

# The New Cities and Religion

Ground breaking festivities for Riverton, a new town along the Genesee River in Henrietta, are set for July 15. The planned town — 1,300 acres for 20,000 people — is not unique. Not even in this area, since land preparation will begin this summer for Gonanda, a larger town of 85,000 on 10,500 acres of Wayne County.

Reluctantly accepting the planned town as the city of tomorrow, I went to the first one, Columbia, Md., for a preview of the future.

Columbia was conceived in the mind of James W. Rouse in 1963. Rouse may some day be a legend for buying up more than 20 per cent of Howard County, a rural area between Washington and Baltimore, without any one knowing it.

Columbia is larger than either of the towns planned for this area. It is 14,000 acres (larger than Manhattan) and will have 110,000 residents when it is completed in 1981. Columbia is planned to have seven villages surrounding a downtown core.

Now, with four villages in various stages of development there are well over 20,000 residents, two colleges, and more than 45 industries in this city that calls itself New America.

The New America is much like the original in that all accents can be heard there. Many English came when a company moved a branch office there, and Orientals, Germans, and blacks are living together in this town that was designed with the natural beauty of Howard County as a major consideration.

If Columbia can be used as an example of planned towns and cities: the future looks a lot like this:

No urban sprawl, no neon signs, no billboards, no asphalt jungle, no overhead lattice of utility lines and poles.

Apartment houses, townhouses and one family houses will be all together; so will low cost, moderate and luxury housing. The number of divorces will grow and interracial dating will be the norm (to the teenagers, perhaps not to their parents). The shop-

ping mall will be "the real Cathedral," a resident predicted.

The thrust of the new cities, built in a time when alienation and fear are what most city dwellers know best, is to engender a sense of community among the populace.

In each of the three completed villages of Columbia there is a community center where the business offices are, a small shopping area for the everyday necessities and some recreational facility. (an indoor pool in one village, a health spa in another). Each neighborhood is built around an elementary school and neighborhood pool. There is also an Interfaith Center to help foster the community feeling of cooperation and shared responsibility.



Father George Zorn, SJ standing beside the poster used to announce the opening of Columbia's Interfaith Center, that now decorates his office.

The beautiful landscaped yards and diversely designed houses are built in a cluster around these focal points.

It is precisely these beautiful houses and manicured lawns that make it hard for the average skeptic to call this a city, with its downtown area on a lake dotted with boats.

Father George Zorn, SJ who has been at the Interfaith Center since 1969, defined a city as a self-contained place that people come into, to shop, work, and go to theaters and museums. Conversely, a suburb is a place people go home to, to sleep, Father Zorn said.

James Montague, the vice president of the Rouse Company who is also chairman of Columbia's Religious Facilities Corporation, and Father Zorn agreed that if Columbia keeps from being a bedroom community, that will be a measure of its success.

People do come to Columbia to shop at the Mall of 102 stores and to attend the outdoor theater. Teens come from the surrounding rural areas to hang out in the city. But according to Montague, only about 15% of the people who live in Columbia work there.

Father Zorn came to Columbia from New York City. He was associate dean of Woodstock College when it re-located from its home of 100 years in Howard County to New York city.

Columbians are "pre-occupied with their own problems," according to Father Zorn and many of the teenagers and recent college graduates who live there feel there is nothing for them in Columbia.

Most of the residents are veteran suburban dwellers; it is a family place. The promotional literature reads: "... only a city can provide the full range of services and institutions, recreation and cultural attractions that a family needs for its growth."

The median age of the head of a family is 32 years and the mean income is \$17,000, which is way out of balance and not at all what the Rouse company had in mind.

Along with these families came family problems, and many divorces. Many people moved to this planned city thinking their personal lives also would be planned, Montague said, adding "They confuse the physical planning with personal planning."

"We do the physical planning so they can do what they want with their lives," he explained.

(Next week: The part religion plays in Columbians' lives.)

## CICP Protests

(Continued from Page 1) are dropping the seventh and eighth grades which eliminates three teachers.

The student loss will total 250 students: 80 students from Holy Redeemer, 90 from St. Michael's and 80 from St. Francis Xavier.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Bridget will rearrange their grading in order to reduce enrollments by about 50 students each, and cut two teachers from middle and lower grades.

St. Francis Xavier also will probably lose two teachers and 25 to 50 students out of the middle grades.

Immaculate Conception, now

## Bishop's Answer

(Continued from Page 1)

mended that the diocese increase its support of the inner city schools above the level of \$200,000 to an extent compatible with diocesan financial capabilities.

The present budgetary decision of \$250,000 represents an increase of 25 per cent.

This crisis can be a grace if we accept it as a challenge to re-examine our effective mission to the poor.

running with a deficit of \$15,000, is not making any changes.

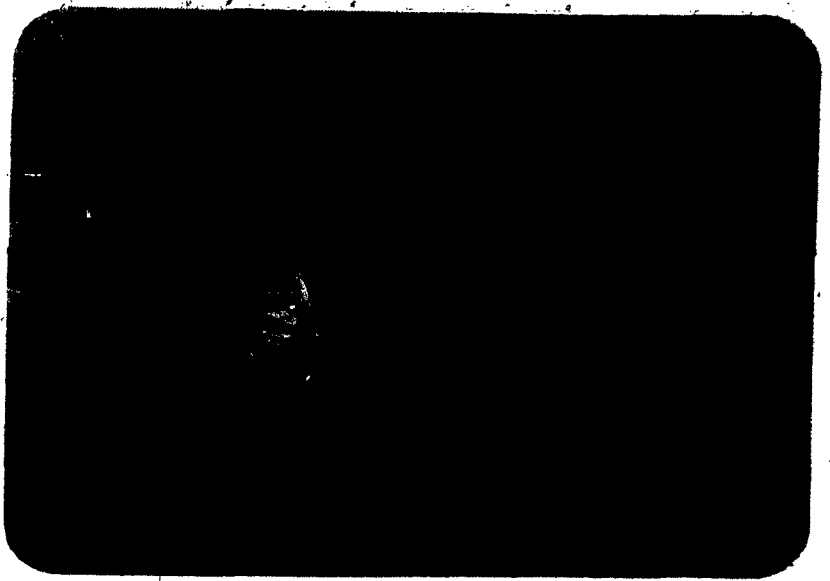
They plan to try to keep their junior high school and make up the deficit by cutting elsewhere in the parish budget.

The elimination of students represents one fourth of the 1600 students in these schools.

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