

December 8

WORLD BUDGET / NAD ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES

The panhandlers. We see panhandlers frequently, often at a busy intersection, with their cardboard signs. We don't know their names or their histories. We don't know if they will spend the money they receive on food, drugs, or cigarettes. Yet the very sight of them tugs at our hearts, and we wrestle with whether to give or not.

Recently, a pastor had an experience that restored his faith in some of these folks. He had been downsizing his life and taking many of his things to a local flea market. Late one Sunday afternoon, as he was packing up his things, a couple came by and asked if they could help because they were hungry and needed to find lodging for the night. They began to recite a litany of hard luck events. Well, the pastor had heard many such stories, so he stopped their recital but did let them help. They really worked—and worked hard. They carried boxes over to the car and trailer, and even helped put on the tarp and bungees. Evidently this was a worthy case, and he gave them a generous sum. And he even had prayer with them.

As Adventists, we are truly blessed with our community services organizations, as well as our disaster response and relief programs. Our personnel are highly trained to distinguish the truly needy, and we can trust that our support goes a very long way in making a difference in many lives.