

Your right to affordable housing

By Beverly Goldsmith

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Shelter is a basic human right. Yet for many people living in the lower-, and now even the middle-income bracket in Australia, this right is fast eroding away. The cost of purchasing or renting a place to live stands at an all-time high. Waiting lists for public housing are years long. Families, singles, and the elderly who are priced out of suitable accommodation are being forced to move into caravans, tents, and anything else they can find.

Australia's current crisis in affordable housing is one form of what's become a global challenge. In the United States, for example, the housing boom of the past several years led some home buyers to take on mortgage payments they couldn't afford down the road, and many of those families are losing their homes to foreclosures. Any challenge to a basic right demands solutions. So what can we do?

A first step is to recognize that for every problem, no matter how severe, there is a satisfactory resolution for each person involved. Why? Because God is the abundant supplier of all good. He provides for each of us. As all-knowing Mind, He has answers that meet the human need for shelter. I know this from experience.

As a young bride-to-be, I knew that after our wedding I'd have to join my fiancé in a small South Australian country town, where he had a room out on a local farm. Big problem. I wouldn't be allowed to live on the farm, and there was nothing for us to rent in this rural area. I prayed with these Bible verses: **"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! . . . Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God" (Ps. 84:1,3), and, "Let not your heart be troubled: . . . In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1,2).**

These passages reassured me that the answer to our housing need already existed and we would find it. Two days before our wedding, a couple who'd just secured work at a remote iron-ore mine in the West heard of our need and offered us their house to rent during their absence. At the end of our honeymoon, we moved straight in.

This experience in prayerfully resolving a housing crisis taught me something: When you need a place to live, don't panic or be overwhelmed by the thought of having nowhere to go. Begin instead with the spiritual fact that the answer to any housing need *does* exist. No problem is insurmountable to God or to us as His intelligent children.

In prayer we can affirm the presence and power of divine Love's caring, and turn away from focusing on the problem to finding the solution. It helps to shut out worrying thoughts that block the clear thinking that's needed to bring about a resolution, and to stay mentally calm. Then, listen for God's good ideas, and don't discount them when they come! Effective praying includes following up each leading the divine Mind provides. Regardless of the severity of the situation, keeping thought filled with the confidence and buoyancy God gives allows us to find safety and sanctuary.

We perceive the right answers when thought is calm and spiritually positive. This is true for those looking to rent or buy, those dispossessed, and for individuals or organizations that provide housing. From personal experience, I know that everyone can find successful outcomes to his or her housing needs through prayer. No one need be left out on the footpath, homeless.

The answers to the wider issue of affordable housing for every citizen lie in the collective social determination of all fair-minded people. Mary Baker Eddy saw the way forward in these terms: **"Take away wealth, fame, and social organizations, which weigh not one jot in the balance of God, and we get clearer views of Principle. Break up cliques, level wealth with honesty, let worth be judged according to wisdom, and we get better views of humanity"** (*Science and Health*, p. 239).

As love eliminates greed in human hearts, and wisdom, fairness, and honesty determine the true worth of housing, owners and lenders will receive an equitable return—and those who need shelter will find it. More than anything else, spiritual thinking and spiritually motivated acting lead to solutions. And prayer makes us part of those solutions.