THE QUARTET OF THE VULNERABLE

Reimagining Outreach to Society’s Most Defenseless People

WRITTEN BY LAUREN KOSKI
ILLUSTRATED BY CARL BOL

Men in crisp, tailored suits, powder their foreheads to avoid eye contact. Uniforms for security personnel are often designed to hide their identities. They appear to be promiscuous and inattentive. They grow frustrated, then they pretend not to see.

He hears the click of high-heeled shoes. He looks up to see the woman’s polished red nails.

She glances down at the man and takes her cell phone, then looks at the men standing beside her. The phone is part of her daily routine.

Their hair is usual to the ground. He exclaims a thrice and listens to her click-clack as she walks away.

It is that awkward, passing moment when nothing is said, and nothing is expected. The click-clack of high-heeled shoes.

Wheatcroft coined the term “The Quartet of the Vulnerable” to describe society’s four most defenseless people — the widow, the orphan, the immigrant and the poor.

Like a helpless man on the pavement, the Quartet can be found all around us in the United States and far across the globe. The Quartet has grown through the years as the suffering of humanity has evolved into an even more diverse and complex.

Since Adain Goodwin, junior biomedical engineering major at California Baptist University, began serving the homeless community of Riverside two years ago, he says there is never a chance to fully experience how love and relationships can change when someone is only committed to a once-weekly idea of service.

Goodwin says he has now adapted a lifestyle of a “resilient yes,” running further than a one-time connection. When asked to help someone, he has committed to saying “yes” and doing all that he can — even if it is not always enjoyable.

“I am not glamorous,” Goodwin says. “But some of the most beautiful and valuable things I am going to come away Privy to my experience at CBU is through seeing ‘yes’ to those difficult, non-glamorous things.”

Through sitting on the cold, gravelly ground in downtown Riverside and dipping into the relationships with his friends in the homeless community, Goodwin has been challenged in his conversations with the Quartet as he discovers the difficulty of finding what he has in common with them.

Goodwin says that in which he prays on, even if it takes months to get past that stage of the conversation.

Benjamin Carron, senior director and president of the International Justice Mission at CBU, says that serving the Quartet is not about getting a good time. But it is in order to make a difference.

“Even when you are actually looking to self-justify, you need to get involved with people’s lives and that can get really, really messy,” Carron says.

A major lifestyle of service is something with which Carron is not unfamiliar. Carron’s father and mother have been foster parents for the majority of his life. Sharing her home and family with foster children is a behavior that Carron says was difficult to make during his childhood and, at times, left her with bitter thoughts.

As she grew older, Carron says that the “power” of helping others helped her understand the meaning of her life better. It is not merely because of the logistics; it is because the foster family must walk with them through their past, present, and future struggles.

“Every individual that comes through our doors needs love so complete that we are willing to sacrifice for them instead of optimizing them because of what they have been through,” Carron says.

Brian Zuniga, director of Discipleship Ministries at CBU, says serving the Quartet and attempting to diagnose the Quintet.
problems in the world is the wrong approach. “Staying in a country that has been ravaged by war is a moral issue,” Zamir says. “We need to help the refugees.”

In the summer of 1980, Zamir and his family arrived in Israel from Ethiopia. For him, it was a moment of transformation. “I started to think about how I could help the refugees,” he says. “I began to see the world in a different way.”

Today, Zamir is the head of the Camelot Group, a non-profit organization that helps refugees from all over the world. He says that his work is driven by a passion to make a difference. “I want to help people,” he says. “I want to make a difference.”

Zamir’s work is not easy. “We face many challenges,” he says. “But I believe that if we work together, we can make a difference.”

How CBU Serves the Quartet

Office of Spiritual Life (OSL)

Contact:
931-488-5705

Mobilization

Serve across the nation and around the world. Applications are available at www.cbucourses.org and are due Oct. 20 every year.

Operation Christmas Child

Each November, students have the opportunity to pack a shoebox filled with toys, hygiene products, candy and the gospel to orphaned or impoverished children around the world.

Compassion Ministries

Children and Family Outreach

Urban Excursion

Serve in local cities during weekend service projects. Applications are available at the beginning of each semester in OSL.

Contact OSL for more information on other opportunities not regularly scheduled, such as volunteering to help women at Riverside-Last Chance.

Homeless Ministry Connections

Contact:
Amy Nagy
AmyElizabethNagy@gmail.com

Feed, wash feet, gift shoes and pray for the homeless community of Riverside through the Gumbo Program, Hot Meals Program, Safe Exchange, and Prayer Night.