At the forum on "Street People: Adrift in the Cities," left to right: David Schultz, consultant on the homeless; Bishop Emerson Colaw, Minnesota Conference, United Methodist Church; John MacDougall, KSTP-AM News Director and State Representative Lee Greenfield.

Homeless, cont.

Doug Federhart, coordinator of St. Stephen's Shelter in Minneapolis says, "All of the people you see in shelters are victims of systems that have used and abused them. We have people who have lost jobs and can't get rehired because they don't have currently marketable skills. Some were abused from a very young age; some don't fit into the normal social system because of chemical dependency or mental illness."

Father Edward Flahavan, pastor at St. Stephens told our staff that homelessness could happen to most anyone, under the right circumstances. "The people who are staying in shelters or standing in foodlines are people who felt secure until their company got purchased or moved out of town. For them, the bottom dropped out. We have a couple of Ph.D.'s eating with us."

There's a sense of family among street people. They tend to look out for one another.

KSTP's Religion and Public Affairs Editor, Tom Di Nanni, rode the "Hobo Bus" on Minneapolis northside. The bus, operated by Pastor Arpadulos and his volunteers from the Disciples Ministry Church Mission, distributes warm food to persons who live under bridges or in crudely made shelters. Each week the volunteers also take groceries into the neighborhood for the elderly, whose pensions don't last the month.

Reporter Karen Severson visited St. Paul's Dorothy Day Center, and interviewed state, county and city officials about the problem of the homeless. News Assignment Editor Tom Myhr got reactions from the general public and discovered the special problems of Vietnam vets who are homeless in our community.

The series was replayed on Sunday, December 15, during a four-hour on-air forum of religious, governmental, community service and business leaders, who discussed the problem. (Audio tapes of the series and forum are available to teachers and groups who request them on their organization's letterhead.)