

# Neighborhood

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pastoral councils as a means of supporting neighborhood preservation and development, do the following four things:

a. Allocate a fixed portion of their personnel and resources for education programs for Christian political responsibility;

b. Provide channels of communication between neighborhood people and those in positions of power and influence within the political and economic institutions of the community;

c. Regularly remind the Christian community of the effects of their actions on the lives of their neighbors and the need for a sense of accountability of the witness they give to the work of the church;

d. Commit themselves to the concept of open neighborhoods, whereby new residents of any race, ethnic group cultural background or religious faith would be welcomed as brothers and sisters in Christ.

6. That the Catholic community through its leaders regularly call all people to their moral responsibility and seek their cooperation to insure that human values, including the right to life, to personal security, to work, to education, to health care, to adequate food, and to a decent home, be guiding actions, private and public, and apply fully these human values to include those unable to work.

7. That the urgent need in the inner-city situations mandates that the church recognize inner-city neighborhoods as territories demanding priority attention and demanding interim missionary personnel, and that the Catholic Church pledge itself to remain as an active force in the inner city; that the church pledge itself to contribute actively to the advancement in our society of black Americans, ethnic Americans, native Americans and persons of Hispanic descent.

8. That each diocese recognize the vital responsibility of ministry to Catholics and other persons who ask for our ministry at colleges and universities and allocate a fixed

portion of its personnel and resources to assist these people in effective Christian action in their collegiate neighborhoods.

## RECOMMENDATION: CHURCH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In order to assist the people of the United States of America to identify, articulate and meet their needs, we urgently seek new national and diocesan strategies, policies and programs for the development of urban neighborhoods and rural communities. Such policies and programs, based on the concept of equality of persons, races, ethnic and culturally diverse groups, must include a recognition and commitment in every diocese that community development must flow from the needs of the people as identified by the people.

Such policies must recognize that neighborhood, its creation, growth and development is a valid and viable concept for urban and rural living and it is the core concept which should give direction and purpose to all urban and rural planning and development. The diocesan and national church must not only listen to the voice of the people, especially the powerless, but must also actively provide opportunities and resources for new vehicles for organizing their voice and implementing their decisions.

Consistent with the above, we call upon all church leaders to support the powerless in their:

- (1) right to be self-determining;
- (2) right to be publicly supported by church leadership in their efforts to organize;
- (3) right to a use of all church properties and resources, even across diocesan lines, provided such use does not interfere with the primary use of such properties and resources;
- (4) right to full accountability for the use of all church funds and resources.

The policy is to include:

1. That each diocese undertake a self-study as to how its resources in terms of people, property, talents and finances are being used, with a full public report within one year.

2. That each diocese and neighborhood parish look at its daily operations as to the utilization of its resources in the neighborhood community in which the parish resides. Furthermore, each diocese should within three years develop a plan on social justice and an implementation schedule. It is also recommended that dioceses endorse the concept of "twinning" and/or "quota systems of sharing" or equivalent sharing procedures.

(A. "Twinning" Parishes/dioceses share resources with other less fortunate parishes/dioceses; B. "Quota systems of sharing" All parishes are assigned quotas to a central fund from which distribution is made to parishes according to needs and/or inability to raise sufficient funds for its needs.)

It is to be recognized that any such program will be directed toward the goal that each parish become financially self-sufficient.

3. That education for action takes place on all levels in the Church.

a. That community participatory education in the neighborhood parishes include the social, economic and political realities of the community in which all the people reside as well as analysis of larger social issues affecting many communities. Such issues would include immigration, delivery of services, quality of education, the aged, youth and the handicapped; the ownership and use of natural resources, including land, as this relates especially to the worldwide crisis of food and energy; race relations; crime; industrial and economic development.

All such issues should be addressed in terms of the interrelationships between city, county, state and federal governments and the interdependence of rural, urban and suburban communities. This education should be addressed equally to the people of the community as well as to those influencing public policy.

b. That multicultural education on these issues be seen as a must for the development of better racial and ethnic relationships in the culturally pluralistic society in which we live.

c. That bilingual education, where needed to achieve these goals, be implemented.

d. That social justice courses in the area of neighborhood parish community development, community organization and multicultural education be mandatory in the training of seminarians and in the continuing education of clergy and religious.

4. That in each diocese the decision whether or not to close parishes and schools should include the involvement of the neighborhood/community. Due attention should be given to the value of consolidation of some parishes and/or schools due to shortage of personnel or funds. A plan shall be developed to maintain the witnessing value and commitment of the Church to the neighborhoods.

5. That the diocese recognizing the impact of public policy on individual parish/neighborhood communities develop a staff position to be held by individuals specifically trained to monitor and report on a diocesan and neighborhood level, and whose major responsibilities shall consist of the monitoring and reporting of local, state and federal policy and program initiatives which impact on the parish/neighborhood community. Organizations dedicated to alleviating urban and rural problems by influencing congressional legislation should be created and supported within each diocese.

6. That an office of ministry of social concerns be established in each diocese to coordinate the actions and activities of the departments of the diocese in its action for social justice and parish neighborhood development and organizing, as to:

- a. Overlapping of services;
- b. Utilization of finances;
- c. Areas of involvement;
- d. Coalition building;
- e. Interfaith cooperation.

New areas of concern and needs of the people of the parish/neighborhood/communities should be channelled into this office and that support be given to existent programs with proven effectiveness.

7. That a similar office or department of each state conference be established to serve the same function on a state level for the better utilization of the limited resources in all areas of social justice, and to maximize the uses of locality development, social action, social issues in the areas of community development in the local parish/neighborhood in an effort to work toward community development and organization in city, county and state issues.

8. That the U.S. Catholic Conference establish a similar office to coordinate the actions on behalf of social justice and community development of all organizations and institutions of the church, with special emphasis on housing and employment needs.

9. That there be initiation and continued development of effective advocacy with the poor through the support and expansion of agencies such as state Catholic conferences, Catholic Charities, or diocesan offices for rural life, urban affairs or social action.

10. That there be initiation and continued development of effective advocacy with the poor through the support and expansion of the Campaign for Human Development, not only by increasing financial contributions but also by encouraging the work of parish and diocesan social justice education action committees in each parish and diocese to offer continuing support of the groups which have applied for CHD funding. This support could be informing public opinion, utilizing church professional resources for technical assistance, and education about moral issues in domestic policies.

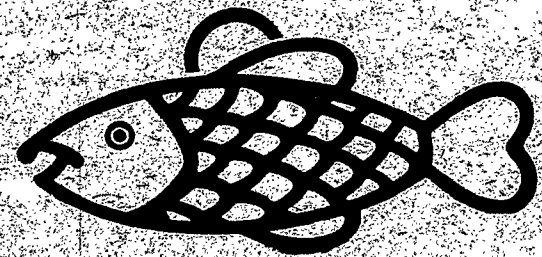
## RECOMMENDATION: THE CHURCH AND THE RURAL COMMUNITY

Inasmuch as we recognize that global hunger, social problems, rural problems, and urban problems are intimately interrelated, we urge

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