

Neighborhood Organizing High Turnover Area Makes a New Start

By BARBARA MOYNEHAN
Second in series

Urban renewal will offer city dwellers attractive surroundings in the not too distant future.

But, in the mean time, it has caused havoc in neighborhoods during the pre-tearing down, tearing down and rebuilding stages.

Ss. Peter and Paul's is a parish that can serve as a prototype for a neighborhood in the throes of urban renewal. Parishioners discussed problems in their Bull's Head neighborhood at a meeting, April 29.

They talked of the waste felt by the long time residents who have stayed while their neighborhood is renewed, which to them has meant neighbors moving out of the area, leasing their houses and forgetting them.

It has meant deteriorating housing, thus low rent housing filled by new, young, poor families. It has meant a large elderly population, people who have lived in the area most of their lives, who only know city life, and have no desire to move to the suburbs growing up fast around the city.

The neighborhood has changed vastly in the past few years and the parish reflects the change.

The church's capacity is 1100. As recently as seven years ago it was filled to standing room only at Christmas Mass. Five years ago 700 attended the same Mass and in 1972, about 300 attended Mass on Christmas.

A guided tour (via a slide show) of the neighborhood was given to the parishioners by the Office of Human Development staff who surveyed buildings, church services, neighborhoods, age and ethnic concentration. It was the first step toward neighborhood organizing in the fast turnover area where people have little in common beyond their street addresses.

The survey found a large elderly population and an even higher concentration of children under five.

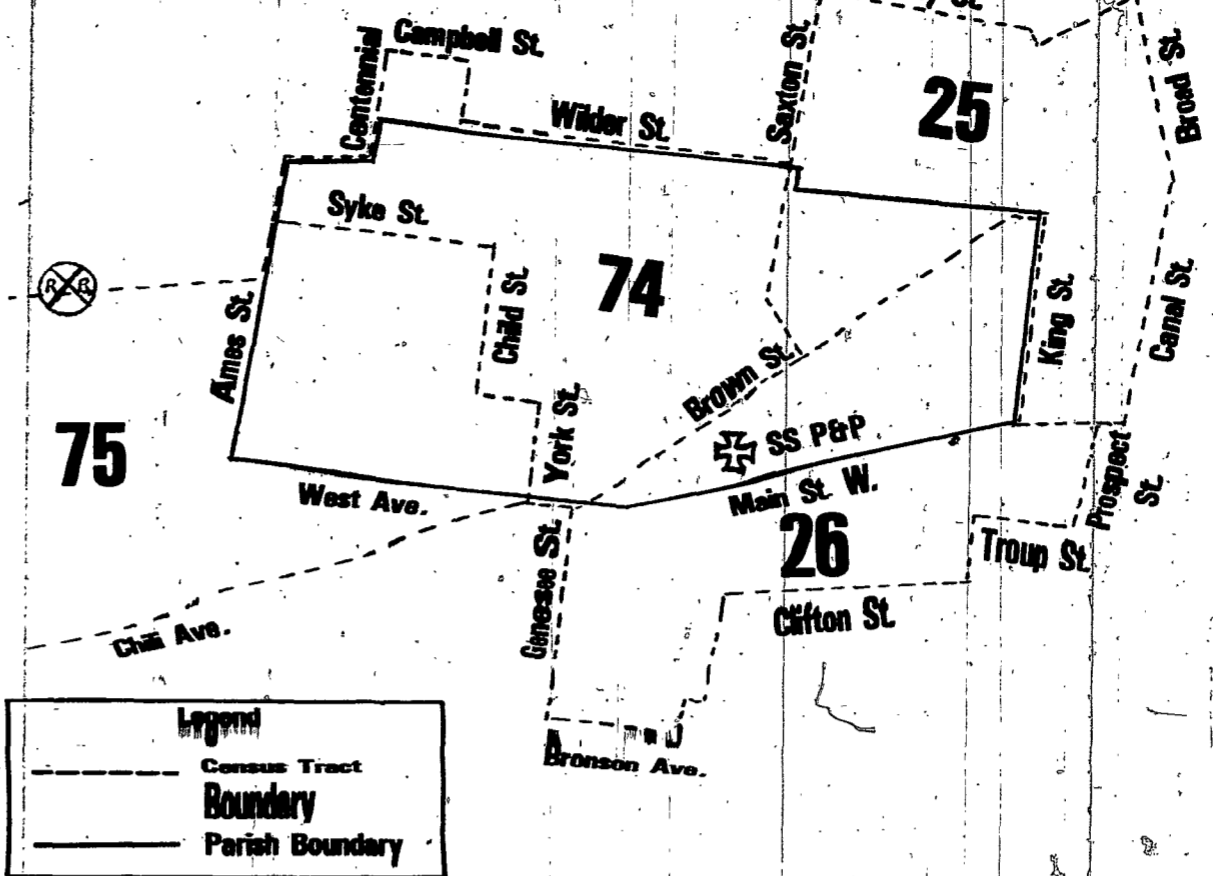
The 35 people at the Ss. Peter and Paul meeting were largely retirees, yet they felt it most important to fill the day-care need.

Kay Brown, who retired in 1967 after 25 years as administrative assistant at the University of Rochester library, is a long-time resident and very concerned about the neighborhood and its new residents. She feels the children should be the ones to benefit from an organized neighborhood effort.

Miss Brown explained that organizing something for the children would be a good way to draw the disparate neighborhood population together. "The elderly can help themselves," she said, "but the children need good influences and this may be their only chance."

How do you pull people together today, she asked, explaining that the parish school used to serve that need. It brought the Puerto Rican and black parents into contact with the whites who live near them,

SS. PETER AND PAUL



Ss. Peter and Paul's parish and surrounding neighborhood the parish Human Development Committee hopes to organize.

Without the common bond of the school, and the socializing service it rendered, the elements of the neighborhood have no reason to mingle.

It was agreed that in the changing neighborhood, in a time when many people are transients, the real challenge to the Church is reaching out to strengthen the family unit.

It was further agreed, however, that apathy is the biggest problem in the city. "People don't value the city anymore," one young woman said. "The attitude is, cope with it until you can move on."

Dr. Kent Smith, a faculty member of Colgate Rochester Divinity School who helped the Office of Human Development conduct the survey, commented that "the only way you reach those not being reached is through services of one kind or another."

He agreed with Mrs. Brown that day-care centers for the children would be a good neighborhood project and observed that Ss. Peter and Paul, Protestant churches in the area and the neighborhood itself have something in common.

"They are in a period of

transition and their resources have diminished," Kent said.

Ss. Peter and Paul seems the strongest institution in the area to one resident who has been there only about a year, Father Charles Collins, SSSC, a native of Rhode Island who worked in neighborhood organizing in Chicago.

"There are no community organizations in the fast changing area," Father Collins reports, "so our idea is to branch out from here to include Protestant churches and agencies in the area, such as Charles Settlement House."

According to Father Collins, "We want to organize community agencies with a Christian ministry, to the total community." He feels the priests and religious can help "by putting faith into practice, and by providing hope."

NEXT WEEK: How a suburban community, St. Louis parish, Pittsford, is organizing to combat its unique problems.



Ecumenism Growth Seen 'Miraculous'

By JOHN DASH

Historians of the future who review the ecumenical movement in the 10 years following Vatican Council II will see, despite some setbacks, its growth as nothing short of "miraculous — not man made. They will see that the whole face of the Church of Christ has changed."

Those reflections came last week from a 66-year-old ex-football player, who is also one of the world's best known ecumenists, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, recently retired general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

In Rochester for an alumni convocation at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Bexley Hall, Crozer Theological Seminary, a multi-denominational institute for ministerial preparation, Dr. Blake entertained questions on the present and the future of the ecumenical movement during a wide ranging conversation in the president's office at the school.

Dr. Blake sees several responsibilities for ecumenically oriented Churches and individuals, not the least of which is that "we

must proceed to a visible, organic unity. Spiritual unity is not enough."

He also feels that ecumenists "ought to support unstructured movements within the Church... We must take seriously the ecclesiology that the people are part of the Church, not merely the hierarchy."

He cited situations in Brazil, where, he said, "There are Christian martyrs in jail, all denominations together; and there are no rules for Communion in such situations." The power structure must be generous and creative in such cases, he said.

Another responsibility of the ecumenist is to join in and support "consortia," agencies and projects for social action.

One of the difficulties, he says, with Roman Catholic ecumenical participation is that "it would appear that the Roman Catholic Church has not yet found its identity," following Vatican II.

He says that while he generally supports the decisions of the Pope, he thinks the reign of Pope Paul VI "is tragic, in the high sense.

He has produced the polarization in the Church, that he tried to de-polarize."

Dr. Blake illustrated his statement with a story of a cordial and open discussion he had with the pontiff one day, only to hear, a few days later, a statement by the Pope he considered vehemently anti-Protestant. "I was shocked," he said.

Nevertheless, "There's nothing the World Council of Churches does that hasn't a good deal of participation by the Roman Catholic Church."

He quipped that the World Council's Joint Commission on Society, Development and Peace (SoDePax) is frequently joked about as a Roman Catholic agency.

The immediate task of ecumenists is to overcome two levels of Christian division, he said. The first level is the "confessional" division, historical splits that he feels are largely out of date. The second and more complex task is to reconcile the cultural and geographical divisions of the Christian Church.

"We are just beginning to realize how even ecumenical

Christianity is sectarian," he said. He pointed to intense national loyalties which also hinge on strong religious feelings, throughout the world, to illustrate his point.

A church of "service" stripped of national and cultural forms is in the immediate future for ecumenism, he said. He sees a Church which has "given up 'triumphalism,' in combined service to all as the next step."

He feels it important that white Western Christians realize they "are a minority in the world" and that their missionary mood be to "convince, not impose" their faith and that they "belong to God through Jesus Christ, not that God and Jesus Christ belong to" them.

"We have something to offer," he said, "that supersedes all nationalities: to serve mankind, which technology utterly demands."

Dr. Blake is spending his retirement "two days on, two days off." That situation, however, may change in the near future. He is running for the position of Moderator of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.



KEVIN E. KLUSS

Memorial Established

The Parents Club of St. Salome's School has announced the establishment of the Kevin E. Kluss Memorial Fund.

Kevin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward V. Kluss of Brandon Road, died suddenly April 24, 1973. A graduate of St. Salome's School and Bishop Kearney High School, he was a member of the Niagara University Class of '73.

The fund, as established, will benefit St. Salome's School and include an award for a member of the school graduating class each June.

Friends may contribute by making checks payable to the Kevin E. Kluss Memorial Fund and mailing them to Mrs. Robert Shaw, treasurer, St. Salome's Parents Club, 166 Filon Avenue, Rochester 14622.