

TH  
W 746

SELECTED CHURCHES MINISTERING TO PUERTO RICANS  
IN EAST HARLEM

By

DOROTHEA M. WIRTH

B. A., Beaver College

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
in  
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N. Y.

March, 1955

17723

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY LIBRARY  
HATFIELD, PA.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	vi
A. The Problem Stated and Delimited . . . . .	vi
B. The Problem Justified. . . . .	vii
C. Method of Procedure. . . . .	viii
D. Sources of Data. . . . .	ix
I. EAST HARLEM . . . . .	1
A. Introduction . . . . .	1
B. General Description. . . . .	1
1. Appearance. . . . .	1
2. Size and Location . . . . .	2
3. Population. . . . .	2
C. History. . . . .	3
D. Economic Problems. . . . .	4
1. Housing and Neighborhood Conditions . . . . .	4
2. Employment. . . . .	9
E. Social Problems. . . . .	10
1. Disease and Health. . . . .	10
2. Delinquency and Crime . . . . .	11
3. Family Relationships. . . . .	13
4. Education and Recreation. . . . .	14
F. Religious Institutions . . . . .	15
G. Summary. . . . .	16
II. PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF PUERTO RICANS IN EAST HARLEM	17
A. Introduction . . . . .	17
B. Language Barriers. . . . .	17
C. Attitudes Toward Puerto Ricans . . . . .	20
D. Adjustments to City Life and Culture Patterns. . . . .	23
1. City Life . . . . .	23
2. Climate . . . . .	24
3. Other Aspects of the Cultural Pattern . . . . .	25
a. Food Habits. . . . .	25
b. Family Loyalty . . . . .	25
c. Sex Knowledge. . . . .	25
E. Employment . . . . .	25
F. Spiritual Needs. . . . .	29
G. Summary. . . . .	31
III. THE PROGRAMS OF SELECTED CHURCHES IN EAST HARLEM.	33
A. Introduction . . . . .	33
B. Church of the Good Neighbor. . . . .	34
1. History, Membership and Present Status. . . . .	35
2. Program . . . . .	36
a. Church Services. . . . .	36

Gift of the author

345-65

May 1955

b. Prayer Meetings and Bible Study . . .	37
c. Evangelism. . . . .	38
d. Church School . . . . .	38
e. Weekday Program . . . . .	39
f. Summer Program. . . . .	43
g. Social Services . . . . .	44
1) Housing Clinic . . . . .	44
2) Counseling . . . . .	45
3) Health . . . . .	45
4) Employment . . . . .	45
5) Credit Union Bank. . . . .	46
h. Adult and Parent Education. . . . .	46
3. Leadership . . . . .	47
4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases . . .	48
C. East Harlem Protestant Parish. . . . .	49
1. History, Membership, and Present Status. .	49
2. Program. . . . .	51
a. Church Services . . . . .	51
b. Evangelism. . . . .	52
c. Church School . . . . .	54
d. Weekday Program . . . . .	55
e. Summer Program. . . . .	57
f. Social Services . . . . .	59
1) Housing. . . . .	59
2) Health . . . . .	60
3) Employment . . . . .	60
4) Case Work . . . . .	60
5) Social Action Group. . . . .	61
g. Adult and Parent Education. . . . .	61
3. Leadership . . . . .	63
4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases . . .	65
D. Jefferson Park Parish . . . . .	66
1. History, Membership and Present Status . .	66
2. Program. . . . .	68
a. Church Services . . . . .	68
b. Prayer Meetings . . . . .	69
c. Evangelism. . . . .	69
d. Church School . . . . .	70
e. Weekday School. . . . .	71
f. Summer Program. . . . .	71
g. Social Services . . . . .	72
h. Adult and Parent Education. . . . .	73
3. Leadership . . . . .	73
4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases . . .	73
E. The Latin American Pentecostal Church . . . .	74
1. History, Membership and Present Status . .	75
2. Program. . . . .	76
a. Church Services and Prayer Meetings .	76
b. Evangelism. . . . .	77
c. Church School . . . . .	78
d. Weekday Program . . . . .	78
e. Summer Program. . . . .	79

f. Social Services . . . . .	79
g. Adult and Parent Education . . . . .	80
3. Leadership . . . . .	80
4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases . . . . .	81
F. Summary . . . . .	81
IV. THE PROGRAM PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES DISCOVERED FROM MINISTERING TO PUERTO RICANS IN EAST HARLEM. . . . .	82
A. Introduction . . . . .	82
B. The Programs Compared and Contrasted . . . . .	82
C. The Principles and Techniques Most Often and Widely Used. . . . .	82
1. Those Used by all of the Churches Studied	82
2. Those Used by Three of the Churches Studied . . . . .	83
D. Consideration of Least Universal Principles. . . . .	84
E. Summary. . . . .	85
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	86
A. Summary. . . . .	86
B. Conclusions. . . . .	89

Bibliography

Appendix

## INTRODUCTION

SELECTED CHURCHES MINISTERING TO PUERTO RICANS  
IN EAST HARLEM

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem Stated and Delimited

Dr. Samuel Blizzard, Professor of Social Science at Union Theological Seminary in New York has said the "effectiveness of the community witness of the Church may be measured by its ability to reach the newcomer in the city."<sup>1</sup>

One of the newest groups to arrive in New York City in large numbers is the Puerto Rican, and one of the areas of the city most densely populated with Puerto Ricans is East Harlem. Because of the rapid changes in this community in the past several years, and because of the particular and real needs of this new group of people, the churches must either change their programs and adapt to a changing community or else re-locate where they can continue their traditional and established programs. Dr. Kenneth Miller, Executive Director of the New York City Mission Society makes this statement:

"We cannot put a church building on wheels and move it to a better location. But the church program can be put on wheels that will help it to circulate among all the people in a community, no matter how changed the neighborhood may be."<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Blizzard, Samuel W., "The Eternal Church in the Changing Community", Social Progress, March, 1954, p.7.
2. Miller, Kenneth D., Man and God in the City, Friendship Press, New York, 1954, p. 115.

Churches which are either unable or unwilling to understand the structure and needs of a community will soon find that their witness has wasted away. Are the churches in East Harlem adapting and gearing their programs to the needs of their changed and changing community?

It is the purpose of this study to survey the programs of selected churches in East Harlem which minister to Puerto Rican people in order to discover the ways in which they meet the needs of the people in the context of their community, and the extent to which their programs have been altered or adapted because of community changes and needs. The study is limited to churches within East Harlem and to those ministering to Puerto Ricans either entirely or as one of their major concerns.

#### B. The Problem Justified

The justification for any survey of this sort comes only when church leaders, having discovered the facts about the programs of their churches will take action to improve, correct, add to, or change any area of their program which will increase the effectiveness of their witness to Christ in their community.

Dr. Kenneth Miller, in referring to church work in inner city areas such as East Harlem says:

"These are the churches that present to the Protestant churches their major missionary task and opportunity. And it is in such areas that our Protestant churches have failed and are failing most lamentably." <sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 101.

A study such as this one should awaken a sense of the mission of the church to people living in inner city areas as well as supply some specific techniques and principles in developing and adapting church programs to any changing community.

The East Harlem community has been studied by many people, groups and agencies and it may seem unnecessary to study it again. It has been chosen here because it is a clearly defined, inner city community undergoing many changes and transitions. It is also abundant in needs and problems with which the church must be concerned. It is typical and representative of communities with deep-rooted problems and has been chosen on that basis. The principles discovered from this study should be applicable to any similar community.

### C. Method of Procedure

In a study of the church as it meets the needs of a community, the first step is to study the community. Following a study of East Harlem, some of the specific needs of the Puerto Rican people who are part of this community will be examined.

The programs of selected churches in the community will then be studied, in order to discover some general principles for the programming of churches working in changing communities with specific cultural and ethnic groups.



#### D. Sources of Data

Relevant books, pamphlets, studies, reports and newspaper articles will be consulted for studying the community and the needs of the people.

The survey of the programs of the churches will be made by means of a questionnaire used as a basis for interviews with pastors and church leaders. Direct observation of the churches will also be used. Literature from the churches and agencies will provide further sources of data.

CHAPTER I  
EAST HARLEM

## CHAPTER I

### EAST HARLEM

#### A. Introduction

A knowledge of the community is essential in understanding the problems faced by churches in planning and executing their programs. Such a knowledge is also requisite for understanding the church's role in a community. This chapter will be devoted to a study of East Harlem to discover its general appearance and characteristics, its history, and the existing economic, social, and religious problems.

#### B. General Description

##### 1. Appearance

The appearance of the East Harlem community is one of dirt, crowds, and slums. One of the churches in that area partly describes the community as follows: "East Harlem in New York City is one of the world's most densely populated areas--as well as the most crowded section of an already over-crowded city." <sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking this community is a jumble of

. . . . .

1. "Going Down This Street Lord", a pamphlet published by the East Harlem Protestant Parish, New York. Undated, no paging.

seething humanity and old houses. It is a noisy, dirty area that is tense with all sorts of problems of human relations such as fear, hatred, discrimination and conflict. The poorest block in Manhattan, 101st Street, just West of First Avenue, is in East Harlem. It is part of the picture which has added to the general appearance of the entire area. An article in a recent issue of the New York Times describes the community in the following graphic manner:

Old folk born and bred in that part of the town cannot recall any street in the district that has come so low and yet remained inhabited. The street crawls with shrill and ill-clad children of many races. Unhappy looking dogs and cats slink along its reach. Impoverished oldsters cluster on its grooved and worn stoops, and scrofulous hallways open into dark, blistered maws.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Size and Location

The community itself is not very extensive and is located in the East uptown area of Manhattan. It extends from 96th Street to 125th Street. It is bounded on the West by Central Park and on the East by the East River. It is just a little over one square mile in size.

## 3. Population

Although East Harlem itself is not extensive, it is intense and overcrowded with all kinds of people living within its limits. There are over 300,000 people living

. . . . .

1. New York Times, September 13, 1954. "Project May Rise In Misery Street".

in East Harlem at present, but the community is in a constant state of flux with new migrations so that it is difficult to be certain of any statistics for any extended length of time.

On East 100th Street, on just one block, there are more than 4000 people living in 27 tenement houses. According to the surveys conducted by the East Harlem Protestant Parish it has been discovered that:

If all the inhabitants of the United States lived as close together as the people in East Harlem, they could all be housed in one-half the area of New York City. <sup>1</sup>

### C. History

The history of East Harlem is one of change and decay, rather than of progress. Up until sixty years ago the East Harlem area was a middle-class, respectable area of the city. Since that time it has become the area in which one migration after another of racial and cultural groups have settled. The first wave of migration was the Italian. This was followed by Jews and Negroes from the South. During the past fifteen years, and coming in greater numbers each year, the Puerto Ricans have settled in East Harlem. Because of the large numbers of Puerto Ricans in this area, it is sometimes called Spanish Harlem.

As a result of the numerous migrations, there are

. . . . .

1. "Going Down This Street Lord".

living together in this area at present representatives of all these groups who are separated by race, religion, language and culture.

Because of the many and constant adjustments of new groups, and because of social and economic problems, the area has become neglected and depressed so that it is now one of the worst slums of New York City.

#### D. Economic Problems

##### 1. Housing and Neighborhood Conditions

The housing conditions of East Harlem are very poor, but are in the process of much improvement. In almost every book and article dealing with the problems of the East Harlem area, the housing problem is considered to be the worst and the most crucial. The buildings and houses are in a state of general disrepair, and in many buildings there is inadequate plumbing, lighting, and heating. In addition there is extreme overcrowding. In many instances there are several families living in one apartment.

In a report issued by the East Harlem Protestant Parish, the following paragraph appears:

Housing is still the plague of East Harlem. The occasional bright spots on the scene keep us at the uphill fight against landlord irresponsibility, inspection inadequacies, and legal loopholes. But the problems of overcrowding, high rents, and lack of basic building maintenance remain and multiply. <sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

1. East Harlem Protestant Parish, Newsletter, April, 1954, p.1.

In 1939 a statistical study of Harlem housing and neighborhood conditions made by the Citizens' Housing Council of New York showed "wide-scale dilapidation and progressive blight reflected in the increasing number of vacant and boarded properties and demolished buildings."<sup>1</sup> A more recent survey in December of 1946 shows that conditions have become worse in many areas than they were in 1939. Closed buildings are very common and many others are in such condition that they would be condemned and closed were it not for the acute housing shortage.

Several case studies which help to point out the acuteness of the housing problem are included here. They are excerpts from histories gathered by the Welfare Council of New York City:

"The A family lives in a five-room apartment on the ground floor in the thickly settled part of East Harlem. The man who is the head of this family came from Puerto Rico twelve years ago. Eleven years ago he brought his wife and their one child to New York. Seven more children have been born since that time and Mrs. A. expects another child within a few months.

The rent in this house is \$33.00 a month. Although each room has a window the apartment is dark. It is furnished with beds, a few chairs and a table. Mr. A. is a grocer. The family income for ten people is \$50.00 a week.

There are four rooms all of which are used for sleeping. One room has a double bed and one folding bed which is opened up for the night and closed during the day. When the beds are opened, in order to get into them it is

. . . . .

1. "Puerto Ricans in New York City", Welfare Council Report, p. 18.

necessary to step into one to reach the other. The niece sleeps with the oldest daughter. One boy sleeps on a couch. Mr. A. contemplates buying double decker beds. The children do not go to bed before 10:30 p.m. because of the confusion in the house. The apartment is a 'rail-road flat'. The back yard has garbage piled up to 'an unbelievable height' that has been thrown from the windows of other apartments. The landlady of this apartment lives in the basement and does nothing about the garbage. She excuses herself for this by saying she has careless tenants. However, some of the tenants say the landlady herself contributes to the garbage pile.

Three children have rheumatic heart disease. Most of the children have been hospitalized at various times. They have also had convalescent care for long periods. The chief problem, the family claims, is the housing situation which is inadequate and unsanitary. However, the mother of these children works very hard to try to keep the children clean, and reports from convalescent homes are always favorable and clinic attendance is regular. Both mother and father are of average intelligence and speak English very well." 1

The following case shows also the extreme shortage in housing as well as the conditions of the houses:

"Mr. C. came to New York City two years ago, and he lived in one room with another family. Four months ago he sent for his wife and three children to come to New York. Mr. C was unable to get an apartment so brought his family (five in all) to his room in which they now cook, eat and sleep. Mr. C. is very discouraged because he has no promise of decent living quarters. Meanwhile the children play and live in the street and spend as little time as possible in the one room which is supposed to be home." 2

A block study was recently made by the Welfare Council of New York City to discover more accurately the living conditions in East Harlem. The block chosen was 103rd Street, between Madison and Park Avenues since it is typical and

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 17.



central in the community.

During the study 109 apartments were visited, some of the findings of which follow:

1. Most of the apartments look dingy and are in bad condition.
2. The tenants complain that landlords pay no attention to requests for repairs or painting.
3. Size of apartments vary from two to five rooms.
4. All have central heating, and two had to supplement with kerosene heaters.
5. All but two had toilet and bath inside the apartments.
6. 117 family units were accommodated in 109 apartments.
7. Some householders take boarders or sublet one or two rooms.
8. Seventeen percent of all persons in one of the buildings were lodgers.
9. 549 persons live in  $46\frac{1}{2}$  rooms in one of the buildings.

The housing problem in this area is critical. The Welfare Council reports that:

"landlords do not make repairs; the repairs needed in such old buildings are costly; tenants are afraid to report violations, even minor ones, because upon official inspection the whole house may be condemned. If a building is condemned, the Housing Authority must re-house the tenants, and this the Authority cannot do because there are no vacancies. There is nowhere for the dispossessed to go. The result is continuous deterioration of houses and lowering of living conditions." 1

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 18.

In the past few years there have been several housing projects erected and more are planned to take care of some of this problem. The following is a list of Public Housing projects either completed or planned for East Harlem.

1. Stephen Foster Houses: 4 buildings completed and occupied, 5 buildings under construction. This is a total of 1379 apartments.
2. James Weldon Jolinson Houses: 1310 apartments fully occupied.
3. Jefferson Houses, Part I: Demolition of site - building is nearly complete and construction has begun.
4. Jefferson Houses, Part II: Planned for the future. When both sections are completed there will be 1495 apartments available.
5. Carner Houses: Demolition completed and construction begun - part of the area must still be evacuated. When completed there will be 1246 apartments.
6. Lexington Houses: 448 apartments fully occupied.
7. George Washington Houses: Demolition is completed and construction is under way.
8. East River Houses: 1170 apartments fully occupied.<sup>1</sup>

However, there are still numerous blighted and deteriorated

. . . . .

1. Cf. Report to Administrative Board on Housing Activities of the East Harlem Protestant Parish, May, 1953, p. 4.

areas in East Harlem which breed all kinds of other problems such as disease, crime and despair. The constant relocation of families because of the demolition of old buildings and the erection of new ones adds to the instability of the entire community.

## 2. Employment

Employment and housing problems are closely related and employment is another acute problem in East Harlem. Unemployment and low-incomes make it necessary to live in the kinds of neighborhoods and houses described above. In East Harlem the high percentage of non-English speaking groups with their language barriers, social problems and educational limitations, also make it difficult for the residents to find good paying jobs.

In the block survey previously mentioned there were 117 families interviewed. In these there are 160 adult men and 206 adult women. Of those who are able to work and who would be working under ordinary circumstances, thirty-seven are totally unemployed and two others have only part-time employment. Of the 112 families reporting their incomes, 70% are completely self-supporting. Weekly incomes range from \$12.50 to \$122.00 with the average income at \$43.75. The remaining 30% receive assistance from relief funds. Two thirds of all of the families have to reduce food purchases and cut down on clothing budgets in order to

make ends meet. Most of the families accumulate debts every month.

#### E. Social Problems

##### 1. Disease and Health

Acute economic problems usually create acute social problems, and this is true in East Harlem. Disease and health are major concerns in East Harlem. A pamphlet describing some of the problems of inner city areas in New York City emphasizes this. "It is a truism that slum dwellers are sick more often than people who have the advantage of a better physical environment."<sup>1</sup>

"Tuberculosis, the greatest of the 'poverty diseases' is one outstanding problem."<sup>2</sup> This is true because of improper food habits, which in turn are often the cause of a lack of funds. According to a previously mentioned survey, "East Harlem has the highest rate in the city for tuberculosis, venereal diseases, infant mortality, rat bites and malnutrition."<sup>3</sup>

Another menace to health is poor plumbing and inadequate trash and garbage disposal service. The Puerto Ricans and other groups not accustomed to new climates

. . . . .

1. Employment and Migration Bureau, Puerto Rico Department of Labor, "The Puerto Ricans of New York City," p. 66.
2. Loc. cit.
3. "Going Down This Street Lord."

have even more susceptibility to disease and ill-health because many of them are not prepared for cold weather and catch many more colds than those used to the climatic conditions.

Overcrowding is conducive to the spread of communicable diseases, which is another reason for the wide-spread health problem.

Much of the health problem could be done away with in the light of proper health habits and education, but many of the groups migrating to East Harlem are not aware of the help that is available from health, welfare, and social service agencies, and many are not even aware of their need of help. This is true especially of newcomers to America, where even the worst conditions in East Harlem are so much better than their previous experiences.

## 2. Delinquency and Crime

Another social evil which usually results from crowded and deteriorated conditions is crime and delinquency. This is especially true in East Harlem where racial discrimination with all of its concomitant tensions, intensify the situation. The workers at East Harlem Protestant Parish have expressed this problem as follows:

The people in East Harlem struggle for survival in an atmosphere that is tense with hatred, fear, discrimination, and conflict. They are separated by race, religion, language and culture. They must compete for

both jobs and homes. Those who are strong maintain the struggle with self-respect, but others are driven to despair and sink into apathy. Some try to escape through drink, dope or sex." 1

The crime and delinquency problem in East Harlem is an intense one. The area is characterized by gangs, vandalism, the use of dope and alcohol by even young children, and by unmarried mothers trying to support their children and themselves.

The problem is heightened by the lack of recreational facilities. There are many children who have both mothers and fathers who are employed, and as a result are not under supervision. Delinquency in East Harlem, however, is not all juvenile, for it is one of the worst areas of the city for dope peddlers, gamblers and underground gangs of adults. The following is a view expressed by a family living in East Harlem:

"There is too much noise at night in the streets and in the buildings. There are too many fights; drunkards and unemployed young men smoking marijuana and playing dice and cards in the streets, and especially in halls and on steps of buildings. There are a few bars nearby where they get drunk. Women and men do not dare go outside in the evening because there are numerous robberies. There are also many young men gathered in the streets saying 'improper words to ladies'. There is a building in this block where robberies are frequent, and tenants believe that the thieves actually live right in the building. One of the tenants complains that when speaking to a policeman, he was told that East Harlem is a 'hot place'. Another tenant says that when he went to Police Headquarters he was told that if he thought

. . . . .

1. Ibid.

himself and his family to be respectable citizens, they should move from the neighborhood. A large number of tenants say that policemen deliberately avoid being on that block and do not pay attention to the complaints of the Puerto Ricans. There are not enough officers in that area." 1

Police protection and control is limited and often unjust. The resident of East Harlem "sees a neighborhood run by gangsters; he sees cheating landlords; he sees the policeman ignore a dope peddler but beat up a child for being sassy." 2

There is much being done by social service agencies and churches to cut down this problem, but it is still a major problem in dealing with the people of East Harlem.

### 3. Family Relationships

Another acute situation in East Harlem is that of broken families through divorce or desertion. Because of close living and frustrations of every sort, sex has become a problem, so that there are many unmarried mothers. Unemployment, poverty, ill-health and overcrowding add to the instability of family relationships. Young children, used to spending much time on the streets in an unsupervised atmosphere, learn to experiment with sex at an early age and contribute to the widespread moral laxity which is

. . . . .

1. "Puerto Ricans in New York City", op. cit., p. 22.
2. "Going Down This Street Lord", op. cit.

characteristic of the area. New cultural groups often seek temporary escape by ignoring their family and moral responsibilities.

#### 4. Education and Recreation

Schools are over-crowded in East Harlem and recreational facilities are limited. At present the schools in the area are: Benjamin Franklin High School for Boys, Machine and Metal Trades Vocational High School for Boys, five grade schools, two Junior High schools for girls, one Junior High school for boys, and three grade schools under construction or renovation.<sup>1</sup> However, it has been discovered that people do not use many of the facilities which are even now available to them. There are numerous efforts being made by various groups to educate families on health and child care and there are English classes and night schools for those who are new to the country. Because of the unstable nature of the community caused by the migration of many people to East Harlem, the schools are overcrowded and problems are created and intensified which would not otherwise exist.

. . . . .

1. Cf. Report to Administrative Board on Housing Activities of East Harlem Protestant Parish, May 1953, p. 4.



## F. Religious Institutions

The many varieties of churches and cults in East Harlem is a sign of unrest and the evidence of deep spiritual needs among the people. In 1947 there were nearly eighty churches in East Harlem and now there are nearly one hundred. The variety of churches is striking in this area. By far the greatest number are store-front Pentecostal churches which, with their more emotional approach, meet the needs of people living in tense situations. Dr. Kenneth Miller says:

"The Protestant churches can no longer airily dismiss the Pentecostal groups as 'emotional sects'. We can all learn much from them as to missionary zeal, their sense of stewardship, and their development of a genuine fellowship of committed Christians." 1

There are six other major types of religious institutions in East Harlem in addition to the Pentecostal or related sects, namely: denominational Protestant churches, Independent churches or missions, City Mission churches and projects, Catholic, and Jewish churches and institutions, and cults of many varieties. All of the religious groups are looking for and learning new ways to work in inner city areas.

. . . . .

1. Miller, op. cit., p. 106.

#### G. Summary

It has been the aim of this chapter to study briefly the main characteristics and problems of the East Harlem area of New York City.

It is a densely populated, deteriorated, inner city area with many intense problems.

The population is now predominantly Puerto Rican, but there are large numbers of Negro, Italian, and Jewish people also living in an area just a little over one square mile in size. The past sixty years has seen several series of migrations to the area of various racial and cultural groups. So much fluctuation has made the area an unstable community.

The two main economic problems are inadequate housing, and unemployment which results in low incomes.

Because of this economic instability there are acute social problems such as ill-health, disease, delinquency, crime and broken homes.

There are not sufficient educational and recreational facilities to meet the needs of the community, and there is difficulty in getting those who need help to take advantage of the available resources.

There are religious institutions of many varieties in East Harlem, especially small sects and Pentecostal churches which are attempting to meet the spiritual needs of the people in this tense, problem community.

CHAPTER II  
PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF PUERTO RICANS  
IN EAST HARLEM

## CHAPTER II

### PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF PUERTO RICANS IN EAST HARLEM

#### A. Introduction

Not only is East Harlem a community of problems in itself, but the Puerto Ricans, who comprise the largest single cultural group in the community, have many unique problems which add to the total picture of tenseness in East Harlem. This chapter will attempt to describe briefly some of the more important or intense problems which are faced by Puerto Ricans migrating to New York City from their native island. Such considerations as language barriers, discrimination and exploitation, adjustments to city living, adjustments to American culture, employment and spiritual needs will be dealt with. An understanding of the problems of these people and the ability to empathize with them is a necessary factor in realizing the problems and emphases of church programming in such areas.

#### B. Language Barriers

One of the first problems which the Puerto Rican faces upon his arrival to the United States is that of language. It is this barrier which is often the cause for even bigger problems. Speech is the "tool" for making one's way, and many Puerto Ricans arrive without any knowledge of

English. In an article from the New York Times concerning the Puerto Rican migrations to New York, Peter Kihss states the lack of a knowledge of English as a cause for problems:

The Puerto Ricans' most difficult employment and adjustment problem is lack of knowledge of English.<sup>1</sup>

The Welfare Council of New York City analyzes the problem in a similar way:

All employment service representatives who have discussed the Puerto Ricans in the Subcommittee agree that their greatest handicap for employment is their lack of the English language.<sup>2</sup>

Probably even a worse problem growing out of a lack of knowledge of the English language is a psychological one which leads to many tensions. The Employment and Migration Bureau, in one of their studies states that:

The Puerto Rican who knows little or no English finds upon arriving that the whole world is shut to his understanding unless he sticks to the people with whom he can exchange ideas in the language he knows. . . . Many times a day he feels misunderstood . . . The pressure brought upon him makes him many times fearful of even using the little English he can speak. The threat to his ego creates anxiety, arouses feelings of suspicion, anger or dejection . . . He soon learns not to go to places outside of his own Spanish-speaking world without the protection of somebody who can manage better than he does . . . .<sup>3</sup>

Another area of living in which this language barrier

. . . . .

1. Kihss, Peter, "Puerto Rico and Us," New York Times, Feb. 25, 1953, p. 6.
2. Puerto Ricans in New York City, op. cit., p. 45.
3. Employment and Migration Bureau, op. cit., p. 58.

becomes a problem is in the public schools. If the Spanish children are kept in special classes, segregation may be the result and if they are not, they are lost in the progress of the other children. A series of articles published by The New York Times on Puerto Ricans says:

With Puerto Ricans comprising 8.2 percent of the elementary school pupils-46,851 of 568,062 registered last October-the school system reported that 17,954 or 38.2 percent of them were 'non-English speaking.'<sup>1</sup>

Public School 121 at 232 E. 103rd St., used to put non-English speaking Puerto Ricans in a special class. Now, however, they include them in with the other children to prevent segregation and to encourage them to use English as much as possible.<sup>2</sup>

Not only is the language a barrier to the Puerto Rican, but also to those who wish to help and cannot because of communication problems. This is true of public health nurses, social workers, church visitors and others. More and more is being done to alleviate the problem by encouraging Puerto Ricans to attend the many English classes offered, by printing literature in Spanish, and by hiring Spanish speaking personnel in social agencies working with Puerto Ricans.

The language problem still remains, however, as a major barrier in the adjustment of Puerto Ricans to their new communities.

. . . . .

1. New York Times, op. cit., p. 7
2. loc. cit.

### C. Attitudes Towards Puerto Ricans

Another problem which faces the Puerto Rican as he arrives in New York City is that of discrimination. This problem has two main phases. First, there is the resentment expressed by many toward the large number of Puerto Ricans arriving in the City and because of the ways in which they live. Many of their habits, perfectly acceptable on their native land, are now the cause of tensions with their neighbors. An example of this is throwing garbage from windows. In Puerto Rico the hot sun disintegrates garbage and it is no problem.

When they throw their garbage from their windows they do not realize that New York lacks the hot tropical sun quickly to disintegrate it, and that city pavements cannot absorb it.<sup>1</sup>

There is resentment too because there is misunderstanding concerning the Puerto Ricans who are coming to the United States. It is the tendency for older residents to look askance at any newcomers and then interpret all problems as having their source in the new group. The discrimination here is the result of stereotyping and generalizing. A typical reaction of this sort is reported here:

What can you expect from Puerto Ricans? I came here 30 years ago to work and I have made money. I help the Puerto Ricans, but they are bad people.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Puerto Ricans in New York City, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Employment and Migration Bureau, op. cit., p. 61.

Groups who have had prejudices directed against them are often the worst offenders in discriminating against others. Therefore, Italians, Irish, Jews and Negroes feel that they maintain their own status by taking advantage of the newest arrival who in this case is the Puerto Rican. An Italian businessman expressed his attitudes as follows:

I can always tell a Puerto Rican because he is dirty, skinny-looking, dresses in nine different colors, always looks like he needs a shave...He's a sinister one...His talking Spanish, undercutting wages and the relief question are the thing I resent. And that they go out with the 'niggers.'<sup>1</sup>

According to a survey made in the area of attitudes, the Employment & Migration Bureau discovered that the Puerto Ricans reported more difficulties with the Italian than with any other ethnic group.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to this general discrimination which may be expected against any large group of newcomers here, there is another phase of the problem in which the darker skinned Puerto Ricans are treated with prejudice because they are thought to be Negroes. The whole Negro-White tension influences where he can live and with whom he may associate. Before coming to New York this was a problem which never existed for the Puerto Rican. The environment in Puerto Rico is one in which Spaniards and Negroes have lived together for hundreds of years without conflict. Puerto Ricans

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 62.  
2. cf., loc. cit.



rarely judge people on the basis of skin color.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, he immediately becomes very conscious in New York that there is a definite color line. A report by the Employment & Migration Bureaus says:

If he has too dark a skin, too kinky hair or broad features, he will be typed as a Negro and discriminated against as is the case with the American Negro. His whole security as a person may suddenly be threatened.<sup>2</sup>

Fears and pressures resulting from racial attitudes often find expression in personality maladjustment and in some cases, open delinquency.

Other reactions of Puerto Ricans to this problem are equally hindering to his adjustment. Meryl Ruoss, Director of Research for the Protestant Council says:

His reaction may be to retreat into ghetto life, an unnecessary insistence on retaining his language and customs, or even rejection of the American Negro with whom he has been thrown into close association by all the social factors of the situation.<sup>3</sup>

The Puerto Rican coming to New York then, is faced suddenly with discrimination, where before he enjoyed tolerance and acceptance. Discrimination is another major problem in the adjustment of Puerto Ricans to their new environment.

. . . . .

1. cf., Ibid., p. 34.

2. loc. cit.

3. Ruoss, Meryl, Mid-Century Pioneers and Protestants, Protestant Council of the City of N. Y., March, 1954, p. 6.

#### D. Adjustments to City Life & Cultural Patterns

Just as the facing of the racial attitudes in New York comes as a great psychological contrast to past Puerto Rican life, so the patterns of urban life versus rural life and past cultural patterns call for other big transitions in the life of these people.

##### 1. City Life

Seventy percent of the Puerto Ricans live in the country or in small villages in Puerto Rico, therefore they are used to rural life and patterns. The Employment Migration Bureau says:

Large families are still economic units, contacts are largely primary, face-to-face; the individual is a person; community control is strong, even oppressive; time is measured by the position of the sun; sanitation rudimentary since the hogs or goats will eat peelings thrown in the yard and the sun and rain will neutralize the liquid waste.<sup>1</sup>

New York City life on the other hand is in sharp contrast to the rural pattern. Here small families are the rule, the individual is anonymous, social contacts are impersonal, people are in a hurry and time is all-important. The family is no longer the unit of economic production and control is institutionalized and is no longer the responsibility of the community.<sup>2</sup>

This contrast between rural and urban life is faced by

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 32.

2. cf., Ibid., p. 32.

many new groups moving into the city, and if the Puerto Ricans follow the patterns of other migrations, eventual adjustment can be predicted according to the Migration Division of the Department of Labor of Puerto Rico:

The immigration history of New York City shows that newcomers always take some time to change habits built up during rural or small-town living in a substantially different environment.<sup>1</sup>

Until the Puerto Ricans are integrated to city living they need love, help and understanding.

## 2. Climate

Another adjustment Puerto Ricans must make to their new environment is a climatic one. Puerto Rico is not endowed with very cold or extremely hot weather. The lowest temperature ever recorded for San Juan, Puerto Rico was 62°F. The average winter temperature is 73° whereas New York's average winter temperature is 45°. <sup>2</sup> The sun is also very strong during the day in Puerto Rico so that very light clothing is worn and the healthful advantages of the sun are enjoyed. Upon arriving in New York the Puerto Rican soon discovers that he must dress warmly, and often he isn't prepared to buy the warm clothing necessary. In many cases the result is poor health.

. . . . .

1. Conclusions of Migration Conference, Department of Labor, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, New York, March 1953, p. 10.
2. cf., Employment & Migration Bureau, op. cit., p. 33.

### 3. Other Aspects of the Cultural Pattern

The entire contrast in the cultural pattern of Puerto Ricans and Americans in New York City is too complex to be handled in detail here; however, these contrasts will be mentioned because it is important that one working with Puerto Ricans be aware of them.

a. Puerto Rican food habits are different from those of most Americans. His main fare is rice and beans, thus he often suffers from dietary deficiencies.

b. In the Puerto Rican household the male is the unquestioned chief. Because of a strong sense of family loyalty, the family unit is usually large. It may include aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, nieces and nephews, as well as the mother, father and children.

c. Sex information is withheld from adolescents; in fact, the whole area of sex is considered conversationally taboo. Girls especially are under strict parental control in social matters. For instance, kissing is allowed only after a girl is formally engaged.<sup>1</sup> The contrast of this pattern to life in New York City is obvious.

#### E. Employment

Unemployment and low paying jobs are among the worst

. . . . .

1. Cf., Ibid., p. 24.

problems faced by Puerto Ricans. Many other difficulties, such as poor health, arise from this economic instability. Ironically enough, most Puerto Ricans come to New York to get work, since there are many more people than jobs on the island of Puerto Rico. They arrive only to discover that conditions are almost as poor in the City as they were on the Island. An article in Latin America Today says:

Some have become doctors, dentists, trade union leaders, businessmen, ministers or artists. Many run small groceries. There are a number of small Puerto Rican theatre groups. But the great majority, handicapped by language, and discriminated against as a national minority and because of color, find themselves at the bottom the wage scale and living under only slightly less miserable conditions than back home in Puerto Rico. <sup>1</sup>

Peter Kihss, in his articles in the New York Times, gives the following revealing item showing economic discrimination:

Nearly half of the violations of the 75¢ Federal minimum hourly wage found in the city in the last two years involved companies in interstate commerce employing Puerto Ricans. <sup>2</sup>

As has been previously cited, inability to speak English is the greatest handicap to good employment. There are however other reasons which intensify the problem. After commenting on the language barrier, The United States Employment Service reports other major reasons for poor jobs and low wages;

Other barriers are lack of training, New York City licenses, tools and local references. Unfamiliarity

. . . . .

1. Latin America Today, "Puerto Ricans in New York," N.Y., May 1953, p.3.
2. Kihss, op. cit., p.6.

with New York's streets and transportation facilities limits the employment of many to the immediate neighborhood in which they live.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a list of occupations covering a period of six months in which Puerto Ricans were recently placed by the New York State Employment Service:

Occupation	Sex of Worker
Power Press Operators (sheet metal)	M
Assemblers of auto accessories	M & F
Machine Shop workers	M
Woodworking	M
Toy Assemblers	F
Jewelry Assemblers	F
Syrup manufacturing workers	F
General full time maids	F
Ward Aides (Hospital)	F
Nurses Aides	F
Potters	M
Kitchen helpers	M
Heavy laborers (sugar factories)	M
Hand Embroiderers & Sewers	F
Sewing Machine Operators	F
Hand Sewers	F

. . . . .

1. United States Employment Service, "Labor Market Development Report", August-September 1947.

Occupation	Sex of Worker
Pressers	M
Floor Boys & Girls	M & F
Cleaners	F
Dishwashers, Bus Boys, Pantrymen, Waiters	M
Laundry Workers	M & F
Porters, Elevator Operators	M
Janitors	M & F
Ship Cleaning Workers	M 1

From this list it is seen that Puerto Ricans are generally employed in low paying jobs which require little skill.

Because of low wages many Puerto Ricans are forced to go on relief, but they are anxious to learn and to work and have no desire to remain dependent. Peter Kihss stresses the Puerto Rican's will to work by quoting Welfare Commissioner Henry T. McCarthy:

Puerto Ricans who come here want to work. The charge most commonly bandied against them - that they flock to the city's relief rolls and stay there - is vigorously rejected by the city's welfare leaders. Those who do go on relief for a while - perhaps one out of fourteen tend to get off faster than non-Puerto Ricans.<sup>2</sup>

The employment problem among Puerto Ricans then is characterized by low wages, many barriers to good jobs such as language, lack of skill, unfamiliarity with the city and

. . . . .

1. cf., Puerto Ricans in N.Y.C., op.cit., pp. 44-45.
2. Kihss, op. cit., p.6

discrimination. However, the Puerto Rican is willing to learn and is ambitious and anxious for economic independence.

#### F. Spiritual Needs

In their complex world of adjustments and problems the Puerto Ricans are in special need of spiritual strength and help. Yet, it has been discovered through various studies that a comparatively large number of Puerto Ricans never go to church. The Columbia University study showed that about half of the migrants never or almost never go to church on the mainland. It also discovered that migrants are less likely to attend church in New York City than on the island, even after a long residence in the city.<sup>1</sup>

Most Puerto Ricans are by tradition Roman Catholic, but large numbers of them are not very devoted to the Church and when coming to New York, they no longer feel tied to the Catholic Church. Meryl Ruoss, who has done extensive studies of the relationship of the churches to the Puerto Ricans says that:

... There is reason to believe that a larger percentage of Puerto Ricans in New York City than on the island avoid relationship to the Roman Catholic Church. The anti-clericalism of numbers of Puerto Rican males and the incipient disinterest of other segments of the migrating population find free expression in the non-Catholic culture of the mainland.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. cf., Williams, Robert, "Jobs Beckon - Migrants Fill The Need", New York Post, July 24, 1953.
2. Ruoss, op. cit., p.10.



On the other hand, there is a strong evangelical Protestant minority among the newcomers which is flourishing in the new environment. The Pentecostal churches are especially meaningful to Puerto Ricans because the freedom of expression allowed seems to meet an emotional need.

The following is the conclusion of a report on a meeting in a Puerto Rican Pentecostal Church:

.... The people were expressing their emotions even more freely than they might have done at the nearby Yankee Stadium. For many of them it must have been the high spot of the week. Here drab lives were rising above themselves through the emotional escape of religious ecstasy." <sup>1</sup>

They reach many more Puerto Ricans than any other single group. In a study conducted by the Protestant Council of the City of New York in which one hundred and sixty-nine Puerto Rican churches were examined it was discovered that fifty-five percent or ninety-two of the one hundred and sixty-nine churches were Pentecostal and thirty-four were Independent. The conclusions of this study were that these churches meet very real needs of the Puerto Ricans because they are an indigenous expression:

.... 55% (92) of the 169 churches are identifiable as Pentecostal. If we knew more about some of the churches in the "Independent" category it is quite likely that perhaps as many as 50% of these 34 could be added to the Pentecostal category ..... the churches in these two groups are largely a real indigenous expression of

. . . . .

1. Scotford, John R., Within These Borders, p.126.

Protestant convictions.... They have a strong evangelical spirit, a conservative theology, and are willing to work with other Protestant churches toward a limited number of specific short term goals.<sup>1</sup>

However, the fact still remains that there are great masses of Puerto Ricans who are completely without church connections.<sup>2</sup> Many of them when approached with the gospel are responsive and make excellent and zealous christians. In an interview with the Reverend John Vincent, pastor of the Jefferson Park Parish, he indicated that it was impossible to spend an afternoon doing visitation evangelism without bringing at least two families into the church.<sup>3</sup> This certainly is an indication of spiritual need and hunger among the Puerto Rican migrants. It is possible then to see the great opportunity to reach Puerto Ricans as well as the great lack in this area of their lives.

#### G. Summary

The aim of this chapter was to study some of the major needs and problems of the Puerto Ricans who are migrating to New York City from their native island.

The problem which stands out almost immediately is that of language. A lack of a knowledge of English presents many other problems such as inability to find a good job.

. . . . .

1. Ruoss, op. cit., pp. 15 and 17.
2. According to Meryl Ruoss, "Perhaps as many as 60% of the Puerto Ricans of New York City are still unchurched". Ibid. p. 24.
3. Rev. J. K. Vincent, personal interview, February 8, 1955.

Discrimination and racial attitudes are new to Puerto Ricans, thus causing fear, maladjustment, resentment and retreat to ghetto life.

Because most of them have been used to rural life and strong family units, they are forced to make great adjustments when they move to a rapidly moving, impersonal city.

Climatic changes present a big physical problem to Puerto Ricans who are not use to cold weather and who do not have sufficient money to buy warm clothing.

The cultural patterns which are brought with them often are in direct contrast to the new environment of New York City.

Because of discrimination, inability to speak and understand English, and a lack of vocational training, Puerto Ricans are forced to take low paying jobs which require little skill and as a result, many of them are insecure economically even though they have a strong will to work and to be independant.

In addition to these many problems, it has been discovered that only about forty per cent of the Puerto Ricans in New York City are being reached by any church. There is a deep spiritual need among them which is evidenced by their enthusiasm when they are reached and their responsiveness to the Gospel.

CHAPTER III  
THE PROGRAMS OF SELECTED CHURCHES  
IN EAST HARLEM

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PROGRAMS OF SELECTED CHURCHES IN EAST HARLEM

##### A. Introduction

Set in the midst of a community with intense social and economic problems, and in a community characterized by transitions, changes and instability, the churches in East Harlem find that they are faced with a unique challenge. The mission of the churches in the community is two-fold, for not only do they minister to English-speaking peoples, but they must find new ways to reach and work with the Spanish speaking Puerto Ricans who are moving into East Harlem in large numbers with unique problems of their own. The church must give attention to these people in meaningful ways in order to fulfill its responsibility in the community and in order to fulfill its high calling to go and make disciples of all nations.

It is the attempt of this chapter to discover what the churches are doing through their programs in working with and adapting to the needs and situations which have been brought to light in previous chapters.

In order to discover which methods of working and adapting were most universal and most widely used, the four churches which were chosen for the study are representative of four very different kinds of ministry. The churches to

be studied are: (1) Church of the Good Neighbor, one of the projects of the New York City Mission Society; (2) East Harlem Protestant Parish, which is a group ministry; (3) Jefferson Park Parish, a traditional church with denominational affiliation; (4) and the Latin American Pentecostal Church of God, which is an independent church.

Data for this chapter were obtained through a questionnaire which was used as the basis for interviews with pastors and workers in the various churches. This method was found to be more satisfactory than having the leaders fill in the questionnaire themselves. In all cases, answers to the questionnaire were obtained from a person well-qualified to give the information.

In addition, personal visits were made to each church with the purpose of observing as much as possible the program as it was demonstrated in action. Further information was obtained from pamphlets and other materials printed by the churches.

#### B. Church of the Good Neighbor and Community Center

Church of the Good Neighbor is the oldest and second largest Spanish congregation in New York City and is one of the churches of the New York City Mission Society. It is located at 115 East 106th Street between Lexington Avenue and the New York Central mainline to Grand Central Station.

1. History, Membership and Present Status

Church of the Good Neighbor was founded in 1912 by the Baptist City Mission Society and two years later it was taken over by the New York City Mission Society, an interdenominational Protestant missionary organization. The church, which once was known as the Spanish Evangelical Church, has been used since its origin for Spanish people.<sup>1</sup>

Until the present migration of Puerto Ricans to the city, it was the only Spanish church in New York City. Because of this fact, the church shifted its location several times in order to follow the Spanish people as they moved from one section of the city to another. Three and a half years ago the church moved to its present location on 106th Street. Previous locations were in the downtown section of New York, 115th Street, and then 102nd Street. The church was forced to move from the 102nd Street location because of a new housing project which has been erected on that site. The present building was bought from a youth organization and it is an attractive and adequate building for the institutionalized program of the church.<sup>2</sup>

The minister of the church is Reverend Rafael Cotto, a Puerto Rican, who has a large staff under his supervision.

. . . . .

1. Ruoss, Meryl, Mid Century Pioneers and Protestants, p. 20.
2. Rev. Rafael Cotto, minister, Church of the Good Neighbor, personal interview, February 9, 1955.

The present active membership of the church is approximately two hundred and fifty and average church attendance is between seventy-five and one hundred. The congregation is ninety-eight per cent Puerto Rican, one per cent Negro, and one per cent Italian and other Spanish speaking groups.<sup>1</sup>

When Church of the Good Neighbor was the only Spanish Church in the city it was much larger than it is at present. As other churches organized work for Puerto Ricans the membership at Good Neighbor decreased. Another reason for decreased membership is the fact that housing projects are being erected in the neighborhood and the housing authorities have moved many families to other sections of the city. In 1954, for example, the church lost seventy-eight members and gained only twenty-seven. However, there has been an increase in membership again in recent months. During January of 1955, the church has already gained twenty new members.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Program

The program of Church of the Good Neighbor is divided into two main parts, that of the church proper, and that of the Community House, which is under the supervision of the church, though only indirectly related to the total program.

### a. Church Services

There are two services held each Sunday, one in

. . . . .

1. From Statistical Records of the church.
2. Interview with Mr. Cotto.



English at eleven in the morning and one in Spanish at three in the afternoon. The Spanish service is the better attended of the two, and is more of a family service. The English service is attended mainly by young adults. The services are not identical, Mr. Cotto says, because the Spanish service has to be much more evangelistic in order to reach for Christ those Puerto Ricans who may never have had any contact with the church before. <sup>1</sup>

b. Prayer Meetings and Bible Study

In addition to the Sunday services, the spiritual life of the church is **enriched** by various other activities.

Each Wednesday evening a group meets for prayer and and Bible study. Since all those attending speak Spanish, the meetings are conducted in that language.

Another activity which has been very successful and has grown in interest and enthusiasm among members of the congregation is the Cottage Service. At present there are four cottage services a week held in different homes of the members of the congregation. These meetings are conducted by a member of the staff or a group of interested laymen. They consist of a period of prayer and discussions on personal and spiritual problems. Usually neighbors or friends or other members of the congregation who live nearby attend. Not only does this method strengthen the spiritual lives of

. . . . .

1. Ibid.

those attending, but it serves to build up the home and strengthen family life. <sup>1</sup>

#### c. Evangelism

According to Mr. Cotto, evangelism is the chief interest of Church of the Good Neighbor, and all other activities of the church are means to that end.

The main method of evangelism is home visitation by both staff and laymen. Many people are brought into their first contact with the church through this method. <sup>2</sup>

Each week at the Spanish service an invitation is given to the people to accept Christ and to dedicate themselves to Him. After this first confession of faith, these people are encouraged to join a six weeks course in preparation for church membership. These courses are offered four times a year, and are open to all who are interested in joining the church. <sup>3</sup>

The social services offered by Good Neighbor are considered part of the evangelistic ministry of the church. In referring to these Mr. Cotto said, "Our main interest is to serve the whole individual with the whole gospel". <sup>4</sup>

#### d. Church School

Church of the Good Neighbor reaches many boys and girls in the neighborhood through their two church schools. At

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

present there are 585 pupils enrolled in both schools and the average attendance is 450. There are thirty-one volunteer church school teachers who handle the entire teaching task. <sup>1</sup>

The church schools meet just prior to the church services. The English church school meets ten to eleven each Sunday morning, and the Spanish church school meets from two to three Sunday afternoon. The children are then encouraged to attend church with their parents. Just as the Spanish worship service is the larger, so the Spanish church school is also the larger. <sup>2</sup>

Different curriculum materials are used in the two schools. The English school uses closely graded Methodist material and the Spanish school uses Spanish materials published by the Nazarene church. <sup>3</sup>

There is no planned program of teacher training at present, although it is one area in which the church is anxious to begin work. The teachers do meet together regularly to make plans for the school. <sup>4</sup>

#### e. Weekday Program

The weekday program of the church is carried on through the church itself and through the Community Center. The Community Center is only indirectly related to the church. When the church took the building, it was only under the

. . . . .

1. From statistical records of the church.
2. Interview with Mr. Cotto.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

condition that recreational activities be carried on for community children and young people without proselyting. However, Mr. Cotto reports that many children and young people attending the weekday program are attracted to the church itself, and many have been won to the church through it. About 40% of the children and young people also come to the church activities. <sup>1</sup>

The chart on the following page is an attempt to give an over-all picture of the weekday program of the Community Center for children and young people.

Mr. Henry says that there are twenty basketball teams at present that use the Community Center. They are all natural gangs or groups from the neighborhood, and no attempt is made to break them up. The gang idea is continued but channeled into the recreation program by having them adopt their gang name as the name of their ball team. <sup>2</sup>

The groups of children which meet in the afternoons each have their own teacher, room and equipment. The group teachers are qualified persons who for the most part are experienced group or social workers. In addition to each group teacher there is also a floating art teacher who works with each group one day a week. <sup>3</sup>

The average number of children reached weekly in the

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Mr. Warren Henry, Director, Community Center, personal interview, February 9, 1955.
3. Ibid.

AFTERNOON		EVENING
MONDAY	<p>GROUP ACTIVITIES for ages 6-14</p> <p>Six Groups Each Afternoon</p> <p>GIRLS                      BOYS 6- 8 years    6- 8 years 9-11 years    9-11 years 12-14 years    12-14 years</p> <p>Crafts Art, gym, games, trips, cooking, sewing, Little League Basketball teams for advanced boys.</p>	Gym for girls.
TUESDAY		<p>Four basketball games for boys. Canteen. Teen-agers sculpture class. Club meetings for vocational guid- ance and problem discussion. Counseling.</p>
WEDNESDAY		<p>Four basketball games for boys. Canteen. Teen-agers craft shop. Camera club for young adults.</p>
THURSDAY	<p>RELEASED TIME CLASSES Not Under Community Center 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. ages 6-14 Activities, study, rec- reation, worship.</p>	<p>Four basketball games for boys. Canteen. Craftshop for teen- agers, camera club for teen-age girls.</p>
FRIDAY	<p>Same as Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, includ- ing Boy and Girl Scouts and Brownies.</p>	CHURCH NIGHT.

1. Mr. Warren Henry, Director, Community Center, personal interview, February 9, 1955.

weekday program of the Community Center is shown in the table below:

AVERAGE NUMBER PER WEEK		PER CENT WHO DO NOT COME TO CHURCH ACTIVITIES
AFTERNOON GROUPS Children	135	60%
EVENING ACTIVITIES Youth	360	65%

1

The released time classes are not a part of the program of the Community Center, but are included in this analysis because it reaches many of the same children and replaces the group activities for one day each week.

The only other weekday activities for young people of the church itself are two young people's groups which meet each Friday evening. There is an English speaking group made up of high school and post high school age young people, whose program is almost entirely recreational. A Spanish speaking group meets simultaneously on Friday evenings which consists mainly of young adults. Mr. Cotto reports that the Spanish group is much more vital and spiritual. Their program is also more varied than the English

. . . . .

1. From Statistical Records of Community Center.

group. The Spanish group publishes a church newspaper, has a good program of Bible study, discussion and worship, and has a variety of recreational activities including dramatics.<sup>1</sup>

e. Summer Program

Mr. Cotto indicated that it was harder work to keep the summer program of Church of the Good Neighbor running smoothly than it is their winter one, which is intricate enough. The major summer activities of the church are the Community Center, camping and the Daily Vacation Bible School.<sup>2</sup>

The Community Center runs a full program in the summer time which is similar to the winter program, except for a greater emphasis on trips, swimming parties, soft ball and a shop class for boys.<sup>3</sup>

Another major summer activity is camping. Each year Church of the Good Neighbor sends about four hundred children to camp or to the country. Many of the children are sent through the New York Herald Tribune's Friendly Town plan, where families in the country offer to take a city child for several weeks for a vacation. Others are sent to one of City Mission's two camps in New York State. The church takes responsibility for arranging for these vacations, giving medical examinations, and taking care of the details of finances and transportation.<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Interview with Mr. Cotto.
2. Ibid.
3. Interview with Mr. Henry.
4. Interview with Mr. Cotto.

The Daily Vacation Bible School is the third area of the summer program of the church. This school is in action for one month, and the daily sessions are three and a half hours long. In order that the school and the Community Center do not conflict, the Vacation School sessions are held in the afternoon rather than the morning. The daily program consists of study, worship, creative activities, and recreation. Last year two hundred sixty children were enrolled in the school.<sup>1</sup>

g. Social Services

Mr. Cotto claims that with the possible exception of visitation evangelism, more people are attracted to Church of the Good Neighbor because of the variety of social services offered than for any other reason.<sup>2</sup> However, this fact is not the motivation for the services, for they spring from a real desire to help any in the community who may be in need.<sup>3</sup>

1) Housing Clinic. Each Tuesday evening from eight to ten o'clock a committee of two lawyers and five volunteers meet to take complaints on housing, fill out papers, or send people to the proper place for further aid. When necessary, follow-up work is done and one of the lawyers will go to court in behalf of the person who needs such legal assistance. On February 8, fifty persons met to file complaints

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.



at the clinic.<sup>1</sup>

2) Counseling. Reverend Salvator Bernard is the church's counselor. His service is offered in addition to the informal counseling done by the other staff members. When necessary, he will refer special relief cases to a qualified social worker.<sup>2</sup>

3) Health. Selected members of the church comprise a health committee which works in close cooperation with the East Harlem Health Unit on East 115th Street. This committee urges cooperation with community services such as free chest x-rays. Often church programs are centered around health education in order to keep this problem before the people.

The church is also concerned with health problems in more overt ways than the above. Each Saturday there is a free clinic at the church with a qualified doctor on duty. In 1954, four hundred and five people were served through the clinic.<sup>3</sup> There is also a full-time nurse on the staff of the church, who spends her time in visiting and taking care of special cases.<sup>4</sup>

4) Employment. Special employment counseling is given by Reverend Bernard three days a week. Last year two hundred thirty-five people were placed in jobs through

. . . . .

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. From statistical records of the church.

4. Interview with Mr. Cotto.

this service.<sup>1</sup>

5.) Credit Union Bank - Through a special arrangement with a bank in East Harlem, people are allowed to borrow money at the church without the detailed credentials of borrowing directly from the bank. Unfamiliarity with the language and the process of borrowing money often cause embarrassment for these people. This service is an attempt to make it easier for them.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these services, there is an attempt to establish friendly relations and cooperation with all community agencies working for the welfare of the people. The staff of the Church also makes a real effort to know personally the principals and teachers in the public schools in the area. This is helpful when it is necessary to go to court for any of the children and young people, because a fuller knowledge of the child is available when the church and the schools work together.<sup>3</sup>

#### h. Adult and Parent Education

Besides the two young adult groups previously mentioned,<sup>4</sup> there are various other emphases for adults.

Any woman in the Church may belong to the woman's

. . . . .

1. Statistical Records of the Church, op. cit.
2. Interview with Mr. Cotto.
3. Ibid.
4. Ante, p. 42

society which meets each Friday evening for discussion, worship, fellowship and educational programs. One of the projects of the society is to have sewing classes to teach new arrivals from Puerto Rico how to use industrial sewing machines. This assists them in finding jobs in garment factories.<sup>1</sup>

There are two choirs for adults, one in English and one in Spanish. The choirs sing at the respective services each Sunday.

The major emphasis for Parent Education is the Defenders of the Home Society which meets each Sunday evening at 8:00 p.m., and includes the entire family. The program of this society is concerned with concrete problems and situations facing families in a neighborhood such as East Harlem. Some of the topics which have recently been presented and discussed are planned parenthood, family worship, and child discipline. Through this society the Church is attempting to strengthen the homes and family life of its members.<sup>2</sup>

There is no separate organization for the men of the Church, but many of them are included in the other activities.

### 3. Leadership

A program as full and varied as the program of the

. . . . .

1. Interview with Mr. Cotto.
2. Ibid.

Church of the Good Neighbor requires a large and competent staff. There are now thirty full or part-time paid professional staff members and thirty volunteer staff members. This number does not include Church School teachers. The paid staff includes three ministers, each with a particular responsibility. Although their work often overlaps one is a counsellor, one in charge of social work, and one in charge of pastoral work and preaching. Other paid staff members are the Director of the Community Center, group workers, social workers, Director of Christian education, and a nurse missionary. Maintenance men and secretaries are also included in the thirty paid staff members. Volunteer staff includes lawyers, a doctor, sewing club teachers, society leaders, an art teacher, several Spanish speaking Church school teachers and a choir director.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases

The philosophy of the work of the Church was stated by Mr. Cotto as being two-fold. He said "the evangelistic aspect of our church is the most important. We want to become a missionary Church where we develop a zeal to get others to come to Christ."<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.

The second important aspect of the work is their social services in which they meet the real needs of the people within the community. In commenting on this he said, "our main interest in carrying out our social services is to serve the whole individual with the whole gospel."<sup>1</sup>

### C. East Harlem Protestant Parish

Unlike the other churches selected for this study, the East Harlem Protestant Parish is a group ministry composed of four churches and various recreational centers, clinics, and offices. The four churches in the Parish are Church of the Son of Man at 227 East 104th Street, Church of Our Redeemer at 340 East 102nd Street, 100th Street Block Church, 332 East 100th Street, and Church of the Ascension, 340 East 106th Street.

Because only Church of the Son of Man has an extensive ministry to Puerto Ricans, only the program of that Church will be discussed fully.

#### 1. History, Membership, Present Status

The East Harlem Protestant Parish was organized in 1948 by three Union Seminary graduates who felt the need for a new kind of ministry to the East Harlem community. They were Donald Benedict, William Webber, and Archie Hargraves.

. . . . .

1. Ibid.

They rented a twenty by twenty foot store space with a \$400. loan from the New York City Mission Society, and then set to work themselves to clean it up and use it as the first church and headquarters for the Parish. Since that time the Parish has aroused the interest and vision of many people and is now supported by eleven denominations and Councils of Churches. The Parish itself is interdenominational and interracial. There are seven different denominations represented among the staff members.<sup>1</sup>

The present congregation was secured mainly through the neighborhood children. After cleaning out a store, the three aggressive divinity students set up a card table on the street and registered neighborhood children for a Daily Vacation Bible School. Through the children, the parents were reached, and incidentally others in the block. The three men also identified themselves with the problems of the community by living in East Harlem themselves and ministering to the deep needs of people as they found them. Since 1948, the activities of the Parish have increased to a great extent.<sup>2</sup> The Church of the Son of Man now has approximately 125 active members, and an average attendance of seventy at the Sunday worship.<sup>3</sup> The membership and status of the Church

. . . . .

1. Miss Janice Sebastian, Assistant to the Administrative Secretary of the E. H. P. P., personal interview, February 5, 1955.
2. Ibid.
3. Cf., East Harlem Protestant Parish, Monthly Report to the Administrative Board, May, 1954, p. 4.

has undergone changes as a result of the relocation of residents to other parts of the city for the erection of Federal Housing Projects. These changes are expressed in a monthly report of the Parish:

Relocation from the George Washington housing site continues to drain members and potential members away from the Church. One interesting effect of the relocation is that a number of families who were on the edge of the Church program have become much more active and have joined the Church as the time for their moving came closer. . . They now feel that the Church can be an effective tie to their old community when they move away. 1

Last year approximately twenty members joined the Church of the Son of Man.<sup>2</sup> The congregation of the Church of the Son of Man is largely Puerto Rican, although there are several Negro and white families.

The minister of the Church is Rev. George Calvert, and Carlos Rios is the lay Spanish speaking pastor.

## 2. Program

The program of the Parish varies with each of the four Churches, but general policies and emphases are followed by all. The Program given here is that of the Church of the Son of Man, except when indicated that it is an all Parish program.

### a. Church Services

The Sunday Morning worship service is really the

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 5.
2. Interview with Miss Sebastián.

central activity of the Church of the Son of Man. In one of the monthly reports of the Church there appears the following witness to this fact:

The Sunday worship service has from the beginning been the central action which has bound our congregation together and has been the focus for the week's activities.<sup>1</sup>

The service is at 11:00 a.m. each Sunday and is conducted bilingually. The prayers, Scripture, and sermon are spoken alternately in English and Spanish, while the hymns and congregational responses are sung or said simultaneously in the two languages. Mr. Carlos Rios, the lay pastor, conducts the Spanish part of the service after close checking with Rev. Calvert.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these Sunday morning services, there are special series of services during Advent and Lent.

There are no special prayer services or Bible study groups meeting during the week, so that the Sunday service really does become the center of the week's activities.

b. Evangelism

The staff of the East Harlem Protestant Parish thinks of all their activities as evangelistic, for they find that through social action, they demonstrate Christ's Spirit and bring to many a knowledge of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Monthly Report to Administrative Board, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Interview with Miss Sebastian.
3. Ibid.



A denominational publication carried an article on the Parish and gave the case history of a hardened man in East Harlem who became a Christian through the efforts of the Parish. The article concludes with these statements which are characteristic of the evangelism emphasis of the Parish:

. . .but at least Mr. D., captured first by the social action program of the parish and then by a sense of the deeper meaning of a Christian fellowship, had come forward to pledge his loyalty to Christ. This is the kind of evangelism central to the work of the parish. <sup>1</sup>

The most used and effective method of evangelism in this Church is house-visitation evangelism. Just recently a religious census was conducted in cooperation with the East Harlem Council of Community Planning to discover the unchurched and Protestant people in the new George Washington Houses. This list was then used as a basis for visitation. <sup>2</sup>

Special Puerto Rican festivals are celebrated openly to attract people to the Church. For example a Three Kings Day festival was planned in which a procession went up and down the streets in Spanish custom. This demonstrated the Church's interest in the people and their customs and some came to the Church as a result. <sup>3</sup>

New Christians and any other interested young people over ten years of age are urged to attend a ten week course

. . . . .

1. Webber, George, "About The 'Store-Front' Churches in Harlem", Outreach, February, 1951, p. 52.
2. Interview with Miss Sebastian.
3. Ibid.

in preparation for Church membership which culminates in taking Communion and joining the Church on Easter Sunday. The Spanish pastor also conducts a Spanish Youth Membership Class for ten weeks, and a more extensive class for adults which lasts for a year.

The evangelistic emphasis of the Parish then, is carried on through social services, visitation evangelism, and training for Church membership.

c. Church School

From the beginning of the ministry of the Parish, their Church schools have been an important part of their program. The school of the Church of the Son of Man is conducted at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday morning in English. At the present time there are sixty children enrolled and the average attendance is fifty.<sup>1</sup> Although there is no set policy for the choice of curriculum materials, the Faith and Life Curriculum of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. is used wherever possible.<sup>2</sup>

The staff of the Church school included nine teachers, who confer weekly with Miss Sebastian, the Director of Christian Education. The Church also encourages teachers to take advantage of leadership training available outside

. . . . .

1. Statistical Records of the Parish, February, 1954.
2. Interview with Miss Sebastian.

of the Parish, such as the Central School of Manhattan conducted by the Protestant Council of the City of New York.<sup>1</sup>

d. Weekday Program

The weekday program for adults will be discussed in another section of this chapter, so that only those activities for children and young people will be pointed out here

Each Thursday from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. the released time classes meet for any children in grades three to nine.

There are thirty children enrolled at the present time who are taught by two teachers and one assistant. The program, which is correlated with the content and study program on Sundays, is mainly creative activity. Occasionally there is a story or a brief worship service, but the released time class is actually an extension of the Sunday School.<sup>2</sup>

Another activity for children during the week is the Junior Choir, which now has about twelve members.<sup>3</sup>

Two more clubs, one for Junior girls and one for Junior boys, complete the weekday activities for children. The program of these clubs is recreation and activity centered. They meet once a week in the afternoon and at present have an enrollment of fifteen to twenty children each.<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Statistical Records of the Church.
4. Interview with Miss Sebastian.

The weekday activities of the Church for Youth take up almost every night in the week. A full youth program at the Parish has cut down delinquency on 104th Street considerably.<sup>1</sup>

Junior Hi girls Club and Junior Hi Boys Club meets every night in the week for recreation and crafts. Occasionally these groups undertake some social action project or help in an all-Parish program.<sup>2</sup>

Every Friday evening there is a canteen and dance for all youth in the Church or community. The same group meets every Sunday evening for worship.<sup>3</sup>

Youth who are Church members are known as the Militants. They meet each Wednesday evening to discuss Church and community problems, and plan ways in which they can help. They expend much energy trying to correct or help social and community problems. The following report gives some idea of the kinds of things with which they concern themselves:

. . . The youth. . . at the Church of the Son of Man on 104th Street spent much time trying to keep peace between warring gang groups in the area. An open fight involving knives and guns at one of their recreation nights led to a series of meetings between rival gangs to work out truces. <sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. East Harlem Protestant Parish, Report to Administrative Board, September 1954, p. 2.

The weekday program of the Church of the Son of man is full, but flexible and rather loosely organized, for the programs here are not ends in themselves, but are channels for re-directing the energies of the children and youth on the <sup>1</sup> block.

e. Summer Program

The summer program of the Parish is fuller and busier than at any other time of the year.

The Vacation Church School meets three days a week, plus Sunday, during July and four weekdays and Sundays during August. The time is spent in worship, study, and creative activities based on a previously decided theme. Curriculum materials are drawn from several denominations.

On the other days the time is spent in recreation and in taking trips. Usually the children take one trip a week. <sup>2</sup>

Camping and summer vacations are other activities which the Parish emphasizes. Almost 300 children spent at least one week, and most of them more than one week, out of the city last summer. The Friendly Town program was the main source of vacations for the children, and a number of them were guests at the Baptist City Societies' Old Oak Farm. More than twenty young people attended camps and conferences

. . . . .

1. Interview with Miss Sebastian
2. Ibid.

sponsored by the Baptist, Congregational, Reformed, and Presbyterian denominations and the New York City Mission<sup>1</sup> Society.

A strong emphasis of the Parish with its members is<sup>2</sup> building up family life. To this end a retreat center is being developed at Putnam Valley, New York, for a family vacation center. The idea of enjoying a vacation is new to many of the families, but progress is being made, as seen by the following report:

Although the idea of enjoying a family vacation in the country is still very new to most of the people in our Parish, during July and August we had 121 people staying overnight at the farm during periods varying from a week-end to two weeks. This included twenty-six families totaling 103 persons, plus eighteen persons from as many different families.<sup>3</sup>

Last summer the theme was "Christian Family Life." Bible study around the breakfast table, daily vesper services, and recreational activities including the entire family were emphasized. Often it is possible to counsel parents informally in situations such as these, and families return to the city with a new appreciation of each other. The retreat center has its own full-time staff, as well as volunteer helpers in the summer time.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the summer program of the Parish is carried on

. . . . .

1. Cf. Report, op. cit., September 1954, pp. 1-2.
2. Interview with Miss Sebastian.
3. Report, op. cit., September 1954, p. 4.
4. Interview with Miss Sebastian.

through the Vacation Church School, the regular activities of the young people and older children, camping and vacations for children and young people, and the family vacation center.

f. Social Services

The Parish has been very concerned with social evils from its founding, and now it is one of their main emphases.

1.) Housing - An important approach in this area is to help and cooperate with existing organizations concerned with housing such as the Federal public housing program. There is usually a staff member at the meetings of these other groups.<sup>1</sup> The Parish also seeks to influence directly the outcome of relevant political issues such as the rent control bill which was passed by the State Legislature in March, 1953.<sup>2</sup>

The Church also steps in when there are crisis situations such as landlords who turn off heat and water.

A housing counsellor is at the Parish once a week to give legal advice or refer people to other agencies. Miss Sebastian said that the staff is always ready to act in cases of injustice in housing and that this area is one of their major concerns.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Report, May 1953, op. cit., p. 1.
3. Interview with Miss Sebastian.

2.) Health - The Parish has a full-time nurse on its staff, and runs a full-time Clinic. A doctor is on call all of the time and is at the Clinic three days a week. A pediatrition offers his services one day **a week**.

Individual problems which are more serious are referred to agencies better equipped for handling them.

Health education plays a big part in programs run by the various groups in the Church, and the social action group of the Parish runs a clean-up campaign of the streets each summer.<sup>1</sup>

3.) Employment - The Parish places some people in jobs directly through its Employment Clinic, but mainly it is a referral agency through which unemployed persons can make the proper contacts. A seminary student is on hand<sup>2</sup> once a week to counsel people through the Clinic.

4.) Case Work - The case work of the Parish is the work they do with individual persons needing special guidance or help of any sort. Such persons <sup>as</sup> are narcotic addicts, alcoholics, juvenile delinquents, and psychotics as well as less seriously troubled persons are helped through counseling, special medical attention or referring them to other agencies or hospitals.

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.



The staff meets weekly to discuss the cases and counseling techniques with a qualified psychiatrist.<sup>1</sup>

5.) Social Action Group - This is a group composed of a staff committee and a laymen's committee with representatives from each of the four churches, which meets once a week to plan action against and discuss the social evils of the community. A special emphasis is adopted each month, and action is taken by the group. When narcotics was under discussion, the group cleaned up a corner lot and gave a play called "Dope", which pointed out the evils of narcotics. In this way the problem was presented to any in the community who would stop and look.<sup>2</sup>

In all of the social action program of the Parish three principles are followed, namely, direct help and counseling when possible to meet any need; referral to more competent or better equipped agencies for severe cases, and direct and aggressive action and education for correcting the causes of social evils and injustices.

g. Adult and Parent Education

The Church of the Son of Man has three main activities for adults. It is

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Cf. East Harlem Protestant Parish, Report to the Board of Directors, December 1954, p. 2.

important that newcomers to the city be given responsibility in planning for their church. A strong lay interest is<sup>1</sup> necessary for vital, indigenous churches. Therefore, a Church Council consisting of ten elected representatives of the congregation meets monthly<sup>2</sup> to plan and administer the various activities of the Church.

The Mother's Club meets weekly for worship, Bible study, recreation, and work. One real difficulty with this group has been the lack of Spanish speaking leadership, and as a result it has become a completely English-speaking group. This has left the Spanish women without any organized channel through which they can come together for fellowship and<sup>3</sup> service.

The Brotherhood of Christian Workers began about two years ago as an effort to reach working men and women in the area of their vocation and union responsibilities. There<sup>4</sup> are approximately twenty active members at present.

In addition to these organized groups, there are the numerous other emphases for adults on an all-Parish scale such as the previously mentioned family vacations and the Social Action Group. The All-Parish family center on East 100th Street is open every afternoon for recreation,

. . . . .

1. Interview with Miss Sebastian.
2. Cf. Report, May 1954, p. 4.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Interview with Miss Sebastian.

1

ceramics classes, square dancing and fellowship.

Family Nights are planned four times a year in an attempt to reach the adults of the children coming to the Parish activities. Usually, if the children have a part in the program the parents will come, and a vigorous Children's program has proved an effective instrument of adult evangelism.<sup>2</sup>

Adult and family education is carried on through informal contacts, church organizations and various family-centered activities.

### 3. Leadership

The leadership of the East Harlem Protestant Parish is unique. It is a group ministry, in which each member of the staff pledges himself to the Four Disciplines of the Parish, and agrees to work along with the principles laid down by the group. In many ways they are a religious order of men and women completely devoted to inner city church work. Although the members of the group have individual responsibility in the Parish, they are a unit in that they follow the same basic principles. The group now has six ordained ministers, three Directors of Christian Education, one nurse, one Farm Manager, one Administrative Secretary, one Youth worker and one lay pastor. There are other workers

. . . . .

1. Ibid.

2. Report, September 1954, op. cit., p. 1.

and leaders such as seminary students and part-time workers who are not full members of the group ministry. If they plan to stay, they become probationary members of the group for a year, before pledging themselves to the Four Disciplines.<sup>1</sup>

Church of the Son of Man has three of the workers on its staff: Rev. George Calvert, an ordained Congregational Minister, Carlos Rios, the Spanish lay pastor, and Miss Janice Sebastian, the Director of Christian Education and Secretary to the administrative secretary of the entire Parish.

The Four Disciplines of the group are:

- (1) Economic - All receive the same modest salary.
- (2) Vocational - All in the group are under obligation to criticize each other constructively and to share with the group those problems related to the work.
- (3) Spiritual - The group has weekly Bible study and worship together.
- (4) Political - Each member of the group must become aware of political issues affecting any area of the lives of the people with whom they work, and are under obligation to become aggressive in defense of those issues which will bring justice.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Interview with Miss Sebastian.
2. Ibid.

All members of the group are required to live on the same streets as the people they serve.

The staff is divided into three all-Parish Committees to carry through general policies and plans. These committees<sup>1</sup> are education, church life, and Christian action.

Through the leadership provided by this group ministry in cooperation with lay representatives of each Church, the program of the Parish and its individual Churches is carried out.

#### 4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases

The philosophy of the Parish has always been to meet the needs of the people on the block, with the Spirit of Christ, no matter what they may involve in work or discipline.<sup>2</sup>

To this end each Church ministers only to those people on the block where it is located, but each person within the Church's limits is a concern to the Parish.

There is an aggressive approach to social evils, political issues, economic problems, and personal problems which is one of the major methods of evangelism used.<sup>3</sup>

Although their motivation is Christian, they do not

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

always attempt to relate persons to the Church or to Christ as is seen from the following quotation:

We counsel in regard to religious questions and concerns whenever people seem to be troubled in this area. We attempt to make the resources of the Christian faith meaningful whenever it seems appropriate to the person's needs. The Parish is convinced that helping people who bring problems to us is a basic part of our ministry even if we do not discuss the religious implications of the problems with them. <sup>1</sup>

The Churches themselves are concerned with the spiritual growth of their members after they have them. Their chief policy however, is to manifest the relevancy of Christianity to all areas of life in East Harlem. <sup>2</sup>

#### D. Jefferson Park Parish

The Jefferson Park Parish is located at 407 East 114th Street between First and Second Avenues, and is housed in a large, attractive building. Unlike the two Churches discussed earlier in this paper, Jefferson Park is a denominational Church directly related to the Methodist Church.

##### 1. History, Membership and Present Status

Jefferson Park Parish was founded in 1906 by Frank Mason North as a Methodist mission to the Italian migration to East Harlem. <sup>3</sup> The Church grew to a membership of 1000 and was one of the largest Italian Churches in the city with

. . . . .

1. Report, December 1954, op. cit., p. 2.
2. Interview with Miss Sebastian.
3. Frank Mason North was inspired to write the famous hymn "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" as a result of his work in this Church and Community.

a full religious and social program. In recent years, however, with the new migrations of Negroes and Puerto Ricans to the community, the Italians have been moving to better sections of the city and even to New Jersey and Long Island. As a result, the Church had gradually decreased in membership, until in 1954 there were only sixty members remaining.

The Church was bilingual, conducting services in Italian and English, and carrying out most activities in Italian. Now it was no longer able to reach the neighborhood people because of the language barriers. The Italians, however, realizing the seriousness of the situation and their Christian responsibility, asked to have the Puerto Ricans included in their fellowship. The Italian minister, Rev. Nicolas Notar, became the pastor emeritus, and a Spanish speaking minister, Rev. John K. Vincent installed. The Church has only had a ministry to Puerto Ricans then, since<sup>1</sup> January 1, 1955.

The ministry to the Puerto Ricans began on the first Sunday in January by announcing through a sign on the front of the Church that there would be a Spanish service. Fifteen people came and were challenged to bring others. Thirty-two came and were challenged to bring others. Thirty-two came the second Sunday, and the Sunday prior to the

. . . . .

1. Interview with Mr. Vincent.

interview with Mr. Vincent, sixty-four people attended. None of these people are real members yet since the congregation<sup>1</sup> was only five weeks old when this information was secured.

## 2. Program

Because the Church is starting from scratch in its new ministry to the neighborhood, its program is only in the formative stage. It is possible, however, to see the trends it will be taking when proposed plans are fulfilled.

### a. Church Services

Two services are conducted each Sunday. The 11:00 a.m. service is a bilingual service in English and Italian. Rev. Vincent speaks English and an Italian laymen summarizes in Italian the important parts of the service and leads in the Italian prayers and readings. The average attendance<sup>2</sup> at this service is sixty.

The afternoon service at 3:00 p.m. is conducted entirely in Spanish. Since no hymnals have been purchased as yet, the hymns are mimeographed for the congregation. So far this service is the main activity of the Spanish congregation. Even though it is only five weeks old, the attendance<sup>3</sup> is greater at this service than at the morning service.

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.



b. Prayer Meetings and Bible Study

Mr. Vincent was making the necessary preparations for an apartment prayer meeting and Bible study. He hopes that this will become a strong emphasis in their total program, both as a means for winning new people for Christ and strengthening others in their Christian life.<sup>1</sup>

c. Evangelism

The program of evangelism in the Church is four-fold, and at the present time at least, the major emphasis.

Church visitors are being trained by Mr. Vincent for a thorough visitation evangelism program in the neighborhood. This aggressive, individual approach to people seems to have the best results both in terms of numbers reached and the depth of the decisions made for Christ. Mr. Vincent also said that the program strengthened the witness and commitment of the visitors, and so serves a dual purpose.<sup>2</sup>

The planned program of apartment Bible studies and prayer meetings will be the second area of the evangelistic activities of the Church.

In the Spanish service each week, an invitation is given to accept Christ and the preaching is concerned with the basic and fundamental issues of the Christian faith. This is necessary because so few Puerto Rican people have

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.

come face to face with the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth part of the program is a class which has just been organized for those preparing to join the church. The course will include a survey of the Bible, doctrines concerned with religious experience, the organization of the church and an explanation of the differences between Catholics and Protestants.<sup>2</sup>

d. Church School

Just as there are two worship services to meet the various language needs, so there are two church school sessions for the same reason.

The English session meets at 9:30 a.m. There is a very small enrollment and the two teachers are adequate for the group. The official curriculum materials published by the Methodist church are used.<sup>3</sup>

The Spanish church school meets at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday and fifty-five children have been enrolled in the five weeks of its operation. Six educated and experienced Spanish teachers comprise the staff of the school. No satisfactory Spanish curriculum materials have been found yet, so that the curriculum has been exclusively Bible stories told by means of a flannelgraph.<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

The eight teachers meet together with Mr. Vincent every Saturday for preparation of the lesson. Not only does this coaching help the teachers with the actual lesson preparation, but it serves to build up a fellowship and concern for the work of the school among the staff members. <sup>1</sup>

e. Weekday Program

The weekday program of the church is in a very early formative stage, and is very vague at present. The gym is being rebuilt by a volunteer group of students from New York University. When it is completed an organized recreational program will be established for various age groups.

A Cub Pack and Boy Scout Troop are to begin within a few weeks. Leadership has been found and the activity is being advertised. <sup>2</sup>

The one activity which has continued from when the church was all Italian is the Day Nursery. The Nursery is a project of Christ Church Methodist, and the leaders are from that church. An attempt is being made now to include the Spanish children who are in greater need of such care than the more well-to-do Italian children. <sup>3</sup>

f. Summer Program

The Jefferson Park Parish has its own Camp at Long-

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

branch, New Jersey which is staffed by the church and sponsored and supported by interested persons.

There are accommodations for sixty people at a time. The four periods of camp are: mother's and children's camp, intermediate's camp, young people's conference, and family camp.<sup>1</sup>

No definite summer program has been decided yet, but Mr. Vincent is interested in establishing a full schedule of daily activities for the summer.<sup>2</sup>

g. Social Services

There is no organized social action program in the church such as those described in previously discussed churches.

The church cooperates with the programs and projects of community social agencies such as the Board of Health and the East Harlem Health Center.<sup>3</sup>

In any individual emergency situation concerning social issues the church is ready to step in.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Vincent reports that much needs to be done in the area of counseling for the Spanish young people, especially, many of whom have deep psychological confusions.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Vincent is anxious that the church be organized very soon to work with problems such as housing, health and discrimination, the three problems which stand out to

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

him as being the most acute. <sup>1</sup>

#### h. Adult and Parent Education

The Woman's Society which now consists almost entirely of Italian women is anxious to take the Puerto Rican women into its fellowship. Language may be a problem for a while, but the church wants to avoid separate organizations for Puerto Ricans and Italians. The program consists of study, worship, service and fellowship.

A Men's Club is to be started in the very near future for a program of study, recreation and service. <sup>2</sup>

Some parent education is accomplished through the mothers and children camp and the family camp, which is run during the summer.

#### 3. Leadership

The only paid staff member of the church is Rev. John Vincent, who has been a Methodist missionary to Puerto Rico.

A Puerto Rican girl is working full time as a volunteer secretary and general helper to Mr. Vincent.

Mr. Vincent expects that the staff will grow as the program of the church expands. <sup>3</sup>

#### 4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases

Mr. Vincent made three main statements emphasizing

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

the philosophy and emphases of the church. He said "our first interest is the evangelization of the Puerto Rican people in the neighborhood. By evangelization we mean bringing these people to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ." 1

Then he said "we are not letting the Puerto Ricans in through the back door." 2 There are to be no separate groups for Puerto Ricans except the worship service and the church school. The Italians must accept the newcomers into their fellowship. He reported a very good attitude on the part of the Italian congregation in accepting the Puerto Ricans so that they will become integrated quickly.

The third emphasis will be to build up strong laymen with a good sense of stewardship and a vital witness to Christ in the community. 3

#### E. The Latin American Pentecostal Church of God, Inc.

The Latin American Pentecostal Church of God is located at 65 East 109th Street between Park and Madison Avenue. Unlike many Pentecostal churches, this one is housed in a large church edifice and not in a store-front.

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
- 2/ Ibid.
3. Ibid.

# 1. History, Membership and Present Status

The church was founded in 1935 as an Independent church for Spanish speaking people in New York City. It is Pentecostal in doctrine and worship, but is not directly related to any particular branch of the denomination.<sup>1</sup>

Not all of the members live in the immediate neighborhood. Some who have been members in the past still retain their membership even though they have moved to other sections of the city.<sup>2</sup>

There are 700 members at present. Eighty-five percent of them are Puerto Rican and the remaining fifteen percent are Cuban, Mexican and other Latin American peoples.<sup>3</sup> Rev. Meryl Ruoss says that according to the records of the Department of Church Planning and Research of the Protestant Council of the City of New York, this church has the largest Puerto Rican congregation in Manhattan.<sup>4</sup>

Not only is the membership large, but it is growing continually. Since July, 1954, 100 new members have been baptized and joined the church.<sup>5</sup> This number is especially

. . . . .

1. Rev. Abelardo Berrios, Minister, Latin American Pentecostal Church of God, personal interview, February 16, 1955.
2. Mr. Miguel Salas, Secretary and Superintendent of the church school, personal interview, February 15, 1955.
3. Ibid.
4. Rev. Meryl Ruoss, Director of Church Planning and research, personal interview, December 8, 1954.
5. From statistical records of the church.

significant when it is kept in mind that the church insists upon all converts waiting for two to three months before actually joining the church.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that the average attendance at services is larger than the membership. Mr. Berrios reports that 800-900 people attend most services.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Program

The emphases in the program of this church are quite different from those in other churches, but it is interesting, too, to notice some similarities.

### a. Church Services and Prayer Meetings

Because prayer meetings are not a separate part of the program, but are an integral part of all church services, they will be included in this section and not treated separately.

Services are conducted each Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. There is no Sunday morning worship service because this time is devoted to assisting with activities at the mission outposts of the church in other parts of the city and New Jersey.<sup>3</sup>

All of the services are conducted in Spanish, including the one on Saturday evening which is especially for young people.

. . . . .

1. Interview with Mr. Salas.
2. Interview with Mr. Berrios.
3. Ibid.



Also on Saturday nights there is an all-night prayer vigil at the church for any who will stay. Mr. Berrios reported that often as many as 100 will stay to pray all night for their own needs or those of the church , their friends or the world.<sup>1</sup>

b. Evangelism

To speak of evangelism in this church is to speak of every activity. In the interview with Mr. Salas he said that "the only reason this church exists is to bring people to a saving knowledge of Christ and to an experience with the Holy Ghost." <sup>2</sup> All of the services are very evangelistic, and the experience of salvation or sanctification is the purpose of all of them.

In addition to these regular services, there are several series of special evangelistic services during the year. An outside preacher comes in for these and the members support them by even greater prayer efforts than usual.<sup>3</sup> The writer visited the church during the most recent series and observed a group of five men praying fervently for the services. Mr. Salas reported that they had been there for six hours and would probably be there for several more.

. . . . .

1. Ibid.
2. Interview with Mr. Salas.
3. Ibid.

All converts must be baptized, but are required to wait two to three months to be sure their conversion is real and sound. Only sound converts are allowed to join the church.<sup>1</sup>

Another evangelistic activity of the church is their program of outreach. The church now has fourteen mission outposts which have sprung up wherever a need was observed for one in other parts of the city and in New Jersey. Most of the leaders are products of the church.<sup>2</sup>

An active visitation evangelism program is carried out by the seven church missionaries. Some of these women care for the sick, and others call to introduce new people to Christ and the church.<sup>3</sup>

c. Church School

The church school is held each Sunday at 2:00 p.m. At present there are 500 children enrolled and nineteen teachers.<sup>4</sup> Spanish is used almost exclusively, although there are occasional classes taught in English.

The curriculum materials are those published by the Assemblies of God church which are written in Spanish.

d. Weekday Program

The only weekday activity outside of the services is a club for boys between the ages of thirteen and sixteen.

. . . . .

1. Interview with Mr. Berrios.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. From statistical records of the church.

The boys meet each Tuesday afternoon and Sunday from 9:00a.m.-12:00 p.m. The program is Bible teaching and prayer.<sup>1</sup> Children and young people are expected to attend the church services. Mr. Salas said, "if they become Christians, they don't need the church to keep them busy so they won't get into trouble." <sup>2</sup>

e. Summer Program

The church is planning to have a Daily Vacation Bible School this year, but plans are not made for it yet.<sup>3</sup>

Many children and young people are sent to camps in the summer time. The church pays their expenses and makes all necessary arrangements.<sup>4</sup>

In general, however, the summer program is not very different from the regular winter schedule.

f. Social Services

One of the seven missionaries on the staff is a social worker who deals with special problems such as housing, legal matters and going to court when necessary as an interpreter.<sup>5</sup>

The minister is also available for personal counseling at any time. All of the social services of the church are a natural expression of Christian concern and are not administered through highly organized programs.

. . . . .

1. Interview with Mr. Salas.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

g. Adult and Parent Education

Adult education is an important consideration in the program of this church.

Two-hundred and eighty adults are enrolled in a Seminary run by the church two nights a week.

The course lasts for three years, and those who have completed the requirements and graduate are eligible then to become teachers or leaders in the outposts, or officers and workers in the church. Many take the course only to increase their own knowledge and witness and not to become teachers.

There are twelve teachers on the staff. Most of them have had Seminary training elsewhere.

The curriculum is: first year, Bible; second year, witnessing and lower doctrine; third year, higher doctrines including Prophecy, the Holy Ghost and Healing.

Those who attend only pay one dollar a month to cover maintenance expenses of the school.

The staff of the church feels this program has done much to strengthen the converts of the congregation.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Leadership

The church is staffed with the minister, a secretary, who is also superintendent of the church school, and seven church missionaries with varying responsibilities for social services, visitation and helping with the sick.

There are also thirteen elders, deacons and trustees

. . . . .

1. Interview with Mr. Berrios.

who work closely with the staff for working out the details of the church program and finances.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Philosophy of Work and Main Emphases

Without a doubt prayer and evangelistic activities are the important emphases in the program of this church. All activities are either to make or strengthen Christians. In questioning Mr. Salas about weekday activities, his reply was "our only activity is prayer." <sup>2</sup>

#### F. Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the programs of four churches in East Harlem working with Puerto Ricans.

The churches chosen were very different in size, affiliation, history, leadership and ministry. Each was considered from the standpoint of its history, membership, present status, program, leadership, philosophy of work and main emphases.

The analysis will be the basis for concluding which principles and techniques are most often and widely used in ministering to Puerto Ricans.

1. Interview with Mr. Salas.
2. Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROGRAM PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES DISCOVERED  
FROM MINISTERING TO PUERTO RICANS IN EAST HARLEM

CHAPTER IV  
THE PROGRAM PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES DISCOVERED  
FOR MINISTERING TO PUERTO RICANS IN EAST HARLEM

A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to gather together the data from the analysis of the church programs in order to discover which program principles and techniques are the most often and most widely used in churches ministering to Puerto Ricans in inner city areas such as East Harlem.

B. The Programs Compared and Contrasted

To facilitate the gathering together of the materials analyzed, the chart on the following page is included to point out the similarities and contrasts in the programs of these four very different churches.

C. The Principles and Techniques Most Often and Widely Used

According to the preceding analysis it may be concluded that the most often and widely used techniques in ministering to Puerto Ricans in an inner city community are as follows:

1. Those Used by all of the Churches Studied:

- a. In all of the churches there are services conducted

CHURCHES	AFFILIATION	NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS	% OF VARIOUS LANGUAGE GROUPS	DATE ORGANIZED, MINISTRY TO PUERTO RICANS	MEMBERSHIP AVERAGE ATTENDANCE - WORSHIP	SPANISH CHURCH SERVICE	PRAYER MEETING & BIBLE STUDY
CHURCH OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOR	NEW YORK CITY MISSION SOCIETY	1	98% PUERTO RICAN 1% NEGRO 1% ITALIAN	1912, SINCE FOUNDED	250 MEMBERS 75-100 ATTEND	YES	YES
EAST HARLEM PROTESTANT PARISH CHURCH OF SON OF MAN	INDEPENDENT GROUP MINISTRY	1	98% PUERTO RICAN 1% NEGRO 1% WHITE	1948, SINCE FOUNDED	125 MEMBERS 70 ATTEND	BILINGUAL SERVICE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH	NO
JEFFERSON PARK PARISH	METHODIST CHURCH	2	100% PUERTO RICAN 100% ITALIAN	1906 PUERTO RICAN MINISTRY SINCE 1955	SPANISH NO MEMBERS 64 ATTEND ITALIAN 60 MEMBERS 50 ATTEND	YES	YES
LATIN AMERICAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF GOD, INC.	INDEPENDENT PENTECOSTAL	1	85% PUERTO RICAN 15% OTHER LATIN AMERICAN GROUPS	1935 SINCE FOUNDED	700 MEMBERS 900-1000 ATTEND	YES	YES



CE	PRAYER MEETING & BIBLE STUDY	VISITATION EVANGELISM	PROSPECTIVE CHURCH MEM- BER CLASS	INVITATION GIVEN AT SERVICE	APARTMENT PRAYER MEETINGS	RECREATION PROGRAM	SOCIAL SERVICES	INTEGRATION OF PUERTO RICANS	SPANISH CHURCH SCHOOL
	YES	YES EMPHASIS	YES	YES	YES	YES EXTENSIVE	HOUSING CLINIC CLINIC-NURSE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU CREDIT BANK COUNSELING	NO PROBLEM	YES
I NO	NO	YES EMPHASIS	YES	NO	YES	YES	HOUSING AID VIA POLIT- ICAL INFLUENCE NURSE, DR., HEALTH CLINIC CASE WORK COUNSELING EMPLOYMENT COUNSELING AGGRESSIVE ACTION A- GAINST SOCIAL EVILS	GOOD (NO SPANISH SPEAKING WOMAN'S GROUP	NO
	YES	YES EMPHASIS	YES	YES	YES	NOT YET	COOPERATION WITH COMMUNITY SERVICES	VERY GOOD ACCEPTANCE OF PUERTO RICANS BY ITALIANS IS ABOVE AVERAGE. NO SEPARATE GROUPS TO BE ORGANIZED FOR PUERTO RICANS.	YES
	YES	YES EMPHASIS	YES INFORMAL	YES	NO	NO	NO PROGRAM (INFORMALLY AND AS INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ARISE)	NO PROBLEM	YES

SERVICES	INTEGRATION OF PUERTO RICANS	SPANISH CHURCH SCHOOL	CAMPING	D.V.B.S.	FAMILY AND ADULT EDUCATION	CLUBS FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN	SIZE OF STAFF	MAIN EMPHASIS
NEW YORK BUREAU	NO PROBLEM	YES	YES EMPHASIZED	YES	YES TRAIN LAYMEN	YES FULL PRO- GRAM	30 PLUS 30 VOLUNTEERS	EVANGELISM SOCIAL SERVICES
VIA POLICE WITH CLINIC COUNSELING ON A- VILS	GOOD (NO SPANISH SPEAKING WOMAN'S GROUP	NO	YES OWN CAMP, FAMILY CAMPING	YES	YES TRAIN LAYMEN	YES	3	EVANGELISM SOCIAL SERVICES AND ACTION
WITH SERVICES	VERY GOOD ACCEPTANCE OF PUERTO RICANS BY ITALIANS IS ABOVE AVERAGE. NO SEPARATE GROUPS TO BE ORGANIZED FOR PUERTO RICANS.	YES	YES OWN CAMP FAMILY CAMPING	NOT YET	YES TRAIN LAYMEN	NOT YET	1 PLUS 1 VOLUNTEER	EVANGELISM, INTEGRATION OF PUERTO RICANS, TRAINING LAYMEN
AND AS EDS ARISE)	NO PROBLEM	YES	SOME	NOT YET	YES ADULT, NOT FAMILY	YES, NOT EMPHASIZED	9	EVANGELISM, SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE PRAYER, OUTREACH

CHAPTER IV  
THE PROGRAM PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES DISCOVERED  
FOR MINISTERING TO PUERTO RICANS IN EAST HARLEM

A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to gather together the data from the analysis of the church programs in order to discover which program principles and techniques are the most often and most widely used in churches ministering to Puerto Ricans in inner city areas such as East Harlem.

B. The Programs Compared and Contrasted

To facilitate the gathering together of the materials analyzed, the chart on the following page is included to point out the similarities and contrasts in the programs of these four very different churches.

C. The Principles and Techniques Most Often and Widely Used

According to the preceding analysis it may be concluded that the most often and widely used techniques in ministering to Puerto Ricans in an inner city community are as follows:

1. Those Used by all of the Churches Studied:

- a. In all of the churches there are services conducted

in Spanish.

b. Visitation evangelism is the chief method used for contacting the unchurched, winning them for Christ, and relating them to the church.

c. Classes for prospective church members are conducted in all of the churches.

d. All of the churches are concerned with the social and economic problems of the community, and have varying degrees of organized services for their prevention, elimination, or the relief of those oppressed by them.

e. All of the churches emphasize summer camping and vacations for their families, and especially for children. The churches take responsibility for arrangements and finances.

f. All of the churches have an active program of adult education and are especially concerned with training indigenous lay leadership.

g. All of the churches report that their main emphasis is to evangelize the unchurched Puerto Ricans by any or all means possible.

h. In all of the churches the Puerto Ricans are an integral part of the activities of the church. The only time they are singled out is for the Sunday morning worship service.

2. Those Used by at Least Three of the Churches:

a. Three of the churches have only one congregation. However, the various language groups within this one

congregation may or may not have separate activities.

b. Weekly prayer meetings or Bible studies are held in three of the churches.

c. An invitation to accept Christ is given each week at the services of three of the churches.

d. Cottage or apartment prayer meetings are held in three of the churches.

e. There is at least one session of the church school conducted in Spanish in all but one of the churches.

f. There is a strong emphasis upon family activities and parent education in all but one of the churches.

g. Three of the churches report some weekday club or recreational activities for children and young people.

#### D. The Considerations of Least Universal Importance

1. The affiliation of the churches is not a significant factor in determining the principles and techniques of their ministries.

2. The age of the congregation is not relevant to the type of ministry in which it engages. The churches range in age from five weeks to forty-three years.

3. The sizes of the memberships vary from sixty-four to seven hundred.

4. The sizes of the staffs range from two to sixty.

### E. Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to tabulate the data which was analyzed in a previous chapter in order to discover which techniques and principles of programming are most often and widely used in ministering to Puerto Ricans.

Those discovered to be most universal are using Spanish in services, visitation evangelism, church membership classes, social action and services, summer camping, adult education, training of indigenous lay leadership, an active and aggressive evangelism and the integration of Puerto Ricans into all of the activities of the church.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### A. Summary

The purpose of this study was to survey the programs of various churches in East Harlem which minister to Puerto Ricans. Most churches retreat from such intense problem areas as this one. The churches which remain must alter their programs by adopting principles and techniques which will meet the needs of the people to whom they minister. In order to understand this problem of adaptation, a specific community and cultural group was chosen as a basis for the study.

The community is East Harlem, which is a densely populated, deteriorated, inner city area in the east side of Uptown Manhattan.

The population of East Harlem is now predominantly Puerto Rican, although there are also large numbers of Negro, Italian, and Jewish people living there.

The community is unstable in every way. The economic instability breeds social evils of all sorts, such as disease, delinquency, crime and broken homes.

The educational and recreational facilities of the community are insufficient for the need, and many varieties of religious institutions are attempting to meet the spiritual



needs of the community.

The Puerto Rican people who comprise the largest single cultural group within the community have many unique problems of their own which add to the tenseness of the total situation.

The particular problems of the Puerto Ricans arriving in New York City from their native island are manifold. Language barriers are the first problem noticed and this problem often causes other difficulties, such as inability to secure good jobs. Racial discrimination is something which is faced by Puerto Ricans almost immediately. Discrimination is especially disturbing since this feeling, with its accompanying actions, does not exist in Puerto Rico. Often the Puerto Rican will retreat into ghetto life, refuse to adjust to American life, or express his rebellion in some other way as a result of this discrimination toward him. Puerto Ricans have many new adjustments to make. They must adjust from rural life to city life, from warm weather to cold weather and from one cultural pattern to a quite different one. Many of them are forced to take low paying jobs not only because of their inability to speak English but also because of their lack of vocational skill. As a result of this, many of them are on relief rolls. It has been discovered, however, that Puerto Ricans are willing to work and are anxious to become independent.

In addition to these complex problems, it has been discovered that only forty per cent of the Puerto Ricans in the

city have been reached by any church. The majority of those who have been are either Roman Catholic or Pentecostal. It has been the experience of the churches that the Puerto Ricans are very responsive to the Gospel and that when they are reached, they become zealous Christians.

The programs of various churches in East Harlem which are working with Puerto Ricans were analyzed in order to discover the principles and techniques of programming which they were using to meet the challenge of their complex community. The churches investigated for this study are very different, so that they represent a wide cross section of denominational and interdenominational ministry to Puerto Ricans. The analysis included the church's history, membership, status, program, leadership, philosophy of work and main emphases. The churches studied were Church of the Good Neighbor, a project of the New York City Mission Society; East Harlem Protestant Parish, an independent group ministry; Jefferson Park Parish, a Methodist church; and the Latin American Pentecostal Church of God, Incorporated, an independent Pentecostal church.

When the findings of this analysis were tabulated, it was discovered that certain program principles and techniques of adaptation and work were used by all of the churches, inspite of their differences. Those most often and widely used are as follows; using Spanish in worship services, visitation evangelism, church membership classes, social

action and services, summer camping, adult education, training of indigenous lay leadership, an aggressive evangelistic approach, and the inclusion and integration of Puerto Ricans into all of the activities of the church.

## B. Conclusions

The conclusions to this study are four-fold.

1. Churches should be willing to adopt the techniques and principles which have been discovered as the most effective in ministering to Puerto Ricans in inner city communities.
2. The church cannot isolate itself and withdraw from the social and economic needs of the community and its people. A concern for the spiritual needs of people must also find expression in ministering to their total personalities. The manner in which this is accomplished, however, according to the churches used for this study, differs widely. It is interesting to discover that the Pentecostal church, with its de-emphasis of social service is by far the most spiritually vital of the churches studied, and is reaching greater numbers with more lasting results. This fact is interesting for churches in such communities to note. Where there is real spiritual transformation in people the elaborate and organized social service programs are no longer as necessary as before. Spiritual transformation usually results in transformations in other areas of life as well. Although the Pentecostal church showed a concern for the social and

economic needs of people, it was from a different motivation. The problem here is not that the spiritual and social aspects of people must be separated, but of which comes first. Three of the churches begin more or less with the premise that a man cannot be reached spiritually until he is relatively free from other burdens. The Pentecostal church says in effect, that a man will naturally find help for many external problems if he is converted and living on a spiritual plane. Which approach to the social needs of men is most valid? This question can become the basis for further study in this area.

3. New York City churches must become more aggressive in their witness and mission to the great masses of unchurched Puerto Ricans in the city. The opportunity is tremendous both in terms of numbers to be reached for Christ and the Church and the responsiveness of Puerto Ricans to the Gospel.

4. The church must continually be alert to needs, problems, and characteristics of all new groups of people in its neighborhood. Traditionalism and unwillingness to change methods destroy the effectiveness of a ministry in a changing community. Usually churches will need to become more aggressive in their approach. They must go and get the people, not wait for them to come.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. Primary Sources

Questionnaire used as a basis for interviews with pastors and workers of the churches.

Interviews with pastors and workers of churches:

Church of the Good Neighbor  
The Rev. Rafael Cotto, Minister  
Mr. Warren Henry, Director of the Community Center

East Harlem Protestant Parish  
Miss Janice Sebastian, Secretary to the  
Administrative Secretary and Director of Christian  
Education in Church of the Son of Man.

Jefferson Park Parish  
The Rev. John K. Vincent, Minister

The Latin American Pentecostal Church of God, Inc.  
The Rev. Abelardo Berrios, Minister  
Mr. Miguel Salas, Secretary and Superintendent  
of the Church School.

Statistical Records of the churches:

Church of the Good Neighbor  
Community Center of Church of the Good Neighbor

East Harlem Protestant Parish

The Latin American Pentecostal Church of God, Inc.

East Harlem Protestant Parish, Newsletter, April, 1954.

East Harlem Protestant Parish, Monthly Reports to the  
Administrative Board; May, 1953, May, 1954, September,  
1954, December, 1954.

"Going Down This Street Lord", a leaflet printed by the  
East Harlem Protestant Parish.

Kihss, Peter, "Puerto Rico and Us", The New York Times,  
February 23, 24, 25, 1953.

Miller, Kenneth D., Man and God in the City, Friendship  
Press, New York, 1954.

Ruoss, Meryl, Midcentury Pioneers and Protestants, Department of Church Planning and Research of the Protestant Council of the City of New York, March, 1954.

Puerto Ricans in New York City, a Welfare Council report, February, 1948.

The Puerto Ricans of New York City, Employment and Migration Bureau, Puerto Rico Department of Labor, New York.

## B. Secondary Sources

### Books

Douglass, H. Paul, How To Study the City Church, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1928.

Scotford, John R., Within These Borders, Friendship Press, New York, 1953.

### Articles

Blizzard, Samuel W., The Eternal Church in the Changing Community, Social Progress, Volume 47, Number 7, March, 1954.

Project May Rise In Misery Street. New York Times, September 13, 1954.

Puerto Ricans in New York. Latin America Today, Volume 3, Number 5, May, 1953.

Webber, George W., About the Store-Front Churches in Harlem, Outreach, Volume 5, Number 2, February, 1951.

Williams, Robert, Jobs Beckon-Migrants Fill the Need, New York Post, July 24, 1953.

### Reports

Conclusions of Migration Conference, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Department of Labor, March, 1953.

United States Employment Service, Labor Market Development Report, August-September, 1947.

APPENDIX



## QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_

Kind or Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

### I. General Information

Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_ %Puerto Rican \_\_\_\_\_

Average Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School \_\_\_\_\_ Average

Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ %Puerto Rican \_\_\_\_\_. Do you have

more than one congregation? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what are they?

\_\_\_\_\_ What is the membership of each? \_\_\_\_\_

### II. History and Background

Date of Organization \_\_\_\_\_ To whom did the church minister  
when organized? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the present congregation

the same (culturally and racially) as when organized? \_\_\_\_\_

Method of securing present congregation: community survey?

\_\_\_\_\_ visitation? \_\_\_\_\_ comparing church membership

list with school enrollment? \_\_\_\_\_ Other methods? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe \_\_\_\_\_

Has the congregation increased or decreased in the past five

years? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the percentage of increase or decrease?

\_\_\_\_\_ Average number of members joining per year \_\_\_\_\_.

### III. Program

#### A. Church School

When is Sunday School held? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have

separate Sunday School classes for various language groups?

\_\_\_\_\_ What lesson material do you use? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Church Services and Spiritual Life

When do you have Church services? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have

separate services for various language groups? \_\_\_\_\_

Midweek prayer meetings? \_\_\_\_\_ for various language

groups? \_\_\_\_\_ Bible study groups? \_\_\_\_\_ for vari-

ous groups? \_\_\_\_\_. Other services meeting spiritual

needs \_\_\_\_\_. What efforts do you make

in the area of evangelism? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. Do you have classes for those who are pre-

paring to join the church? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Weekday Program

Do you have a weekday school? \_\_\_\_\_ released time? \_\_\_\_\_

other? \_\_\_\_\_. Time held \_\_\_\_\_ Enrollment \_\_\_\_\_

Number of teachers \_\_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson material used \_\_\_\_\_ Supervision by church? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ? Other? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have organized social and recreational activities? \_\_\_\_\_

List the clubs you have for children: with their program and

the age group they are designed for:

Club

Program

Age

How often do they meet? \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership \_\_\_\_\_

Do you include Christian Education in the program? \_\_\_\_\_

List the clubs you have for young people with their program and the age group they are designed for:

Club

Program

Age

Do these groups include all language groups and races? \_\_\_\_\_

Is Christian Education included in the program? \_\_\_\_\_

How often do they meet? \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any special children or youth activities for Puerto Ricans? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a daily vacation Bible School? \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_  
length of daily session \_\_\_\_\_ Enrollment last year \_\_\_\_\_.

Do the children and young people of your church attend summer camps and conferences? \_\_\_\_\_ Which camps? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the church pay their way? \_\_\_\_\_

How are delegates chosen? \_\_\_\_\_

Community Services

Does your church take an active part in programs of welfare to the total community? \_\_\_\_\_ Describe.

Do you have any program designed to help in such problems as:  
(Use back of sheet if necessary)

Housing? \_\_\_\_\_

Police Protection? \_\_\_\_\_

Health? \_\_\_\_\_

Employment? \_\_\_\_\_

Education? \_\_\_\_\_

Family Services? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you get involved with such problems even if you have no specific program?

Do you have counseling services? \_\_\_\_\_

Adult and Parent Education:

Do you conduct English classes? \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Length of sessions \_\_\_\_\_ Enrollment \_\_\_\_\_

Do you reach mainly church members with these classes? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you reach any neighborhood people? \_\_\_\_\_ Do any join the

church as a result of these classes? \_\_\_\_\_ Is Christ-

ian teaching included? \_\_\_\_\_

What organizations and clubs do you have for adults? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have separate organizations and activities for the

Puerto Rican adults? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have other kinds of adult education? \_\_\_\_\_ If so,  
describe briefly:

Do you have any program of parent training? \_\_\_\_\_ Do church  
school teachers visit in the homes regularly? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have parent-teacher meetings? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe briefly any other program your church has for adults

### Leadership

How many staff members do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ What are their responsibilities? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have any volunteer staff? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you make special effort to train church officers and develop leadership from the congregation? \_\_\_\_\_ Describe:

How many Sunday School teachers do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ Weekday \_\_\_\_\_ Clubs and Activities \_\_\_\_\_ What provision is made for teacher training? \_\_\_\_\_

### Puerto Ricans

Describe as fully as possible the following three items:

1. Is the Puerto Rican program in your church integrated with the rest or is it a separate department? Try to include an analysis of reasons, attitudes and problems involved?
2. What do you consider the special emphases in your church program? (spiritual, educational, evangelistic, social action, welfare, counseling, community center, settlement house, etc.) ?
3. How has your work with Puerto Ricans necessitated adaptations or alterations in the total ministry of your church? What kinds of adaptation were necessary, what problems were involved, etc.?





*No grass grows on Misery Street.  
Cement and iron streets  
are playgrounds of the poor.*





"No matter how I fix these rooms, they don't look nice." Pale and tired, the 90-pound mother serves supper in shifts, scrubs the kitchen bathtub, beds her family on couches and in a black bedroom. There are no sheets. Scarcely enough food. Never enough money to need a hudoor





Trash cans are the trees of Misery Street. To some, they give food. To others, a place to climb or sit. In the life of the street there are death and worse things. To keep alive: "Never squeal. Never rat."



When street lights go on, talk to pals. But watch out for guys you don't know. Around here they carry switchblades, razors or zip guns and don't hesitate to use them.