R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 012 654 RC 001 153

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF URBAN CHURCHES IN HELPING RURAL YOUTH BECOME ASSIMILATED IN URBAN AREAS.

BY- WAGNER, JOHN, JR.
NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

PUB DATE SEP 63

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.76 19P.

DESCRIPTORS- CHURCH RESPONSIBILITY, *CHURCH ROLE, *CHURCH PROGRAMS, EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS, ENGLISH (SECOND LANGUAGE), *JOB PLACEMENT, OBJECTIVES, *URBAN IMMIGRATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, *RURAL YOUTH, ADJUSTMENT (TO ENVIRONMENT), DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THIS REPORT STATES THAT RURAL YOUTH MIGRATING TO THE CITY FACE PROBLEMS OF MULTIPLE DECISIONS, LACK OF EDUCATION, LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITY, LACK OF MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS, COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS, AND LIMITED PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR LIVES. THE AUTHOR KNOWS OF NO URBAN CHURCH PROGRAMS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO HELP RURAL YOUTH, BUT HE OFFERS EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WHICH MEET BASIC NEEDS OF YOUTH IN METROPOLITAN AREAS. THESE PROGRAMS, WHICH WOULD ALSO BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE IMMIGRANT, ATTEMPT TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THESE YOUTH, SEEK OUT TALENT AND IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, ASSIST IN JOB TRAINING AND PLACEMENT, AND PROVIDE PROPER ASSOCIATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS. THE NEED IS FOR MORE INFORMATION AND FOR PROGRAMS WORKING WITH PEOPLE RATHER THAN FOR PEOPLE. THIS PAPER WAS PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROBLEMS OF RURAL YOUTH IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT (SEPTEMBER 1963). (SF)

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF URBAN CHURCHES IN HELPING RURAL YOUTH BECOME ASSIMILATED IN URBAN AREAS

by

The Reverend John Wagner, Jr.
Executive Director
Department of the Urban Church
Division of Home Missions
National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

National Committee for Children and Youth
1145 Nineteenth Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF URBAN CHURCHES IN HELPING RURAL YOUTH BECOME ASSIMILATED IN URBAN AREAS

by

The Reverend John Wagner, Jr.
Executive Director
Department of the Urban Church
Division of Home Missions
National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Prepared for

The National Conference on Problems of Rural Youth
in a Changing Environment

September 1963

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF URBAN CHURCHES IN HELPING RURAL YOUTH BECOME ASSIMILATED IN URBAN AREAS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF URBAN CHURCHES IN HELPING RURAL YOUTH BECOME ASSIMILATED IN URBAN AREAS

by
The Reverend John Wagner, Jr.
Executive Director
Department of the Urban Church
Division of Home Missions
National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

Urban Churchmen are aware of the great migrations occuring in the United States from town and country areas into the urban complexes. They have not seen their responsibility in terms of the process of assimilation of these people but rather in terms of the services they may offer all people of the city, be they newcomers or long-term residents.

The youth of the city have certain fundamental problems which they must face. These issues of city life for the youth are key concerns of the churches and their programs and services reflect how they feel the young people may appropriately meet these problems. Six major issues are cited in this paper: Anomie, lack of education, lack of job opportunity, lack of meaningful relationship, the problem of communication, and the limited participation in decisions affecting their lives. Brief descriptions of specific church programs are presented under each category.

The only handle open to urban churches has been to take seriously the particular problems the youth believe to be the most pressing. Many churches have not been satisfied to recast these problems into the mold of "predigested" institutional programs. There is creativity in urban churches which shows their willingness and ability to adapt and virilily address these concerns. It is proving essential and effective.

This creativity ought to be informed by studies and experiments on the process of assimilation of rural youth into urban life. As greater understanding is gained on this subject, urban churches will be aided to understand their role and will offer more universally appropriate service.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF URBAN CHURCHES IN HELPING RURAL YOUTH BECOME ASSIMILATED IN URBAN AREAS

INTRODUCTION

To meet a literal interpretation of the topic assigned, the author must report that, to his knowledge, there are no specifically defined programs and services of urban churches which help rural youth become assimilated in urban areas. The reason this is true, is that urban churches simply do not define their task in these terms.

Some urban churchmen are aware of the problems initially met by in-migrant youth: strangeness to urbanism, myriad choices, different working conditions and schedules, new patterns of community relations, greater values placed on basic skills, and a new type of sophistication. And this list is only indicative of a much longer catalogue. But these problems are subtile for us all to understand and are rarely the articulated problems of a young person when he seeks help from the Church.

This does not preclude the necessity to make such evaluations of the effect of urban living on the new migrant from rural areas. These insights will perfect the quality of programing which churches, educational and social institutions, and public agencies offer.

There are some reasons why your reporter cannot be literal with the subject. Urban churches are concerned with the needs of youth who either have come to the city recently or who have lived in the city their whole lives. To attempt a separation of these groupings is not considered by them to be a valid step in a process of meeting these needs.

Churches traditionally attempt to meet the problems of people as they are posed by the people themselves. If it is alcoholism, then this is to be addressed. If it is mental illness, then care must be sought. If it is hunger, then food must be obtained. Because people seek help from churches on these overt problems, because many thousands seek help from the churches, and because the church by its very nature must accommodate all people, the churches build their programs and services in other ways than in terms of the in-migrant.

Another reason why this report cannot deal with the subject literally defined is because of the in-migrant youth himself. He leaves the home community because it will not satisfy his hopes and expectations. He comes to the city for work. He comes for new friendships. He comes for broader experiences and opportunities. These basic needs are uppermost in his mind when he leaves, and they stay with him as he looks about the city of his choice. All the success stories he has ever read will happen to him. So he thinks. If he talks about assimilation at all, it will be in terms of these basic needs and aspirations.

A final point to be made on this subject is that churches in what some

call "ports of entry" communities know intuitively that there is far more diversity in the population than is commonly imagined. Central Harlem of New York, for example, is traditionally considered the first stop of Negro migrants from the south and a large number of the problems of Central Harlem are blamed upon this assumption. Actually, the 1960 census reported that two thirds of Central Harlem residents were living in the same house as in 1955, compared with 58 percent for the city as a whole. Of the one-third who had moved to their 1960 residence within that five year period, 79 percent had moved to Central Harlem from elsewhere in New York City, 2 percent from elsewhere in the metropolitan area, 13 percent from southern states, 3 percent from northern and western states, and 3 percent from abroad. In other words, only about 4 percent of Central Harlem's 1960 population consisted of migrants from southern states, and these were not necessarily from rural areas.

The point is that urban churches of these areas may have intuitively been cautious of accepting these stereotypes as the basis of their programing, and so have built their services on the needs of all youth who live there.

There are examples of valid programs and services offered by urban churches which meet basic problems of the youth in the metropolitan areas. Their programs also are appropriate for the inmigrant and help in the process of assimilation. But their programs have as their purposes underlying issues of city life which every youth faces. We present as the outline of this report these issues: Anomie, lack of education, lack of job opportunity, lack of meaningful relationships, problem of communication, and limited participation in decisions affecting their lives.

These are not mutually exclusive issues. They overlap, are interrelated, and they could be indicated by other words than we use. But these are some of the general concerns urban churches are attempting to meet with their programs and services.

ANOMIE

A widespread issue for youth in the city is goallessness or normlessness, stated in brief as anomie. It happens when avenues of action or expectation are blocked. It is aggravated by the plethora of choices and decisions that must be made. It is imposed in part because of the plurality of customs and heritages a youth meets first hand. It becomes a state of hidden and suppressed confusion.

Urban churches have a definitive responsibility for this issue. Their services of worship communicate the fact of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the necessity that man's perspective of himself and his life be informed by this revelation. A keystone of the Church's programing is the service of worship and, therefore, is universally offered.

Programs of Bible study and discussion are also a major emphasis in urban churches. Increasingly small groups of lay people are meeting to consider the Biblical revelations for their every-day responsibilities and problems. These are not didactic monologues, but dynamic probing sessions as

people press their real problems against the commands and guidance of God as the Scriptures present them. The stark reality of difficult decisions that must be made occurs naturally at these sessions. These encounters with the word of God and in the presence of the group cause men to consider the ramifications of Christian discipleship in what they say, do, and are.

One example is the Woodlawn Protestant Youth Parish in Chicago. It is built on the premises that the youth want to deal with their anomie and that they can evidence moral courage and idealism. It makes certain demands on those who are part of the parish. It requires participation in a weekly Bible study group, involvement in a Woodlawn congregation, and participation in the special activities and services of the parish.

This approach goes beyond the individual congregation and its youth work (which often is quite small and boring) and yet maintains for the youth an orientation to the local congregation. The laymen and laywomen of these congregations provide leadership to the parish and its serious probes into the problems of the youth.

One of the most severe problems facing the Church is that of making contact with the youth so that there can be a serious approach to anomie.

In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, young people from colleges over the country meet to spend their Easter vacation. The major time is spent on the sands of the beach. A denomination asked some of its churchmen to be there on the beach to stimulate conversations on some of the issues facing this generation. By the simple process of a sign stuck on the sand announcing that "at noon there would be a discussion on world peace around this sign," the fleeting contact was made.

In Pittsburgh a denomination has hired two young men to be on the streets in the North Pittsburgh communities to make contacts with the youth. This resulted from a survey which showed that of the 11, 000 young people in these communities, the churches and social institutions had contact in any way with only 2,000.

Father Joseph Connelly of Gregory the Great Roman Catholic parish in Baltimore, Maryland, presented an "outdoor mission" on the recreational lot adjacent to the church using specially written music in the vernacular of the neighborhood and played by a jazz combo. The religious meanings conveyed by the church were brought to the street in a form and manner which had meaning to that community. For many on the block, it was the first time they had heard the Church or been part of a service of worship.

In San Francisco the Episcopalian diocese has a special priest assigned to work with Italian and Filipino youth. These concentrations of young people will be assisted in this way to relate to the churches there as well as have their problems addressed appropriately through a knowledgeable person.

In Philadelphia the Methodist Mid-Town parish recently completed the first phase of exploration on the "Ministry to Socially Stigmatized Youth."

Their findings underscore the basic religious and moral needs of youth and the imperative upon the churches to make this a clear and specific role which they shall seek to perform in behalf of the community of young people.

One type of specific service being offered by urban churches has to do with narcotic addicts. In part the addict has sought an answer to his sense of anomie by the sensations of a "fix." The cyclical motion of addiction which comes closer and closer until the youth is bound is not alone broken by the prison or hospital approach. This lad needs a friend in his neighborhood who is there at all hours. Some urban churches are "friends" because they understand the problem and help the committed youth with appropriate service. The East Harlem Protestant Parish Narcotic Committee provides services which reach into the prisons and hospitals, advocate proper legislation, and at the neighborhood base vocational guidance and placement, food, clothing, shelter, psychiatric and pastoral counseling, work with families, and Bible study and discussion groups for addicts.

The Village Aid and Service Center of Judson Memorial Church of New York City is another type of neighborhood centered programing of an urban church. Its concern is for the values and goals young people have and express, and through counseling and group programs they initiate a program by which these are evaluated and become the equipment of the young people for use in all their associations.

LACK OF EDUCATION

A major shift is occurring in the American economy which demands higher education and better skills. Schools in some regions of our country have been ill equipped to provide their students with the background necessary or the incentive to persevere for educational attainment. The alarming educational deficiencies of inmigrants and urban youth and the increasing rate of "drop-outs" is being noted in every urban area of our country. Churches are concerned.

We record a sampling of programs and services of churches related to educational needs for today's living.

In San Francisco the Inner City Council of the United Presbyterian Church is participating with the Ford Foundation Great Cities Study Project in providing study halls and lounges for the youth who do not have quiet in their own homes. This supervised evening study hall augments the serious work of the schools during the day.

In Chicago Casa Central, a mission to Spanish speaking newcomers operated by the Chicago City Missionary Society, provides a concentrated program of both English and Spanish language classes. Sewing, arts, and crafts are offered. One of the pastors, the Rev. Jose' Torres, describes the situation of these newcomers: " Each day we get those unequipped to fend for themselves because of the lack of 'know-how.' Even the use of transportation and knowledge of the city has to be taught to newcomers who have never walked down more than three or four short streets in their lives." 1/

In Toledo the Methodist Inner City Parish offers classes in homemaking and money management to assist the newcomer family adjust to circumstances of the city. The close relationship of the volunteer teachers and their classes provide extra benefit to the churches that have for too long overlooked and ignored the bread and butter issues new inmigrants must face.

One example of many programs offered by churches is the remedial reading classes offered to youngsters in the East Harlem area of New York City by the Protestant Parish. Afternoons after school volunteers work with children on a one-to-one basis or in small groups patiently broadening the reading skill of these children. Educators have claimed the necessity of these programs as a first priority in order that the educational process offered by the schools may become applicable to these students. Remarkable results have been seen. Some children in a semester's time have jumped two "grades" in their reading comprehension by this method.

In a number of cities, churches are offering nursery classes for preschoolers. They are not doing this for the traditional reason that is so often suggested for a nursery school--that is, care for children while their mothers are working. A more basic reason, now is offered. Some educators have found these nursing classes provide the necessary incentives in regard to education for children who will grow up in circumstances of disadvantagement so that they overcome the environmental cynicism which has affected so many drop-outs in the past.

At Greeley Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, a "Sheltered Workship" is provided for young men who have already dropped out of school and who seem not to be skilled enough to hold a job. Churches of the area recommend their placement in the workshop and retain a sponsorship role with them. In the workshop the young men are given work experience, and some fundamental instruction in how to apply for employment, how to dress properly on the job, proper work habits, and relationships to supervisors. The boys who go through this two month experience are guaranteed job interviews.

In every community there are youngsters of exceptional abilities and talents. They are highly gifted but often are ignored in inner city neighborhoods because of the great number who need help in upgrading basic skills. The Nazarene Congregational Church of Brooklyn through its "Halfway House" identifies these gifted youngsters and encourages their development. Annually those who have creative abilities in the performing arts are presented at a festival. One young man is now a violinist in the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITY

In a list of important concerns to young people job opportunity runs high if not first. They must start their careers. Because of the limitations newcomers have known in their homes, former communities, or schooling, they need assistance to find jobs. Some urban churches are augmenting the services provided by civic agencies and in many cases are planning their work jointly with these agencies.

In Detroit Halfway House of the inner city program of Plymouth Congregational Church is sponsoring a long range program for the preparation, encouragement, and placement (PEP project) of young people in employment. The Project operates under a series of committees: research, counseling, interpretation, and job placement.

First Presbyterian Church and Neighborhood Center in Kansas City, Missouri, have inaugurated a Youth Employment Service to secure part-time after school and full-time summer employment for youth attending high school. The church approached a local foundation which provided a grant to employ a youth worker to head up the program. The employment service itself is guided by a citizens board with civic leaders in management, unions, personnel, etc., and from Roman Catholic and Jewish as well as Protestant groups. The six churches of the Christian Inner City Council which includes Methodist, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian U. S., and United Presbyterian congregations have the program operating in their neighborhood through their facilities.

Prior to placement the young people must attend six sessions of training to be eligible for placement. These training sessions include information on probable job categories, how to seek a job, employee-employer relationships and responsibilities, how to deal with grievances, etc. The instructors include businessmen, counselors from public schools, and representatives of the State Employment Service. 2/

Similarly Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia arranged such a service to give young people part-time work while encouraging them to stay in school. When they were making the preliminary contacts with employers, they thought hopefully a few hundred would apply. On the first day of registration 1500 queued up outside the office.

The Church of the Master in New York City offers a guidance program to young people. At the conclusion of the 1962 phase of the program the minister of Christian education wrote:

> This program included an orientation group session, individual preliminary interviews, psychological tests and one to three summary interviews for each young person. In the summary interviews the findings of the tests and their implications for vocational and educational planning were discussed with each boy and girl. In most instances parents of these young people also had an interview to discuss the results of the counseling program.

The most comprehensive program that exists for job opportunities and run by the church is the Youth Development and Vocational Training Program of the United Presbyterian Church in St. Louis. Mr. Gerald J. Engel is program director. We have reported above their Sheltered Workshop approach.

Two additional aspects of this program are "Jobs for Youth" and Employer Contacts."

The first is similar to the programs reported above which help a young person prepare himself for the schedules, relationships, and responsibilities of employment.

The employer contact program aims to have discussions among employers who are members of St. Louis congregations on the problems of youth employment and on the ways they might aid in the alleviation of this unemployment. This approach presses the question to those persons who might bring change to the situation. It is fitting to have such discussions in the churches because it gives an opportunity to describe the denominations' program in the city for the youth (which is their church's program) and to discuss the responsibilities and difficult decisions laymen must make in their employment practices. Often the churches' social mission programs are "side" concerns of the congregation and very limited in their scope because there is not the corollary dialogue about the total congregation's responsibility in its everyday decisions and actions. The employer contact aspect of this St. Louis program ought to be a responsibile activity of the churches in every city.

Summer time for young people is a difficult period of the year because school is out, the tenements are warm, and work is scarce. In a number of cities churches are offering a "Teens in Industry" program in the summer which provides an inside view to different types of work. Stores and factories are the most numerous placements but in certain cases law offices and banks participate in the program. The jobs themselves are not the most important dimension of this program since they often are the menial "errand boy" types, but the evening sessions when these young people meet to discuss their impressions and experience provides a counseling opportunity which is most important. It helps a youth sift through the daily problems and talk about his goals. It helps him react to the reality that labor is hard, and routine, often boring or fragmenting. Churchmen in cities where such a program is offered ought to see the potential for the youth as well as the possibility to get some long postponed work done.

These examples are illustrative of an extensive list of services offered by urban churches in regard to job opportunity. Some are programs of broad dimension, many are services of pastors or laymen to individual young people. Through this one-to-one approach must not be forsaken, churches of our cities ought to initiate some of the aspects illustrated in this section which are more comprehensive, and effectively present the social crisis we face in youth employment.

LACK OF MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

If there has been any aspect of the young person's life in which the church has been interested, it has been in regard to fellowship or associations they have with one another. Peer group identities are important, and constructive, creative relationships must be an aspect of a person's maturation.

Major time in the youth departments of the communions is spent in consideration of what the youngsters do when they come together under the auspices of the church. Extensive guidelines for programs and activities are suggested. Such documents as The American Journal of Catholic Youth Work published by the National Catholic Welfare Conference are produced by every denomination.

A major thrust in urban church work has been the neighborhood house or community center. In every major city churches sponsor these programs augmenting the work of agencies such as the YMCA, the YWCA, the civic sponsored settlement houses.

To indicate the breadth of many programs, we have selected one example--Emanuel Community Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. This center is part of an Inner City Methodist program geared to the in-migrants coming from the southern states--southern mountain people and Negroes. To present this comprehensive program in capsule will give the impression we wish to convey--that is, the many facets all aimed to establish meaningful relationships.

1. A daily group work program for about 1,000 people which includes recreational, social, and educational services.
2. A day care program for 55 children of working mothers.
3. A residence home for women.
4. A case work program for families in need supplementing the program of the county welfare
5. A visitor in the homes of families in need.
6. A resident camp for underprivileged children and others culturally deprived.
7. An orientation program for newcomers into the city.

Another urban church service to young people has been to provide space for a "canteen." Normally the young people handle all the details and decorations and work out their own rules of conduct for the group. (These are rigidly held and effective.) In Pittsburgh a church has two nights set aside for its canteen. Friday it is for "low-teens"-- 13 to 15; and Saturday for the "high-teens"--16 to 18. The West St. Louis Ecumenical Parish runs "the Roof Club," an evening lounge for high school students seeking some place to go on those muggy summer evenings. The Buffalo Council of Churches sponsored last summer a Friendship Corps who lived in a highly mobile inner city community. Their contact with the young people was through the "Hole-in-the-Wall." Anyone who has worked as a volunteer in these lounges notices there is more to this than a "baby sitting" job. He begins to listen and hears about a life that he knows has existed (because he went through it and maybe now has children in it), but he now sees the magnitude of questions, issues, and problems these youngsters face. It's fun but fun with a purpose.

Judson Church in Greenwich Village has a "Hall of Issues" dedicated to people who want to speak about their grievances, yearnings, and hopes. It's not just "sick talk." It is a setting for the dialogue a man must have. Here men defend their commentary on life, which a man should be able to do. In this place men stretch their imaginations and, through it, the church gives credence to the immanence of revelation.

The Rev. Kilmer Myers, now director of the Urban Training Center for Christian Mission in Chicago, was rector of a ministry in the lower east side of New York City. He owned a boat. He invited gangs to go with him for a day's outing. There was more to it than just the joy ride. As seafaring people know, the captain is in charge and has full responsibility for those aboard. The old gang lines were eclipsed and new relationships of authority and responsibility imposed.

This Episcopalian father on his ship was not just an image. A full day on the sea with this understanding was of great importance to the growth of these young men and gave credence to a new set of allegiances among the boys and between the boys and the Church.

In Los Angeles the Southern California Council of Churches engages in a Lay Ministry with Inner City Youth. The city has been a mecca for inmigrants from the south and east. Suburban laymen following a training session are assigned to young people as counselors. The man's job is to get to know his "friend," to have this lad's problems "bite" into him as if they were his own. He is to see the city through the boy's eyes and deal imaginatively and realistically with the issues the boy faces. This requires dedication and consistency. This ministry is not accomplished in a day or two of outings. It ties up a man's attention and disciplines his concern. Such involvement is rare for the church, while the number of relationships of this order that are needed increases.

In a number of urban churches a system of "godparents" for children of nonchurched parents has been begun. These churches are taking serious their pledge in baptism to see that the children are nourished in the Christian faith. These churches know the facts of life about too many families and realize such nurture is not automatically going to happen through the family. To these godparents their "adopted" children's growth in grace is an imperative even though it means facing their uncommitted parents.

If any section of this paper could be extended, it would be this one. These illustrations must serve as brief illustrations to a broad field of concern expressed by urban churches across the land for young people. Knowing them in a sustained relationship is an obligation of every church.

PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION

Churches ought well understand this problem because communication is a major issue for the churches. The insights about our own problem of communication should inform us of the dimensions this problem poses to the young person. Certainly in our major concern for the inmigrant we ought to recognize the scope of this issue. Other papers in this series will spell out in much greater detail our concern but by this reference we wish to underscore its effect.

For the Mexican or Puerto Rican a communication problem is highly visible. He speaks Spanish in a primarily English speaking culture. Who will interpret for him? Who will listen? Who has time to be concerned for the nourishing of his thoughts?

The New York City Mission Society, the Chicago City Missionary Society, and hundreds of other ministries see this as important and have staff people who are bilingual in concepts as well as in words. Classes and guidance are offered. The "small" problems are given patient attention by a dedicated, trained minister. Roman Catholic schools have revised and revamped their approach to these young people who now are a majority in many city communities. Pastors and priests are learning the language of the streets in their parish, and, for some, this is not English.

For the Indian coming into the city from the reservation many of the supports and customs are left home and he now resides in a confusing urban culture. A primary problem is communication of the culture to him, as well as he to the culture. In Rapid City, South Dakota, the Indian Center provides extensive programs of adult education, personal counseling, laundry privileges, children's activities, health clinics, and recreation. The impact on the Indian by this urban culture is possibly revealed in the present statistic of one-third who are returnees to the reservation.

Besides these two communication problems which face specific churches in urban areas, there is a more general problem that faces the young person of the city. In many communities the young people are "space-bound." Their opportunities to get out of their neighborhood are limited if they exist at all. They are held to the "space" of a few blocks because of limited knowledge of the rest of the city, of money, and of incentives. One typical program now becoming more common in our cities is "Exploring St. Louis"--a service of the Youth Development and Vocational Training Program there. They explore the cultural attractions of the city opening up horizons to the child's curiosity and interest in life. Art and music centers, national and state parks industrial plants, become the places on the travel agenda. This opportunity which may seem so common place to the affluent society, is an experience to the city child never before imagined. Through these simple travel programs of urban churches for their youngsters we provide a new perspective which nourishes his personal history and aspirations.

Problems of communication for the child of the city are great and should become a major attention in ecumenical strategies.

LIMITED PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR LIVES

Dan Dodson in a recent issue of The City Church highlights a major issue for the youth in the city.

> While we have been willing to serve people, it has been at a price. Service has meant we have done things for people. We have not been willing to do things with people for this would have meant we would have to share power with them. This we were unwilling to do. If a youth wanted to come into the power relations of the community the rules were well prescribed. First some agency, the school, the settlement house, or the agency worker got him involved. They inspired him to take some stock in the so called "American way," i.e., to believe that if he worked hard, behaved right, and studied hard enough he would be recognized. This led to his alienation from the subculture of which he was a part. He became ashamed of his backgrounds--every minority group in America has had to contend with the problem of its youth depreciating its own backgrounds and idealizing the culture of the dominant group. (Kurt Lewin, you will recall, advised the Jewish group to resort to education in Jewish culture to provide such youths with a "ground on which to stand" in order to make creative outreach to other groups.) These bright youths who were so involved were eventually transmuted into so-called "Ideal Americans"--which is to say they lost their identity with the groups of their heritage, and moved both psychologically and physically as far from it as possible. The settlement houses' walls are lined in my community with the pictures of the greats they have served. They, and their constituents measured success by the number they have helped produce. By

and large, those "Greats" however, no longer are identified with the groups or the neighborhoods out of which they come. What our programs have done is to siphon off the bright ones and help them individually, but leave the group itself as a residue to stew in its own problems. Hence we have never solved the problems of the slums. They stand as an institutionalized part of every American city, and the erosion of human resources of youths upon whom our programs did not "take" has been staggering.

If the hypothesis which I presented has validity, maybe the missing ingredient in our programs is that we have failed to help these groups find leverages to power. 3/

Two illustrations of urban churches'attention to this basic concern will suffice to make the point. In actual fact there are too few examples of churches' grasping the significance of this problem. The present social revolution in civil rights accelerates the necessity of becoming cognizant of this arena of concern about which the Church has been blind.

One major trend is in community development and organization. The Organization of Southwest Community in Chicago is sponsored by the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, local business, civic and social groups. It serves all people of the community as these people are represented in the Organization through the organizations they belong to in their church or community. It aims to meet the problems of community renewal in a multiphased approach. Their concern cuts across the dissimilar problems of blight, apathy, deterioration of political structures, education, and integration. The churches see in the program a realistic and relevant expression of their discipleship in terms of the problems of the neighborhood, district and city. They become involved in the bread and butter issues of their community and witness to the Gospel in these issues. The churches thereby are working with the people and allowing the Gospel to inform their engagement with these problems. Such risk which permits criticism of past practice has not always been allowed by the Church, but through such encounters the services and programing of the churches have become far more appropriate. After careful negotiations about the purposes and methodologies of community organizations, churches ought to be able to participate through their lay apostolate.

The second illustration is at Immanuel United Church of Christ of Los Angeles. The Rev. Killingsworth, the pastor, has a youth group who listened one evening to the record "The Nashville Story" which described racial integration there. This raised the whole question of conditions in Los Angeles. They knew this was as much their decision as anyone else's. They decided that discrimination in barber shops was the priority issue. They went and were refused service. The group sat down. Two incidents of man-handling of the youths by the proprietor occurred before the police arrived. These young people then instigated legal procedures against the proprietor. He changed his mind about how far these young people were prepared to go and he agreed to serve both Negro and white. 4/

These short capsules of actual history are meant to underscore the two directions of church involvement in the community and of church commitment to the specific issues young people face. This is the type of dedication that should be common in the churches.

CONCLUSION

Urban churches are constantly adapting, scrapping, and reformulating their programs and services to keep abreast the problems facing youth. They are not always effective or faithful. They are not always equipped or resourceful. They are not always empathetic and patient. But they are working on the basis of integrity which in history ought to change our commentary from"what the churches should be doing" to "what the churches are doing," in large measure across the country to help meet the problems of young people.

We commend those denominations who like the American Baptists are sponsoring regional conferences on "The Church and Troubled Youth." We commend those councils of churches such as Albany, Schenectady, and Troy who sponsor community clinics on unemployment. We commend the Council of the Southern Mountains who, with church support, aid relocating families to northern cities with proper counsel and guidance. We commend St. Louis University for its research project, headed by Bernard J. Coughlin, S. J., to ascertain what seminaries are teaching clergymen about youth problems and which will be followed by an institute on the clergy and youth in the modern community and by summer internships for seminarians in youth agencies and institutions. We commend denominations in their serious criticism of their youth programs and their desire for creatively new approaches in services and programing.

Churches need to know much more about the process of assimilation of rural youth into modern urban society. Such problems, face all churches, whether they are in the city or in the villages. The Church's sensitivity to this American fact will provide a test of her perspective, relevance, and mission.

REFERENCES

1. Hargraves, J. Archie. Stop Pussyfooting through a Revolution, Philadelphia; Stewardship Council, 1962, p. 17.

2. Waterman, the Rev. Kenneth. "A City Church Organizes Interchurch Resources." Concern, September, 1963.

3. Dodson, Dan. "Power as a Dimension of Education." The City Church, January-February, 1963, 14, 3.

4. Hargraves, Op.cit., p. 26.