

PART I DISSERTATION

Chapter 1: The Problem

The United States is the richest country in the world but 45 million of its people suffer from poverty and 3.5 million people experience homelessness every year. Homelessness for families, women and children in particular, is growing. The homelessness problem seems to be a systemic one rather than personal. The problem is not that we don't have enough funds to end homelessness in the U.S. but that our government policy is to spend huge funds for war and tax cuts, most of the latter benefiting the wealthy, rather than solving the domestic poverty and homeless problem. The problem also seems to be that the U.S. government appears to have a lack of political will, policy and interest to end homelessness, and would rather maintain poverty and homelessness by offering minimum assistance and continuing to slash funds for public assistance.

The problem with the Christian Church and other congregations appears to be that while many are trying to help the poor and homeless, others blame the victims and don't seem to care to challenge the root causes. They perhaps believe that religion and politics don't mix. The Christian Churches unintentionally help maintain homelessness by offering charity rather than focusing on ending it. They seem to be concerned to save personal souls than try to find solutions to social problems. Most churches don't seem to help government develop political will, policy and funding priority toward a permanent solution. It seems they would rather go along with the system without challenging the unjust policies that create and perpetuate poverty and homelessness in the United States.