

### A Christmas Story: An ADVENTure With a Homeless Man

By Bobby M. Reyes

It all started days before Halloween 2019 when I was doing my almost-daily brisk-walking exercise in a city in Southern California. I noticed a man sitting on a bench in a bus stop. He had with him a grocery cart filled with a suitcase, some blankets, a jacket and some items in plastic bags.

The next day, I did the same walking exercise. And again I saw the same man at the same bus stop with the same belongings. I concluded that he was a homeless man. I rested at the bus stop and did small talk with him. He gladly accepted the unopened bottle of water that I usually carry with me in my walking/jogging exercise. He said that his name was "Benny." I did not bother to ask his family name or where on Earth did he come from. For I am of limited means myself, as a retired journalist who cannot stop pounding his keyboard.

When I reached home, I told my wife, Geny, of my encounter with Benny. She suggested that every time I see him, I should give Benny not one but two bottles of water. And I did. The next week, my wife prepared a plastic bag with some pastry and bread, along with two dollars for me to give to Benny, aside from the bottled water. And that became my routine of an exercise -- whenever we were in the city where Benny "lives."

By the way, I asked Benny where he sleeps. He said that when it is not raining, he parks his grocery cart behind the bench and sleeps beside it. When it is raining, he goes to a small shopping center and seeks refuge at a roofed sidewalk.

Apparently, Benny is a smart man. Because by staying in a bus stop, he would only reply, "I am waiting for the bus," if asked by law-enforcement officers why he is at that location.

And thus, my wife and I became Benny's benefactors. Or as I coined, "Bennyfactors."

Today, being the day before Christmas Eve, my wife said that we would not be able to see Benny tomorrow, as we would be with relatives in another city. We passed by Benny and I gave his usual bottles of water, pastries and fruits. I told him to wait for us, as we were going to a nearby Mexican-American super-mart. We returned and delivered to Benny a freshly-grilled whole chicken plus the usual two dollars. And greeted him "Feliz Navidad." And told him that I would probably see him again before New Year's Day..

Tomorrow night, there will be no rain, per the weather forecast. But it will rain on Christmas Day.

Now let us just imagine Benny sleeping on his blanket at the back of the bench in that bus stop tomorrow night. Surely, he will shed a tear or two -- if he was married -- because he would miss a lot his wife and some children (if he is married) and/or kin, who he left behind where he came from. Because the pangs of loneliness would hit him hard. Like any person would feel if he or she is away from loved ones on Christmas.

And if Benny is a Christian, he would probably remember sadly that Jesus Christ and his parents were also "homeless" when he was born in a manger sometime in 33 AD. And perhaps, if he knew the Bible, Benny would remember that Christ and his family later fled to Egypt as "political refugees," as King Herod had goons looking for baby boys to be killed in an extra-judicial way. And the Egyptians never turned them away even if they came from Judea nor were they asked if they had any entry visa or financial resources with them.

In just over 10 months, American voters will choose their next President. Nearly all politicians of all political colors, creed and orientation are conscious of the plight of the homeless. But almost all politicians -- and many public, private and religious leaders alike -- are long on rhetoric and short on performance. Many talk of grandiose plans of ending homelessness and other crises. But they do not reveal how and when they will do them. And from where they will get realistically the funding for the promised socioeconomic projects.

To cite the Democratic Party, each one of the more-than 20 presidential aspirants has at least a million-dollars in net worth. But -- to my limited knowledge -- nobody among them gave even 10% of their net worth to charitable causes and concerns. The only exception -- again to my imperfect knowledge -- is former New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg who set up a family philanthropy that has given 15.1% of his net worth or approximately \$8-billion (spelled with a B) so far, and counting.

We cannot accuse the Republicans of also doing nothing for the poor and the homeless. Why? Because if the GOP's supreme leader, the incumbent President, had his Trump Foundation shut down by the State of New York for diverting millions of funds to his favorite charity, the Trump Family, is there really something to talk about charitable giving within, and by, them? The poor and homeless people do not need crocodile tears. They need action.

In the 2018 California gubernatorial election, I published a Facebook Note on how to solve the state's homeless problem, as well as mitigate and even end other pressing problems such as unfunded pension funds, etc.

Unfortunately, the only gubernatorial candidate, then-State Treasurer John Chiang, who promised that he would implement most of my proposals, lost. But I kept on revising the proposals and here is Draft No. 3: PSEED Platforms: Solving Unfunded Pension Funds, Homelessness, Save the USPS & Other Crises While Doing Immigration Reform

URL:

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/bobby-m-reyes/pseed-platforms-solving-u>

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There are tens of thousands of Bennys living in many cities in the United States. And in other countries. Chances are there will be more homeless people in the years to come.

Many scientific experts have forecast that by 2050 to 2100, there will be several hundreds of millions of people more -- if not a billion or two -- all over the world who would be "Global-Warming refugees." The number of these refugees would be compounded by refugees from war-torn countries and from the Third World, which is forever mired in poverty caused by despotic leaders, lack of educational-and-healthcare infrastructures, as well as lack of job opportunities.

If the United States of America is the "shining hill" at the very top of the world's numerous mountains, then it must lead the world by eliminating homelessness and poverty in its own peaks and valleys. For it is given that a superpower cannot lead the world in eliminating a social cancer if it cannot even eliminate the same malady among its own people.

Quo vadis, America? # # # [Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)