian Nations Presbytery at FPC, Ada, OK. Jill Acree is a seminary graduate member of the congregation who is dedicated to working on ending homelessness in the Ada area. A corporation and board were formed about six months ago. It is named Ada Area Community Emergency Services (AACES). We offer a hotline with information about shelter services. We anticipate eventually opening a shelter facility and then provide skills building to help people who have the potential make a transition into self-sufficiency. We are also working with the Chickasaw Nation, which is headquartered in Ada. Many of the homeless in this area are Native Americans. My involvement in Ada stems from the inspiration the Initiative gave me. Jill and I wear the purple end homelessness t-shirts so ably designed.

**Comment from Barbara Pletcher, PWP Moderator, Boise Presbytery.**

The Initiative through Jean Kim's visit to Boise, opened our eyes wider and spurred us into working harder for the Homelessness.

**Comment from Jackie Patterson, Hunger Action Enabler, Florida Presbytery**

Did Jean Kim make a difference? You bet she did! You go to the airport to meet Jean and here she comes through the gate with the famous purple shirt on and a big smile on her face all fired up to meet with your people. She not only encourages you to do more for the poor and hungry, but she pushes and shoves you to do more, more and until you are her disciples and teaching the story of the hungry and poor to all that will listen. I've known Jean before she was in the Hunger Program and heard a lot of her speaking at Presbyterian Women Gatherings and now we work together in the Hunger Program.

**Comment from Mary Evans, former PW Moderator in the Synod of South Atlantic, and Issues Chair for the PW in the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. Current PW Mod for St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, in Atlanta, GA.:**

The Homeless Initiative through Jean Kim's journey throughout the church have awakened people to the needs of the homeless and to some reasons for homelessness. The Initiative has given fresh and extensive ideas about helping the homeless. The Initiative, through Jean Kim, has encouraged people to see homeless persons as children of God and offered the example of Jesus in dealing with others. In some areas, the Initiative has ignited an effort, in other areas, it has informed and made aware.

**Comment from Rev. Patrick Hurley, Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Pueblo Colorado:**

The Homeless Initiative through Jean Kim's presence and words helped me and our church in deciding to become a host church in the Pueblo Interfaith Hospitality Network. We and 8 other churches now host homeless families for a week on a rotating basis.

**Comment from Rev. Lorraine Stuart, Parish Associate, First Presbyterian Church, Bend, Oregon:**

Thanks be to God for the Homeless Initiative; a special ministry God has given Jean Kim! The Initiative, through Jean Kim, raised our awareness of the needs of homeless women and how Christ's compassion reaches out to all in need these days and helped us identify with women, homeless or otherwise, and helped us be more aware of homelessness in our community. Our church has joined others in the ministry of Bethlehem Inn, providing shelter for homeless people during the winter months. The number of homeless persons served in the Bethlehem Inn has jumped from 1,985 in winter 2001-2002 to 5,435 in winter 2002-2003. Volunteers staff the Bethlehem Inn -- in this past year 3005 volunteers, including those from our congregation, have served. So you see that your ministry with us has had far reaching results.

**Comment from Mrs. Kwi Sook Choi, Director, Good Samaritans of the East Bay, Oakland, CA:**

The Initiative has made tremendous contributions to the faith communities' awareness of hunger and homeless issues and have motivated them to get involved in anti-hunger and homelessness activities throughout the country. I was truly amazed by Jean Kim's tireless devotion, yet filled with joy, to spread the good cause, which was initiated by Jesus Christ by saying "You yourselves give them something to eat." It is my extreme pleasure to know Jean personally in our common endeavor to end the homelessness.

**The day I was retiring from the speaking tour mission: Party:**



What was I so shocked about? As I entered the room I saw the whole group was wearing purple shirts as the photo below shows.

I was shocked to death. They brought 50 homeless shirts from Louisville to Stony Point New York where our meeting was held. They couldn't have shocked me and at the same time please me more than this! Someone had a



brilliant idea what kind of farewell party for me ... Gary Cook who knew better.



People in the picture are Hunger Action Enablers who work for the

Presbyterian Hunger Program throughout the nation. We had one of our bi-annual training event at the Stony Point, NY, this year on October 24-28, 2003. As I was finishing up my work with the Hunger Program they gave me a totally surprise party, the best one anyone ever can imagine, by all wearing purple shirts with purple cake, purple cups, purple napkins and purple balloons. The Hunger Program staff, volunteers and Hunger Action Enablers all were wonderful people to work with. Without the support of the staff especially Rev. Gary Cook, the coordinator, I couldn't have done it. Thus the mission of carrying out the Initiative moved one step forward by birthing the National Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness and National Korean American Coalition for the Homeless.