

Home: A Biblical Vision

Throughout the biblical story, we find a repeated vision of a society where everyone has a home. The jubilee laws aimed to restore to each family any of their allotted land lost because of debt (Leviticus 25:8-55). The prophets foresaw a time when each person would rest under their own fig tree on their own land (Micah 4:4). In Acts, we read of each person receiving their basic needs (Acts 4:32-35) and of some folks selling land and homes to provide for others, and even inviting the abandoned and homeless to live with them.

This “homes for everyone” vision was shaped by the Hebrew experience of being landless and homeless for long periods: slavery in Egypt, wandering in the desert and exile in Babylon. Jesus himself was homeless: “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Luke 9:58).



Homelessness matters to God because people matter to God. God has created each one of us in His image, set us within an intricately wondrous physical world and sent Jesus to live among us. Moreover, God acts on and within our world and expects us to be involved in loving what He has made. For example, Jesus taught us to pray for His kingdom to come and to seek this kingdom first (Matthew 6:10, 33). This call asks us to participate in God’s radical transformation of our communities and our society so that every person has the opportunity to live as God intends. One facet of this fullness of life is that each of us is to have our basic needs met, including living in a community where we have a sense of belonging, love, safety and wellbeing: a home in the fullest sense. This is God’s vision of justice and compassion:

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me (Matthew 25:40).

And there are plenty of “the least of these” among us! About 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year, with about 35,000 being homeless on any specific night. A further 50,000 are known as the “hidden homeless” because they find shelter sleeping in a car, on someone’s floor or in some other temporary spot. With its links to poverty, domestic violence, addictions and poor mental health, homelessness rates are rising, particularly in urban centres where there are few affordable housing options.*

As we seek God’s kingdom first, let us seek to fulfill the biblical vision of homes for everyone.

*Statistics from www.raisingtheroof.org



What You Can Do

PRAY regularly for those who experience homelessness and for the people who serve them.

LOVE and RESPECT people who are homeless as unique individuals made in God’s image, treating them with dignity and courtesy.

BE OPEN to God’s leading towards being involved in a practical response to homelessness.

LEARN about the underlying causes of homelessness.

GIVE financial gifts, food, bus passes, clothing and toiletries to nonprofits that serve those who are homeless.

CARRY lists of shelters, extra food and water, warm clothes and other items to give to people living on the street.

VOLUNTEER your time and professional talents to nonprofits that serve people who are homeless.

CONVERT excess church property, like a parking lot, into affordable housing.

SUPPORT housing-first strategies that begin with finding permanent housing and then walk beside people facing challenges like mental health and addictions.

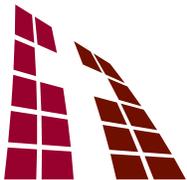
ADVOCATE for nonprofit or affordable housing in your community.

GIVE recyclables like pop cans to people who are homeless.

TEACH your children to have empathy for people who are homeless.

EMPLOY people who are homeless to give them the dignity of earning a wage and using their skills.

JOIN affordable housing projects like Habitat for Humanity to build homes for people at risk of homelessness.

Canadian Baptists
OF WESTERN CANADA 

This bulletin insert was created by the Justice and Mercy Network which is a committee of the CBWC Board.