

Power, the Law and Homelessness...

[Continued from page 4]

I've never been raped, but in a small way I was raped that day. I hope and pray our country has not come to this.

You may be reading this and thinking just give him your I.D. and it's all over in a couple of minutes. Some I've shared this story with have said the same thing. I wrote the Police Chief of Limon, Colorado and he backed up Officer Wyler completely and said I should have given him my I.D.

Except for the Limon P.D., those that have said to me you should have... no longer have that opin-

ion. Try walking across America as a homeless person on a many year walk and go through 100 times being I.D'ed. It never feels good, least not to me. When we say it is O.K. to do this it will become nationwide policy and then you will know how it feels over and over again when your look is the correct one for profiling.

Our fears are running so rampant that we will give up true freedoms for our "security." True security comes only from our relationship with God. I asked Officer Wyler if he was a Christian and his answer was yes. Jesus says in the

Bible in the book of Matthew, chapter 7, verses 1 and 2, "Do not judge or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged." When God speaks, I listen.

Profiling is judging. Whomever you are you wouldn't appreciate being profiled over and over again. It would get old after awhile as it has with me.

For those of you who think I'm down on cops, you're wrong. Without law enforcement there would be anarchy. Some of the criminal homeless would have a field day. Some of the corporate

executives would do likewise. So would some of your neighbors.

I'm down on judging, down on profiling, down on fear, down on thinking true security comes from law enforcement.

I'm not down on cops.

Till the next time...

In Christ's Love,

Don

Miles walked: 6,702

Money found on road: \$508.59

Unsolicited money from motorists: \$463.36

Illegal to be Homeless: The Criminalization of Homelessness in the United States...

[Continued from page 1]

homeless, and as the economy continues to tighten, it is causing financial crises for shelters and service-providing agencies. Though nearly all cities still lack sufficient shelter beds and social services, many continue to pass laws prohibiting people experiencing homelessness from sleeping outside.

Almost 70% of the cities surveyed in the first report have passed at least one or more new laws specifically targeting homeless people since January 2002, making it increasingly difficult to survive on the streets. Cities are attempting to make it illegal to perform life-sustaining activities in public, while at the same time refusing to allocate sufficient funds to address the cause of homelessness.

This 2003 report finds Las Vegas, San Francisco, New York City, Los Angeles, and Atlanta to be the top five "meanest" cities in the United States for poor and homeless people to live in; California is the "meanest" state, followed by Florida as the second "meanest" state.

The National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (NHCROP) – a project of the National Coalition for the Homeless comprised of local advocates in communities across the country – has compiled quantitative and qualitative data samplings from 147 communities in 42 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. These cities represent rural, urban, and suburban areas in all geographic and demographic varieties across the United States.

"Instead of the compassionate responses that communities have used to save lives in the past two decades, the common response to homelessness is to criminalize the victims through laws and ordinances that make illegal life-sustaining activities that people experiencing homelessness are forced to do in public," said Donald Whitehead, Executive Director of the National Coalition for the Homeless, who is himself formerly homeless.

As it becomes increasingly difficult to afford housing, this country is turning to jails instead of creating affordable housing by enacting the Bringing America Home Act (H.R.2897–108th Congress). These individuals and families are arrested for committing such illegal acts as sitting or standing on

sidewalks and napping in parks. Whitehead stated, "At the national level, we see a relationship between municipalities' efforts to make homelessness a crime and the increases in hate crimes and violent acts directed at homeless people in these cities."

Brian Davis, Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, said, "Imagine, the loneliness and feeling of helplessness, when every shelter is full and then the city's police force adds insult to injury by confiscating all your belongings or issues a ticket for sleeping in the park. It takes a special person to be able to cope with the daily struggle to survive while the city government throws added barriers into your path toward stability."

A parting word from our summer intern...

[Continued from page 3]

This is the love that is experienced here everyday. This is the love that can be shared not just on this farm found in Earleville, Maryland, but the love that can be offered to others everywhere. If I were to guess, there is someone in your State, in your town or even on your street right now that needs to be loved. The question I have been asking myself is do I have the courage to reach out and love them? I have been blessed to live at Clairvaux Farm for one sum-

mer. I found that it was easy to walk up to a stranger give them a genuine smile and handshake. Hoping that they realize that I do care about them as a person. I realized that some people are lucky enough to make it to Meeting Ground but more people are still left on the street needing food, shelter, and clothing but the most powerful thing that can be given to them is someone to love and let them know they are worthy of love.

Jesus taught us to seek out those that are the least of God's people and serve them. I do believe that those that are the least are those in this world that have found no one that will love them. May God bless you all with the gift of a courageous and open heart.

Our summer internship program is funded by a grant from Citigroup Foundation.

Special thanks to Terry, Gretta, and Coleen!



Lisa holding a ransom note for the kidnapped flamingo!