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'Soles' help 'souls' on LA's Skid Row

Whittier area church members give the 'gift of shoes'

By Dan Wooding
Founder of ASSIST Ministries

WHITTIER, CA (ANS) -- "Amy Gunther went to church Sunday morning wearing a pair of black ballet flats. But she and hundreds of others left in their bare feet.



Bryan Guthrie, Lead Pastor of Creative Ministries at the Whittier Area Community Church, shows off shoes donated by the church parishioners to give to the needy.

(Photo by Mike Mullen)

"The 22-year-old Downey resident and hundreds of other parishioners at Whittier Area Community Church (WACC) responded to a call from their pastor to donate much needed shoes to LA's homeless on skid row."

This was how Bethania Palma Markus, Staff Writer for the Whittier Daily News (www.whittierdailynews.com) began her story about how church members of this large church in Whittier, which is located in Los Angeles County, about 12 miles southeast of the City of Los Angeles

She

went on to say, "During his Sunday sermon, Pastor Bill Ankerberg challenged church-goers to donate their shoes to the Los Angeles Mission, which provides shelter and services to homeless in downtown Los Angeles."

Hundreds of pairs of shoes were left at the altar on a recent Sunday, but it didn't stop there.

"Shoes are still coming in every day," Ankerberg told the local paper. "Some people even left and



went over to Target and bought shoes (to donate).”

The shoe donations will be a big help, said Joe Rowe, a church member and associate director of major gifts at the LA Mission.

“Shoes are one of our most critical things,” he said. “We always have a hard time getting shoes, and if you are homeless you spend all day on your feet. Your feet cause you the most trouble.”

Rowe said he was at the “shoe” service and people who could not leave their shoes behind gave him money for the shelter to purchase new ones for the Mission’s homeless clients.

“Watching all the people walk out of the church in their socked or bare feet was really humbling,” he said.

Markus went on to write, “The LA Mission, in downtown Los Angeles, serves hundreds of thousands of meals to the homeless every year and distributes clothing as well, officials said.”

“It’s hard to describe how encouraging this is for us at the Mission,” said Herb Smith, President of the Los Angeles Mission in a message on their website (www.losangelesmission.org).



A scene from LA's Skid Row

things that can help.

“WACC has been a good friend of the Mission for years. They volunteer, donate and support us in prayer and in deeds. (Last year they collected more than 7,000 pairs of underwear for the homeless.) But the encouragement is the great hearts and ready action on people who understand a problem – and see how a quick action can help solve it.

“This won’t end poverty or homelessness overnight. The men, women and children we serve have lots of problems that require much more work to help them restore their lives. But sometimes it is the simplest thing that encourages someone to take the next necessary step to restoration – and we now have a thousand

“Thanks to Pastor Bill and all those who gave us their shoes,” he concluded. “I’ll leave it to you to make some pun out of the soles and souls helped by this gesture.”

Amy Gunther told the Whittier Daily News reporter that it was worth the sacrifice.

“It was an easy opportunity for me to give to somebody that has less than I do,” she said. “They need shoes, I’m wearing shoes and I have a lot more at home, so why not give away this pair.”

Dan Wooding, 68, is an award winning British journalist now living in Southern California with his wife Norma of 46 years. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times) and the ASSIST News Service (ANS); and US Bureau Chief for the Missionaries News Service (www.missionariesnews.tv) and Safe Worlds IPTV’s Faith, Hope and Charity channel. He was, for ten years, a commentator, on the UPI Radio Network in Washington, DC., and now hosts the weekly "Front Page Radio" show on KWVE in Southern California and which is also carried on the Calvary Radio Network throughout the United States. The program is also aired in Great Britain on UCB UK and Calvary Chapel Radio UK. Wooding is the author of some 42 books, the latest of which is his autobiography, "From Tabloid to Truth", which is published by Theatron Books. To order a copy, go to www.fromtabloidtotruth.com. E-mail: danjuma1@aol.com.



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