



The former Jewish synagogue at which serves as ministry headquarters.

Paul Arnopoulos...

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 congregation. Frequent break-ins into the parsonage cars and the new environment scared many off.

Not only that, but the new vision that was emerging for Pastor Paul was not shared by all the members. His vision was for missions, for evangelizing the needy of the Northside, that required commitment and sacrifice. Not everyone wanted to be part of a "mission church." Even today, Arnopoulos' church numbers only about 150 people. About 15 of these are actively involved in the work of the mission.

During the first two years after the move to its present location, Arnopoulos' vision developed. He began to see the need to reach out to the neighborhoods around the church evangelistically. But as he did, he realized the need for ministering to the natural needs of the people. "You have to meet the needs of the people," the pastor told Heartland. "You need to feed your brethren." He said the basis of his ministry to the poor has been the statement of Jesus in Matthew 25: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Vs. 35,36 and 40b)

Arnopoulos began meeting with pastors of Black and Indian churches on the Northside and attempted to establish a coalition of ministries to begin to meet these physical needs. A non-profit corporation was even formed as a legal entity for the mission. Although the men developed a close friendship, the coalition never seemed to get off the ground, and eventually Disciples Ministry Church took over the mission of feeding the poor of North Minneapolis.

Arnopoulos described the ministry as "a lot of work." Typical of this "ministry" are the times they have unloaded semi-trailers full of 80,000 pounds of potatoes.

"Either you love it or you don't," he said. "You must be highly motivated and highly organized. If you're motivated yourself, you can motivate others."

Describing Christianity as "the greatest thing going," Arnopoulos is a picture of vitality, living on the divine energy and excitement generated through serving God. "The joy of the Lord is when you are doing his work," he said. "When Jesus is excited in you, that's life."

His idea of fun is delivering food on Christmas day. When everyone else is stuffing themselves with turkey and opening presents, Arnopoulos and others are spreading good cheer to the poor with gifts of love. Three times a year (Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving) are special times of food distribution for the mission. Over 5,000 bags of groceries are given during these times. During the holiday season in December, Arnopoulos used the television and radio media to help publicize his food distribution. On New Year's Day, he gave away 1500 bags of groceries in St. Paul.

"When do you get all this food, Pastor?" he was asked.

"I beg for it," Arnopoulos replies unashamedly. He said, although he does receive some funds from Hennepin Co., most of the food is given by supermarkets and individuals. The local church also contributes to the work and some of the food is purchased at low prices.

Besides the work of feeding the poor, Arnopoulos also has a regular radio program on KUXL Radio in Minneapolis and has an extensive cassette tape ministry into many foreign countries.

He believes that the church has



Disciple Ministry's Hobo Bus is painted in keeping with the city environment. Jesus' hand, at right, symbolizes the outreach to the needy of the Twin Cities.

wonderous potential. "We must provoke one another unto good works," he said. We have a real need to help people. He also believes that the church needs to be a leader in the community. When a local park board was in need of funds, Arnopoulos organized a picnic, procured some items for a large raffle to raise the money. Another time, the church helped raise funds for needy kids from the North Side to go to Summer camp.

Asked if he felt all the work he was involved with in the mission was a hindrance to his ministry of the Word of God on Sunday mornings, Arnopoulos replied to the contrary. He said his experiences during the week were the basis for his sharing on Sunday morning. "I minister what I see," he said. "The

Word isn't alive, until it's lived..."

For more information on Disciples Ministry write 1000 Oliver Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55411 or call (612) 521-4665.



Waiting for a warm meal.



Free haircuts and free clothing are among the services provided for the needy by Disciples Ministry.