

## The Inner City . . . Its Problems Overrun Its Borders

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R.S.M., who will assist in the formation of a sector ministry in the Northeast during the coming year, Sister Kieran Sweeney, S.S.J., who is concentrating principally on developing new forms for sensitizing suburban areas to the needs of society today, and Reverend Larry Coppard, who directed the Ecumenical Community Ministry in the third ward during the past year.

The Urban Ministry recognizes these principles of action:

1. Home rule, whereby initiative in planning and setting priorities is developed by laymen and clergy at the local level. This encourages self-determination and rejects paternalism.

Applied to the black community's growing search for self-identity, the principle of home rule demands that whites strive sincerely to understand and accept the black point of view not only on the theoretical level but also in the many areas of implementation.

2. Sector, whereby the problems of one area are met within a decentralized cooperative (and thus ecumenical) approach.

Utilizing the research of all of the Christian churches in an area, such an approach, while treating the symptoms of human need, enables the affected people to gain a greater voice in their own destiny and have a part in the decision-making process in the political, economic and social spheres.

3. Cooperation on the metropolitan level for coordinated strategy, planning, and implementation.

"Sector ministry" responds to the unique needs of persons within a certain defined area, or sector, through cooperative ecumenical planning and action. The eight city planning communities, whose boundaries were originally delineated by the city itself, are used as a basis of sector ministry by the Joint Office and its affiliated programs, though there is no exact correspondence between these planning areas and existing ministries.

The following is a summary of the various sector ministries operating in Rochester.

1. Southeast Loop and Atlantic Avenue Ministry (SLAAM),

directed by Rev. Johnnie Monroe, endeavors to develop indigenous leadership in those residential blocks slated for urban renewal between the business district and the southeast portion of the inner loop. Basic problems that face the area are welfare, employment and housing. He is presently working toward the formation of a non-profit housing corporation which would purchase some of the land on which the people now live, and rebuild low income housing.

2. Northwest Ecumenical Ministry (NEM), begun in 1965, the oldest of the sector ministries, is under the direction of Rev. Robert L. Boher. In the spring of 1968, the Northwest Ecumenical Ministry Board was formed by the actions of sixteen neighborhood congregations. Of the several ministries under the aegis of the board, one of the most vital is the Area Youth Ministry (AYM) which, under the leadership of L. Michael Losinger, works to reach and serve teenagers without church affiliation, especially school dropouts, court cases and those who are not associated with any existing religious

group. AYM reaches about 10% of the 3500 young people in the area per year.

Other programs in this ministry include: WEDGE, a development corporation formed from the action of the block clubs in the Brown Square area with the support of the Lake Avenue Baptist Church and the Community of the Servants of God; and the Junior High Ecumenical Ministry (JHEM), which is an attempt to relate to junior high youth, and to provide a program for both self-determination and engagement of agencies to meet specific programs.

3. Southeast Area Ministry (SEAM), is a committee of representatives from St. Boniface, St. Andrew's and Calvary Presbyterian churches, with the participation of the South Avenue Baptist Church and the Lutheran Church of Peace, headed by Mrs. Robert Passon.

Programs involved with the ministry are Southwest Area Neighbors (SWAN), which has established working organizations with the YMCA and a summer ecumenical church

school; and the Southeast Area Youth Ministry (SEAYM), whose coffee houses "The Hang-Up" and "The Cave" have exercised a unifying influence among the youth of the area and served as a contact point in meeting their most crucial problems.

4. The Ministry to the Southwest Sector, under the direction of Rev. Lawrence Witmer, gives priority to the area's real estate problems. The association actively engages in building a desirable area image for buyers of both races; concerns itself with the quality of public education, the needs of youth, problems arising from the proximity of the airport, community enrichment and maintaining zoning and building code regulations in order to assure a stable neighborhood.

5. Northeast Area Development (NEAD) concentrates on serving area youth from lower income families, assisting in the sphere of education, job training and recreation. Both black and white teenagers, including dropouts and court cases are reached through Engine House #9, now used as a youth center.

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Service to the elderly includes particularly the "Hi, Neighbor" senior citizen program which presently meets in three area centers under the voluntary leadership of Mrs. Walter Mayr.

6. Projected Ministries to the Northeast must take into account the dis-organization of the predominantly black community in the Model Cities area. The Northeast Strategy Committee, begun in 1967, helped achieve a reversal of the city's lack of recognition of indigenous leadership for the planning and implementation stages of this massive urban renewal program.

Presently the Board of Urban Ministry is studying proposals from Rev. Herbert Shankle and Rev. Johnnie Monroe to expand the concept of the Hanover House ministry. If approved, one man will coordinate the work of all the black and white churches within this sector.

Deserving of special attention in this report is a primarily Catholic project centered at Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester.

The Ecumenical Community



Father Robert Kreckel and Rev. Mr. Larry Coppard, who cooperated with the Urban Ministry Office for the Ecumenical Community Ministry in Rochester's Third Ward. Father Kreckel is pastor of Immaculate Conception Church and Rev. Mr. Coppard is a minister of the United Church of Christ.

Ministry (ECM) was begun in June, 1967 under the leadership of Rev. Mr. Larry Coppard. As a seminary student about to be ordained in the United Church of Christ, Coppard had been hired by Immaculate Conception Church. This in itself is unique: "As far as I know, it's probably never happened anywhere else in the world," is Larry's observation. His close association with the staff of this church, under pastor, Father Robert G. Kreckel, gave him a special position in the ecumenical sector ministry he was creating according to the guidelines: the ministry must be ecumenical, staffing must be lay-oriented, and needs must be discovered through listening.

Coppard was a tangible answer to the parish's realization of the need for "overarching" if all people were to be the scope of its concern, and if change was to be effected in this ghetto area.

As a result of the summer's listening and research in the area, Larry and his staff of two fulltime Sisters (loaned from the Urban Ministry Office for inservice training under ECM), seven part-time seminarians and

over two hundred volunteers, tackled the four top priority areas: religious education for the children, ministry to the elderly, work with youth, and community problems such as recreational facilities for children, garbage collection, rat control.

Provision for religious training for children took concrete form with the development of an ecumenical school supported by 14 area churches. The school met in three centers twice a week, incorporating drama, music and arts and crafts with its Bible lesson presentations to almost 500 children. Aimed at the unchurched, the program was for most of the children their only contact with religion during the week.

The 1960 census reported a population of 3600 elderly citizens in the area, but investigation revealed very little service available to them. Under ECM, a small and highly skilled team visited them not only to provide companionship, but to discover their needs as well. Available agencies were also visited, and helped to recognize their obligations to the elderly.

A neighborhood survey re-  
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