

CASE STUDY

This week's Case Study will be a little different. Rather than describing an existing ministry, you are presented with the opportunity to step in at the moment when the needs have come to the surface, before any actions have been taken. Read the story and then answer the questions that follow.

You have just moved to the community of Clifton, a town of 25,000 on the outskirts of a major metropolitan area. The subdivision in which you live, the schools your kids attend, your place of work, as well as your church are all filled with mostly middle-class professionals and their families. Safe, quiet, and community-focused, you are pleased with your new home. However, it doesn't take long before you discover there are parts of the community that look significantly different from your own. Driving through town, you notice there is a concentration of poverty in one particular area. You see the names of schools that you have heard are struggling. You find out that there are a number of homeless families whose kids attend there. You also observe a number of vacant homes and a lack of businesses. You can't help noticing these economic lines also follow racial ones. You feel called by God to respond compassionately to those on the margins. You find out that for years, organizations have been providing resources and services to meet the needs of residents here – lunches in the summer for kids, rent and utilities assistance, public transportation passes, a food pantry, and a clothing closet. It appears that these things have not made a significant impact on poverty in the area.