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Bus brings food and God's message to homeless

By Weady S. Tai Staff Writer

Like moths drawn to light, the men came out of the darkness.

But the bus, parked beneath the N. 7th St. viaduct on a recent chilly evening, promised more than warmth.

It was the flist night the bis had come to feed, clothe and deliver God's message to the city's homeless. 'The Bible says, 'Go to the highways and byways and minister to all creation,' 'said Paster Paul Arnopoulos of the Disciples Ministry in north Minnespoils.

So he did

And the hungry responded. Shadowy figures apainst dimming daylight, they walked through the muddled lot of railread tracks, trailers and wood pilings Thursdry night to receive a hot meal and whatever else the ministry could give.

"We need a dinner bell real bad," said Rick Lindsey, a ministry volunteer, as he and others bustled about the kitchen in the back of the converted church bus.

But the men who slepped inside had needed so dinner announcement, they already knew that free meals would be driven to the isolated spot where the homeless often gather. "Word gets around," one man said.

The "word" was that free food and clothing would begin coming to them nightly, delivered by a postor and some volunteers who knew what life is like on the street.

So the men didn't hesitate to walk into the unfamiliar vehicle, where bright lights revealed their stubble and stained clothes.

Most said little as they sait down, serveying the yellow-patterned curtains, the yellow burstools, the battle in countertop and booths. When soup and bologus isandwiches came, they site greedily, soppling up the soup with white bread. In 15 minutes the windows frosted over with humidity, and seven men filled the diner with sounds of dinner and chalter.

"Postor sir, thank you very much. I appreciate this," one man said as he waited for a second helping of soup like buddy across the table from him said, "You better do a hundred push-ups quick" to help digest the amount of food he was enting.

Several others pointed to their empty bowls and mumbled, "More." Many did that four to five times. And five members of the church, including Arnopoulos, walled on hem, passing full bowls, sandwiches and sweet rolls across the narrow

You get enough to eat? You warm nough?" the paster asked around.



Staff Photos by Bruce Bisging

The Disciples Ministry bus, parked beneath the N. 7th St. viaduct, offered the hungry a hot meal, blankets and warmth.



Those who came were fed soup and bologna sandwiches.

A man wearing a red coat and dark glasses acked, "You got a blanket coming?" He nabe tasked for a paper hag to hold sandwiches, popcers and sweet rolls that he wunted to take alone.

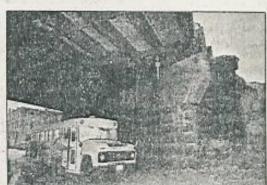
Arnopoulos passed a grey blanket to him, but another man intercepted it and said, "Thank you." Then, turning to the red-costed man whose hands



Richard Lindsey and Pastor Paul Arnopoulos dished out meals.

reached out, the man said, "Too

In an bour, more than a dozen men were fed. Asked where they sleep, they lawariably answered, "here and there." Asked their names, some refused or gave only first names. The man with the red coat declined to identify himself, explaining, "I'm so proud."



The bus will be parked under the viaduct every evening for about a month. Then it will begin making several stops each night.

Most wore old but clean clothing many seeded a shave; several had lattoos. Some were young most were middle-aged, but universally they were a look of deleat.

"They're very sweet-spirited," Arnopoulos said later in the evening, One man, he said, had confided that he feared losing the sight in one eye, and Arnopoulos told him, "I'll pray for your eye." The man began to weep, the poster recalled. "It's most rewarding when I lend somebody to the Lord, like tonight."

He said he wants to continue his mission every night from 5 to 7 at the same place for about a month. After that the bus will visit several sites each might.