

GEOGRAPHICAL PLANNING

GENERAL SUBJECT: "GEOGRAPHICAL PLANNING" (Comments of Gene W. Rossman, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Portland, Oregon, as a Layman "Resource Person" participating in the "URBAN LIFE CONFERENCE ON THE INNER CITY" sponsored by the Methodist Church, Portland, Oregon, March 22, 1962). LYLE E. SCHALIER, of Cleveland, Ohio, is a unique person. He is not only an ordained Methodist Minister (a member of the Western Wisconsin Conference), but he holds an M.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin in City and Regional Planning. He has served professionally not only as a Methodist Pastor, but also as a Mayor's Administrative Assistant, Director of Municipal Research, and City Planner.

"The current emphasis on the conservation and preservation of older neighborhoods offers the church a new evangelistic opportunity. This neighborhood renewal concept developed in recognition of the fact that in most blighted areas many of the buildings can be saved through constructive efforts. Cities cannot afford to completely write-off whole neighborhoods. Several Protestant Churches are now undertaking a similar approach to the people living in blighted neighborhoods. It is erroneous to "write-off" these residents as people who cannot be served by mainline Protestantism. More and more we see Protestant Churches that have been ministering to members who long ago moved to Suburbia now focusing attention on the people living within the shadow of the Church. These Churches have discovered that within a few blocks of the sanctuary are living thousands of people who are in as great a need of spiritual renewal as their homes are in need of physical renewal. Re-building the physical neighborhood may be the responsibility of the government; helping the residents re-new their lives is a proper task of the neighborhood Church. Blight is, at least in part, a product of the hopelessness of the residents. Merely rehabilitating the structures will not eliminate this hopelessness. The Evangelical Church, ministering to the people in its neighborhood, may be able to serve Christ

and fight blight at the same time by bringing to these people evidence of the redemptive love of God through Christ. This may be the greatest challenge confronting the Church today. The Inner City is the site not only of most urban renewal activity, but also of Protestantism's greatest missionary challenge".

Rev. Schaller has pointed up most articulately the close interrelation between the Church and Government in the massive movement toward community renewal, redevelopment, and rehabilitation in our urban areas.

In the selection of a site for a new public-housing project, what is the first consideration? It is the proximity of that site to existing Churches, as well as to shopping centers, educational, health, and recreational facilities. Witness the site of the Portland Housing Authority's 180-unit NORTHWEST TOWER housing project now under development at NW 19th and Everett in Portland--the first high-rise, low-rent, public-housing facility in the Far West, exclusively for senior citizens of low income. This site is not just surrounded, it is virtually "hemmed-in" by long-established Portland Churches. Witness the Portland Housing Authority's DAISY B. WILLIAMS housing project for families of low income -- now under development in the Albina District. No neighborhood community in Portland is so "peppered" with Church facilities of all denominations.

We in the field of public housing know from experience that low-income households displaced by public works do not wish to be relocated in areas remote from their former friends and neighbors -- and their Churches. A case at point is Portland's new Memorial Coliseum the construction of which displaced some one-hundred households -- mostly low-income families living in overcrowded, slum-type, dwellings. Only four of these households chose to move to Columbia Villa and other remote low-rent housing projects of the local Housing Authority. The rest preferred to move into the slums adjacent to the Coliseum, pay exorbitant rentals for sub-standard accommodations, but retain their close proximity to their long-time neighbors, to the community life with which they were familiar, to their Church.

In our relationship with our community's low-income households, we in the business of Housing and in the calling of the Church share a joint responsibility. We are dealing with a sizable segment of our total population, a special kind of people -- people who in so very many instances are in urgent need of both physical and spiritual rehabilitation. Because of the traditional shortage of manpower and funds, we are presently satisfying a very small part of that need. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us all to direct our energies and to utilize what resources we have in accordance with careful planning--to make the very most out of what we have to offer.

Here are some observations that may give us cause to reflect as to whether we are heading in the right direction: Low-income families must, of economic necessity, live close to where the wage earner makes his living. The cost of transportation to and from work can take a considerable "bite" out of this family's total income and divert to such expense funds needed for food, clothing, and medical care. For this reason -- in developing new housing projects, Public Housing is giving increasing consideration to the desirability of choosing sites located close to the core of the City -- despite the fact that the acquisition of such sites is proving increasingly costly. In its planning for more adequate facilities to meet growing spiritual needs, is the Church giving proper consideration to the requirements of this concentration of low-income households in the Inner City? Or is its gaze more attracted toward an expanded and considerably more picturesque and enticing Suburbia - Cont,next week

Safeway Stores Hire Grocery Checker

Margarite Wilson of 537 N. Stanton St. was hired Mon. March 26, as a grocery checker for Safeway Stores at North branch 1335 N. Mason. Mr. Harold Bleything, zone merchandising manager stated that Miss Wilson's referral for employment was submitted through the Urban League of Portland by James Frazier Industrial Relations Director.

Miss Wilson is a graduate Shorter Jr. College Little Rock, Arkansas and has completed a eight-week business machine course, at Marketing Training School of Portland, Oregon.

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