

Just a Simple Pallet

In the United States, businesses use millions of wood pallets each year to haul products. Life Care uses many of them, for example, each holiday season during the collection of shoe boxes in the Operation Christmas Child campaign. After a pallet has borne heavy, sometimes crushing weights and taken abuse from truck travel and forklifts, eventually it can no longer be used.

Now cracked and smashed, or loose and floppy, pallets are something businesses must pay other companies up to \$5 per pallet to dispose of them. Disposal companies burn the pallets, chew them into wood chips or dump them in landfills.

One non-profit company in New York had a better idea, writes Andrew Revkin in the *New York Times*. Big City Forest in South Bronx takes other companies' junk and turns it into treasure. The raw material of pallets is valuable hardwoods like rosewood, cherry, oak, mahogany and maple. Big City Forest workers dismantle the pallets, salvage the usable wood and recycle it into furniture and flooring.

Recycled wood chips are worth only \$30 a ton. But when used as flooring, the value of the recycled wood is \$1,200 a ton, and as furniture, \$6,000 a ton.

If that is what can be done with lifeless wood -- a not very valuable pallet -- how much more can people be restored to lives of value? Like Big City Forest, God is in the business of restoration. He takes people who seem worthless, people broken by the weight of sin, and transforms them into works of beauty and usefulness.

And He often uses His own children to accomplish that makeover. Are you part of someone's restoration project today?

--Beecher Hunter