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An 23

SURVEY OF METHODS AND TECHNIQUES  
IN MAKING THE BIBLE RELEVANT  
TO YOUTH IN THE INNER CITY

By

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## INTRODUCTION

The communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, of the gift of spiritual regeneration of the individual is the God-given work of every believer and every body of believers. Tradition and convention have grown up around time-honored methods of the Church. Society and culture have changed, but the Church and its methods have not, in many cases. Modern Christian educators have come to the place where they have had to re-think and reconstruct their methods of education, in order to translate the gospel into the language of modern society.

Because of the characteristics of the culture of the inner city, and the resulting effect upon personality, the Church has been quite ineffective in reaching the youth in this area, for Jesus Christ. These young people are not even touched by the conventional methods of the Church, and the problem, at present, is to find techniques which will make the Bible relevant to them. Appeal to these youth is important, as well as ways of applying Biblical truth, and is similarly difficult to discover.

It is the purpose of this paper to delineate some of the problems which confront the Church in the inner city, in this specific phase of its work -- the youth.

It will deal with the particular sociological problems

of the inner city, and youth culture in an area of this kind, and the psychological factors involved in and resulting from this type of environment. The sources used have been references dealing with sociological and psychological aspects of the inner city culture, concentrating upon juvenile delinquency and gang culture.

There will be a consideration of a sampling of methods which have been used in some inner city churches and church-related organizations in New York City. Observations of methods at three churches have been a primary source: Church of the Good Neighbor; Church of the Son of Man; and one church-related organization, the Centurion Christian Cadet Corps.

## I. PROBLEMS OF THE INNER CITY

### A. Introduction

During the last century, the increasing reorganization in urban society has resulted in major upheavals in many areas of life. The impact of change in the United States from a relatively simple agricultural society to a complicated industrial one has magnified mobility and speed to such an extent that the individuals involved become confused and disoriented. The greater mobility of the large city has an unstabilizing effect, and social experience becomes more and more impersonal.<sup>1</sup>

In the very heart of the metropolis, there is an area of transitional neighborhoods, business districts, where transportation facilities, communications, department stores, etc., have their focus. This is essentially an area of low income, with the available housing usually border-line, or slum area. This is the "inner city", a district which is often not very large, but harbors some of the most unhappy, hopeless, and helpless people in the world.<sup>2</sup>

This is the part of the city which has the greatest accumulation of social needs. A large majority of these

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1. Miller: Man and God in the City, p. 32.

2. Ibid., p. 99.

people are newcomers to the city, of varying ethnic groups; Negroes, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, some are the residue of older immigrant groups, others are people who have been lured from rural areas by the high wages of industry. The problems which confront them in the inner city are those of poverty, disease, delinquency and housing.

These, however, are the kinds of problem which result from the physical deterioration, deprivation of the area. There is also the deeper kind of problem which faces the people of the city -- problems which have deeper implications, and which often arise out of the externalities.

Anonymity is a featured pattern of human relationships in the inner city. Impersonality characterizes superficial contacts, and the speed at which society moves contributes to the loneliness, the friendlessness, that the individual experiences. Anxieties and fears are magnified, tension becomes greater, and extreme secularism and materialism intensify the superficiality of relationship and rootlessness. With such impersonality of society, there is no feeling of responsibility, few ethical or cultural standards, and there is a general moral sag, breakdown of home and marriage.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. Housing

The housing problem is one of great concern in the in-

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1. Ibid., p. 76.

ner city. Low rents are related to low incomes, unemployment, inadequate space per person, a lack of light and air, all of which raise the possibility of disease. The noise, smoke and dirt of the city can be psychologically devastating, and the cheap amusements, certain forms of vice found in these areas are designed to appeal to the discouraged, the pleasure-seeking, those looking for respite, for escape from misery and squalor.<sup>1</sup>

The disease rate is high, and is complicated by lack of facilities for cleanliness, sanitation, health education, and medical service. Tuberculosis and venereal disease probably hold greatest precedence. Huge epidemics are controllable with modern medical knowledge, but contagion is still one of the biggest problems in these areas. Malnutrition is common, partly because of the poverty, and also because of the lack of education among the people.<sup>2</sup>

#### C. Minority groups

Minority groups are predominant in inner city areas, and competition between them often is high. The preponderant majority of Negroes, for instance, is found in the lowest income brackets, and comprises 20%-27% of the juvenile delinquency in the U.S. since 1929 -- even though the total Negro population accounts for only 10% of the general pop-

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1. Kincheloe: The American City and Its Church, p. 65.
2. Hallenbeck : American Urban Communities, p. 357.

ulation. It has been found that individuals who belong to minority groups, racial, religious, or national -- are frequently subjected to pressures above and beyond those in the same general society. Often they are labelled on sight as "nigger", "wops", "micks", "white trash", or "spicks", and rejected by the dominant group in the community.<sup>1</sup> The exclusion of members of minority groups from major streams of community life intensifies frustration, aggressive tendencies and insecurity feelings. The personality of the Negro, for instance, is the product of his reactions to a social order in which he is regarded as belonging to a subordinate group, and such an attitude makes for constant pressure and frustrations.<sup>2</sup> Race and nationality groups often compete for work and housing, a condition which also leads to prejudice and antagonism.<sup>3</sup>

#### D. Recreation

Recreational facilities in the inner city are at a low standard, and there are few, if any, in some areas, which function as beneficial agents of the community. Leisure-time activities in the city consist usually of commercialized recreation, with much competition for stimulation and excitement, in the form of sex immoralities, the use of drugs,

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1. Webb: The Churches and Juvenile Delinquency, p. 19.
2. Banay: Youth in Despair, pp. 93, 199.
3. Kincheloe, op. cit., p. 42.



influences of bars, poolhalls, and night clubs.<sup>1</sup> The thirst for excitement and entertainment is a characteristic of urban people, and in city life, it is comparatively free from community and family controls. The nature of work in the city -- highly industrialized and routine, with a short working day -- makes the problem of leisure-time activities a difficult and important one.<sup>2</sup>

#### E. Work

Personality is very closely related to man's work; and it is second only to family relationships. In rural life, sharing work is basic. In the city, it is the sole means of livelihood for those near the subsistence level. Here the democratic implications and ideas of work are being thwarted in the fact that skills are often not needed, and jobs are obtained through graft. Unemployment, therefore, is not only a problem economically, but psychologically, because it produces personal demoralization.<sup>3</sup>

#### F. Education

Schools in the city are overcrowded, understaffed, and teachers are underpaid, generally speaking. Less than 20% of the teacher training institutions in 1931 had courses in mental hygiene, and approximately 15% of the total teaching

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1. Ibid., p. 37.
2. Ibid., p. 83.
3. Ibid., p. 145.

body had emergency or substandard licenses, according to one survey of American schools. Because the enrollment in schools has steadily increased, and the variety of courses has been augmented, along both vocational and academic line, guidance service has become necessary. Budgetary provision has never been sufficient, however, and this can be conducted only on a limited scale.<sup>1</sup> Education in most large-city public school systems consists of little more than the dispensing of knowledge that may or may not be necessary for satisfying living.<sup>2</sup> In a recent article, Time magazine (December 8, 1958), quoted an editor of the New York World Telegram and Sun, on a series of articles which exposed conditions in the metropolitan schools; "We studied every article carefully and toned down all of them. Conditions are much worse than what we said."

In studies of twenty-one American cities, over a period of twenty years, there is high correlation of juvenile delinquency with areas of social disorganization. Although delinquency is not confined to these areas, and thrives in communities where the standards of living are relatively high, lack of physical and psychological stability results in behavior classified as delinquent.<sup>3</sup>

#### G. Summary

The inner city, then, is more than a physically defined

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1. McGill and Matthews: Youth of New York City, p. 111.
2. Banay, op. cit., p. 195.
3. Ibid., p. 139.

area -- it is also an area of social disorganization, of physical and psychological problems of amazing magnitude. The factors delineated here are only a few, but serve to outline the situation, and to point out the interrelatedness of these conditions. Low income and high rents lead to crowding, unwholesome relationships among people, heighten the incidence of disease; rapidly changing neighborhoods and communities lead to physical instability, which results in rootlessness, lack of a sense of moral and social responsibility, and an impersonality of relationships which has deep psychological implications for the individual. This is an overall view of the society known as the "inner city", which is identified by the intricate web of characteristic factors in which many people are helpless victims.

## II. YOUTH CULTURE IN THE INNER CITY

### A. Introduction

This paper is particularly concerned with youth in the inner city, and methods of reaching them. In order to determine the best ways available, one must be familiar, not only with the society in general, but with the individual, and his immediate concerns. One must identify the individual and attempt to understand him through a consideration of dynamic influences in his life.

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Because of the nature of the inner city, and its problems, one finds that a large percentage of a city's delinquency originates here. It surely is not confined to this area, and not all the youth of this area are delinquent, by any means. Because of the high concentration, however, there is a need for understanding this problem also.

B. Definition of delinquent and pre-delinquent

Delinquency is seen as a product of an area's patterns of life.<sup>1</sup> The child who becomes delinquent is not fundamentally different from the non-delinquent but is usually making a rather normal human response to the kind of life situation he is experiencing.<sup>2</sup>

To clarify this thought, one must look at the definitions of juvenile delinquency, as stated from various points of view. The legal definition states that juvenile delinquency constitutes any act which, if committed by an adult, would be a crime -- the violation of any law of community, state or nation. This, by definition, includes any town by-laws or city ordinances, "or commission of any offense not punishable by death" (Massachusetts). A wayward child is "one between 7 and 17 who habitually associates with vicious or immoral persons, or who is growing up in circumstances exposing him to lead an immoral, vicious or criminal life."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Miller: Understanding and Preventing Juvenile Delinquency, p. 113
2. Ibid., p. 79
3. Glueck : Delinquents in the Making p. 6.

The psychiatrist, on the other hand, has a slightly different connotation: "juvenile delinquency is a pattern of behavior manifested by a youth below 18 that is contrary to the laws of the land, and accepted mores, and that is anti-social."<sup>1</sup> It is that interpretation with which society is concerned, at a stage in the child's maladjustment where he not only places himself in danger, but his acts may endanger general security.<sup>2</sup> These conditions or maladjustments may be brought about by environmental deprivation, conflict within the home, or psychiatric difficulties.

The Christian should define juvenile delinquency in terms of Christlike concern for the young lives that are being affected, lost to happy and meaningful existence. The proper perspective must be maintained, especially since there is much confusion as to the definition of delinquency. This leads to inconsistency in law, statistics, opinion, and practice.<sup>3</sup> In an article concerning a report on juvenile delinquency in North America by Dr. Paul W. Tappan, professor of sociology and law at New York University, the New York Times (August 2, 1958) stated: "Growing confusion as to what type of child should be handled by the juvenile court is a striking characteristic of the treatment of the situation in

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1. Fine: 1,000,000 Delinquents, p. 31
2. Glueck, op. cit., p. 7
3. Miller, op. cit., pp. 18, 20

in the U.S." The Times also stated that courts have lost all regard to standards of social behavior, and lack of agreement as to the causes of delinquent behavior has resulted in vague, imprecise ideas of such conduct.

In addition, in recent years, a new term of classification of some of these youth has been coined -- "pre-delinquent youth". These are children who live in any area of deprivation, whose environment and circumstances are predisposing factors toward delinquency, but who have not yet been categorized as such in the legal sense. They are usually young people who have shown a marked tendency toward antisocial behavior.

The age of these delinquent youth is largely between 14 and 18, with the average age of the girls being slightly higher. The Gluecks found, in their study, that the average age at first court appearance was 12.4 years. The boys outnumber the girls; most of the boys are brought into court for stealing, or aggressive behavior injurious to others. The girls, on the other hand, are brought to court for behavior considered injurious to themselves. The girls are most frequently involved in sexual offenses, and seldom in typically male offenses involving property and aggression.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp1 21-22

### C. Home and family

The foregoing describes delinquent youth as a group; for even the beginning of a sympathetic understanding, it is necessary to consider the individual. "The delinquent as a person" --E.W. Burgess-- is one who has certain wishes and attitudes, and seeks their fulfillment in human relationships where he has significant place or role.<sup>1</sup> In the circumstances which permeate the inner city, these desires for satisfactory human relationships are thwarted. These obstructions, in turn, have initiated the feelings of dissatisfaction, deprivation, inner conflict, and inadequacy which precede delinquent behavior.<sup>2</sup>

Most immediate, and most influential of these relationships is that of the family. Authorities disagree as to the cause or causes of delinquency, but all agree as to the primacy of the family as a predisposing cause. The effect of city life on the family is the breaking down of relations between members by a lack of common interest, and a lack of opportunity for participation in common tasks.<sup>3</sup> In the families of delinquents, divorce and desertion rates are higher; bonds, such as economic, religious, protective, educational and recreational ties, are not as strong.<sup>4</sup> The

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1. Kincheloe, op. cit., p. 80
2. Healy and Bronner: *New Light on Delinquency & Its Treatment*, p. 132
3. Kincheloe, op. cit., p. 60ff.
4. Ibid., p. 62

Gluecks found less planning of household routine, less cultural atmosphere, less family self-respect, less ambition to improve status on the part of the parents, or the parents for the children. The supervision of the children is usually lax, with little provision for recreational outlets within the home.<sup>1</sup>

It is generally accepted in the field of psychology that the first six years of a child's life determine his character. There is much available data which proves how important it is for a child to feel wanted and loved by his mother from the beginning. The child's desperate need for love is a universal phenomenon, and rejection will almost always produce a traumatic effect on an infant's personality.<sup>2</sup> This is rarely a single act of rejection, or one experience; it is manifested in various ways -- frequent beatings, face-slappings, turning away from a child's efforts to show affection and to gain the parent's affection and approval.<sup>3</sup>

As the child grows older, the father's influence on the child grows. He represents authority, and the method (or lack of it) in administering authority, is tremendously important in developing respect for authority outside the home. The child needs a "father figure", someone with whom

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1. Fine, op. cit., p. 76
2. Ibid., p. 54
3. Ibid., p. 78



to identify himself, who is stronger and wiser. This is especially important with boys.<sup>1</sup>

Broken homes, then, divorced parents, or parents who are not compatible, or those who are emotionally disturbed or maladjusted, will have a detrimental effect on the personalities of their children, possibly permanently damaging. The emotional and physical deprivations implicit in such conditions are a main cause of juvenile delinquency.

Children are more affected by what their parents do than by what they say. They learn by imitation, and the behavior patterns of the parents have a strong influence. In rebelling against actions of the parents which they consider unjust, children often assume the same attitudes as their parents. Through early association with parents, children form their concepts of right and wrong.<sup>2</sup> Another main cause of delinquency centers in a lack of unity of cultural and moral values in the family and neighborhood.<sup>3</sup> "The majority of offenders between 16 and 19 that I have seen have been deprived of moral guidance in the home. There has been an absence of affection and love. All they see and hear is how to make a fast buck." Irving Ben Cooper, Chief Justice of Court of Special Sessions, quoted in the New York Times, February 13, 1959.

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1. Ibid., p. 60
2. Ibid., p. 70
3. Kincheloe, op. cit., p. 80

In the families of delinquents, there is little provision for recreational activities (in the comparison of 500 delinquents with 500 non-delinquents), for the family unit as a group; such as picnicking, going to the beach together, auto riding, visiting relatives, and attending movies together. Group recreations were not at all customary among two-thirds of the families of the delinquents. This failure to foster recreational outlets in the family group manifests the lack of the cohesiveness. The boys' reliance upon their own devices is aggravated by the parents' lack of interest in the home, encouraging friends to visit, making it attractive.<sup>1</sup>

Just as all relationships within a family react on each other in a dynamic way, so society and home and the institutions of society form a dynamic chain. Parents are products of their homes and of society, and society is a community made up of many parents. The relationships are a kind of infinity of interdependence; therefore the home cannot be truly separated from influences of society or of the times. It is necessary, consequently, to look at juvenile delinquency as a symptom of a more general sickness of society.<sup>2</sup>

Modern culture, especially in underprivileged urban areas, is highly complex and ill-defined because of the many conflicting values. The adaptive capacities and powers

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1. Glueck, op. cit., p. 52

2. Fine, op. cit., p. 107

demanded of the child in such a culture are numerous, involved, often subtle, and can be most inconsistent. This is true, not only of the culture, but of the home, school, and the neighborhood. For instance, the child is told he must be honest, non-aggressive, self-controlled; but on every hand he runs into vivid contradictory attitudes, values and behavior in an environment that to a large degree rewards selfishness, aggression, a predatory attitude and success by any means. It "does not require the wisdom of a Seneca to convince the child, early in life, that successful and fortunate crime is called virtue."<sup>1</sup> During the earliest years, therefore, there must be the difficult task of "internalization" of ideals and symbols of authority, which is so crucial. The home climate becomes of utmost importance in developing desirable attitudes, and behavior standards.

#### D. Psychologic factors and traits

Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck have done valuable studies in the area of juvenile delinquency, particularly in the comparison of 500 delinquent boys with 500 non-delinquent boys from similar underprivileged areas. They discovered that in the prevailing economic-cultural level, both groups have a comparable proportion of feelings of being unwanted, unloved, not taken care of, or not being taken seriously. Feelings of not being wanted or loved generally are regarded as a powerful cause of delinquency. It is found, though, to exist in

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1. Glueck, op. cit., p. 179

similar proportions in both the delinquent and the non-delinquent.<sup>1</sup>

Miller has observed that similarities which delinquents exhibit are statistical majorities and universal characteristics, and do not lend credence to the idea that delinquents are categorically different from non-delinquents in make-up. They are marked by characteristics found in disadvantaged social position and opportunity.<sup>2</sup> The Gluecks, on the other hand, have discovered that certain characteristics which are found in both groups, can be seen intensified in the delinquent group.

There is a significantly higher proportion of delinquent boys who are characterized by feelings of not being recognized or appreciated, and who have feelings of resentment. In basic emotional attitudes, the delinquent is slightly more self-assertive than the non-delinquent, and far more socially defiant, less submissive, and more ambivalent to authority.<sup>3</sup> There is also a lower incidence in delinquents of anxiety or insecurity, helplessness and powerlessness, and the fear of failure and defeat.

There is markedly less cooperation in the attitudes toward those with whom the delinquent group associated, and a larger proportion of them seem to have conscious or un-

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1. Ibid., p. 146-147
2. Miller, op. cit., p. 28
3. Glueck, loc. cit.

conscious hostility, are suspicious of the motives of others, and are more destructive. They seem, on the whole, to have an exaggeratedly defensive attitude toward life.<sup>1</sup> They are usually forceful, dynamic, and restlessly energetic, impulsive, extroverted, and slightly more aggressive; they tend largely to be suggestible and quite stubborn.<sup>2</sup> More delinquents than non-delinquents tended toward the inclination to indulge their appetites, and have a tendency to get hold of material things or money beyond any desire for immediate use (acquisitiveness). They are quite deficient in aesthetic sensibility, and tend to be more interested in the materialistic. One of the striking differences between the two groups of boys was the lack of conventionality among the delinquents, and the lesser degree of conscientiousness, i.e. they are much less scrupulous about achieving their aims. They also tend to be less critical of themselves.<sup>3</sup> Their methods of resolving conflicts are by giving overt expression to them in feeling and/or action (extroversion). They refuse to take responsibility for their behavior, letting the pressure of their feelings work itself off in direct action without much inhibition. They have little concern whether their behavior is criminalistic, or otherwise. On the other hand, non-delinquents develop many inhibitory mechanisms,

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1. Ibid., p. 152
2. Ibid., p. 131
3. Ibid., p. 133.

turning inward upon themselves, which result in a tense overalertness.<sup>1</sup>

In the area of intelligence, the most significant differences are not in I.Q., but in areas of abstract intelligence -- vocabulary, information, comprehension -- in which the delinquent group is deficient. This is partially due to the high incidence of truancy.<sup>2</sup> Most of the delinquents are found to be unrealistic in their thinking, and lack common sense, are unmethodical in their approach to mental problems -- a characteristic which can be related to persistent anti-social behavior. Since the delinquent is prone to direct and concrete expression, rather than symbolic intellectualizing, he will approach meaning in intellectual tasks by direct physical relationships, with only a minimum of dependence on intermediate symbols or abstract thinking. These are the mental tendencies which are likely to be most involved with the general processes of socialization and adjustment to the realistic demands of life.<sup>3</sup> Actually, the relatively high intelligence of delinquents is astonishing, considering their average level of accomplishment. Self-esteem, however, plays an important part, because where it is low, there is mistrust of one's mental capacities.

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1. Ibid., p. 136-137
2. Ibid., p. 121
3. Ibid., p. 127-128

The expectation of failure is likely to insure actual failure. Thus, the image of self -- physical, as well as mental -- is of primary importance.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Louis E. Raths, New York University School of Education, has completed a study of emotional needs of children which affect their learning. He found that the primary needs were: 1) the need for belonging; 2) need for achievement; 3) need for economic security; 4) need to be free from fear; 5) need for love and affection; 6) need to be free from intense guilt feelings; 7) need for personal integrity; 8) need for understanding and knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

There is a high proportion of delinquents, therefore, who fail to make a satisfactory school adjustment, and this failure makes impossible the provision for the emotional satisfaction in the achievement of skills, as well as the establishment of social relationships. Educational requirements are not fulfilled, as a result, and truancy often appears as a first offense.<sup>3</sup>

The school's responsibility, on the other hand, is to equip the individual with skills by which he may earn a living, teach him to think clearly and independently, help him to get along with other people and to accept obligations

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1. Banay, op. cit., p. 115
2. Fine, op. cit., p. 158
3. Banay, op. cit., p. 51

that come with living as part of the group.<sup>1</sup> Considering the conditions known to be prevalent in the physical and psychological climate of the inner city, the general deficiency in knowledges, the truancy, and slowness in school are explained to a large extent.

There is a definite preference among delinquents for adventurous, exciting forms of entertainment and recreation, which probably results from the greater restlessness of this group. There is far more movie attendance, for the vicarious excitement of forms of life yet unexperienced and desirable. The favorite activities include stealing rides, hopping trucks; late hours, roaming streets; smoking and drinking at an early age; running away from home, gambling, setting fires; generally destructive mischief. They mainly seek recreation in areas at a distance from their homes -- in vacant lots, waterfronts, railroad yards; poolrooms, dance halls, penny arcades, places of commercialized recreation.<sup>2</sup> Delinquent, and some non-delinquent, boys have a lesser desire for organized and supervised activities, which is indicated by the necessity of more urging for them to take part in the programs of clubs, settlement houses. They expressed a decided dislike or contempt for controlled recreation.<sup>3</sup>

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1. U.S. Dept. of Labor Children's Bureau: Understanding Juvenile Delinquency, pamphlet, p. 12.
2. Glueck, op. cit., p. 86
3. Ibid., p. 91



Playgrounds and recreational facilities are inadequate and sadly lacking in these areas, but the maladjusted child escapes these limitations. He prefers the street to the playground, the gang to athletic clubs, and spends his leisure time standing on the street corner or in the motion picture theatre.<sup>1</sup>

#### E. Gang culture

The term most often associated with juvenile delinquency in modern society is the "gang". Contrary to the beliefs which have revolved around this particular association, the "gang" is not inherently vicious, but it is an expression of the growing child's need for companionship and for group activity at this time (usually adolescence) in his life. Its influence is great because it answers the boy's needs, and he gets a feeling of belonging and of loyalty to the group. He finds his desire for companionship and adventure satisfied, he has recognition, and also the discipline that he needs and wants. The adolescent is especially responsive and sensitive to the attitudes and judgments of his peer group.<sup>2</sup> The child needs to identify with a group, for conviction of personal value is found by each individual through this type of identification.

In the inner city culture, however, the gang is outside

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1. Banay, op. cit., p. 61

2. U.S. Dept. of Labor, op. cit., p. 14

the pale of society, usually, and sets itself against society. The conditions which confront the individual tend toward a destructive pattern of life. The child who is unwanted at home, with no sense of identification there or with his school-mates, drifts gradually into the gang. Sometimes he is obliged to join the gang for self-protection. He finds strength with those who are in like circumstances, and the solidarity of the group is enhanced with every victory over another group or society in general.<sup>1</sup> Here he finds prestige, emotional security, and an outlet for aggressive tendencies, and the discipline that actually he likes. The gang sets up and develops its own codes and rules of behavior, and demands obedience. The control of such a group often becomes stronger than that of the family or social group.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, it is a primary group, loyalty to which is a universal requirement, and within which a kind of brotherhood develops.

Barriers of an unsympathetic social blindness between the gangs and conventional American society have isolated the gang. There is an inability of either to understand the other, and the deep significance of the lack of cultural communion cannot be overemphasized. As a consequence, the gang member moves in his own universe, partly from choice and partly

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1. Banay, op. cit., p. 58

2. U.S. Dept. of Labor, op. cit., p. 14

by force of circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

The gang may be a natural organization, resulting from varying pressures and patterns outside and within the group. It often represents a spontaneous effort of boys to create a society for themselves where none adequate to their needs exists. It has its beginning, then, in acquaintanceship and intimate relationships which have already developed on the basis of some common interest. It acquires definite group-consciousness when it excites disapproval and opposition within the larger society. There is continuous flux and flow of members, and little permanence in most of the groups.<sup>2</sup> Conflict and competition threaten solidarity internally, and ultimate status is due to these interpersonal relationships. Each member has his role imposed upon him by group discipline, his own personality, and by performance of the role characteristic of him. In the struggle within the gang to acquire status, personality habits develop out of the roles each member assumes. Participation usually is of prime importance, although the criteria for prestige differ in each gang. Roles evolve as a result of group experience, fighting being one of the chief means of determining status.<sup>3</sup>

There is wide divergence in the character of the gang;

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1. Thrasher: The Gang, p. 253
2. Ibid., p. 35-6
3. Ibid., p. 330ff.

it varies in membership, type of leader, mode of organization, interests and activities, and status. Each gang tends to undergo a natural evolution, from a diffuse and loosely organized group into a solidified unit. The first, the diffuse type, has no lasting solidarity, the bonds of loyalty are weak, and natural leaders are definitely not recognized. The conventionalized type may be social, athletic, pleasure, or even political. It is often organized under the initiative of the members, but sometimes is encouraged by an agency, politician, tavern-owner, etc. If given good supervision, it may become thoroughly socialized; otherwise, it may be a destructive and demoralizing influence. A third type, the criminal, does not become conventionalized at all, but drifts into habitual crime.<sup>1</sup>

There are many ways of controlling the group discipline -- one of the main mechanisms of control is ridicule, which defines what a boy must not do if he wishes to maintain status. Fear of violence or physical harm is another of the chief mechanisms of control. The leader of the group has considerable power if he does not abuse it.

Marks of leadership differ in each gang. The most influential trait is probably fearlessness. Quickness, firmness of decision, the ability to back up words with action, and a convincing manner, are characteristics generally found in a leader. The imaginative boy has a good chance of being

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1. Ibid., p. 58ff.

leader. The function of leadership is an inevitable growth out of conflicts and other activities. The character of the gang is determined largely by habits, attitudes and interests previously acquired by its members, particularly with references to the leader.<sup>1</sup>

The structured gang often has a leadership clique with titles, offices and responsibilities. The Cobras, for instance (a fighting gang in Brooklyn), are divided into two categories, the Big People and the Little People (Negro street gangs are usually divided in this manner). The Big People are the core of the fighting gang, composed of those whose ages are between 16 and 19, approximately. The Little People are about 9 or 10 to 15. The Big People have a top echelon of a President, Vice-President, War Counselor (intelligence, tactics) and Gunsmith or Armorer (weapons and logistics).<sup>2</sup>

Leadership often follows a fairly definite cycle; the first being the normal adolescent leader with only a few pathological tendencies. When conflict sharpens, a new leader emerges -- a disturbed, homicidal individual who generally has a quick inglorious end; the third stage is the controlled, cool "organization man", who dictates gang policy, with the members having little voice.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 344ff.

2. Salisbury: The Shook-Up Generation, p. 20-1

3. Ibid., p. 27

These gangs are highly organized, with "brother clubs" with which they are friendly, auxiliary clubs of girls, known as "debs", and younger children. Geography, rather than ethnic differences usually determines the gang composition. Because they are more accustomed, in these deprived areas, to resolve their problems by physical action or physical violence, these groups constitute a serious threat to their own well-being and that of the surrounding area.

#### F. Summary

The youth culture of the inner city is complex and varied; many factors are at work here, and one must not only understand the dynamics of interaction, but be sympathetic with the patterns and phenomena which make up such a culture. This is the period of readjustment between childhood and maturity, and has become a prison of behavior patterns for those adolescents caught in it. Psychological factors, arising and nurtured in the home, find their expression in the peer group, or in the gang. There is a real desire to escape from this prison, but the difficulty lies in their ignorance of how to go about breaking out, and the lack of strength to cope with stubborn reality.

### III. SECULAR RESPONSE

#### A. Introduction

Secular organizations in the concerned community have

responded to the needs of the inner city in many ways. Concerning the problem of delinquency, which is important, but not by any means the most important, there are three types of program which have been presented: 1) that type which deals with the general socio-economic conditions that affect the entire culture and is remotely related to delinquency itself; 2) the type which is not organized chiefly to cope with delinquency, but still has an indirect and incidental relationship to the problem; 3) that which is set up to deal specifically with conditions that presumably make for delinquency.<sup>1</sup> The primary focus must be with the underlying factors, as well as they can be determined -- the traits of the delinquent himself, his family life, school, and employment of leisure time. "A crying need of the times in this field is a preventive medicine of personality and character. -- In delinquency we are dealing, not with predestination, but with destination."<sup>2</sup>

B. New York City Youth Board

The New York City Youth Board, established in 1948, has introduced an organized effort on a neighborhood level, to combat juvenile delinquency. This program stresses "grass-roots" participation of residents, the strengthening of adult leadership.

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1. Glueck, op. cit., p. 192

2. Ibid., p. 193

The Youth Board has done a great deal of work with teenage street gangs, and has developed principles and methods that other organizations might well employ. In a monograph concerning making contact with the gangs, the group worker reported that he first walked around the assigned neighborhood to locate the places where the young people might congregate. He noted the unserved natural groups, and their place of meeting. He spent time on front stoops, in candy stores, playgrounds and parks, talking to the children, becoming acquainted with them, their social habits, to a certain extent. Information about groups he gleaned from candy-store owners, playground directors, religious leaders, school principals, police, and commercial recreation personnel.

As far as possible, the worker responds to the needs and interests of the group, as they are expressed in various ways. His own personality is extremely significant in gaining rapport with the young people. He must be warm, relaxed, mature and sensitive; he must accept those with whom he works for what they are, and be understanding of their behavior, friendly toward them as persons. He attempts to work through the group's natural leadership, for in this way he can be most effective in reaching the whole group.<sup>1</sup>

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1. New York City Youth Board: Monograph #4, Reaching the Group, p. 16ff.



As a result of this work the Youth Board has evolved some principles which apply generally to this type of work.

- 1) Participation in a gang or club is part of adolescence, and possesses potentialities for positive growth and development. The individual gains security and develops positive ways of living with other individuals, and can develop characteristics of loyalty, leadership and community responsibility.
- 2) Some gangs, as a result of such factors as have been discussed, such as family disorganization, economic insecurity, racial and religious discrimination, poor housing, lack of recreational and educational facilities, and emotional maladjustments, have developed antisocial behavior (i.e., street fighting).
- 3) The use of repressive measures does not change basic attitudes or behavior.
- 4) Gang members can be reached and will respond to sympathy, acceptance, affection and understanding when they are approached by adults who reach out to them on their own level.
- 5) Positive relationships can develop between the adult worker and the gang member which can serve to modify antisocial attitudes and behavior.
- 6) The work of adults must be coordinated, unified, and applied on a saturation basis.
- 7) Each worker should be assigned to only one street club because of the close relationship necessary to obtain results.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Fine, op. cit., p. 215

The Youth Board has found that the most effective method is that which includes a large number, and has only a loosely structured program -- the informal lounge and game-room setting often being very effective. Since the war period, there have spring up "teen canteens", which are an attempt on the part of young people to be responsible, to plan and carry out recreational programs of their own.<sup>1</sup>

### C. Recreation

There is a heavy emphasis placed upon recreation in these organizations. Because factors like poverty and economic insecurity produce social and personal maladjustment, recreation constitutes a release for pent-up feelings in terms of high social values. However, to be of greatest value, recreation must be flexible enough to accomplish its purposes. Recreational guidance can be given in several ways: 1) by general questions concerning the basic nature of the applicant's background; 2) by personal interview, exploring the applicant's personality, ascertaining interests and possible hobbies; 3) by questionnaire, which is not too reliable because the individuals concerned are often not acquainted with the possibilities available; 4) by choice through exposure -- "browsing"; 5) by choice through experimentation.<sup>2</sup>

In recognizing the possibilities and advantages of re-

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1. Hallenbeck, op. cit., p. 374

2. Slavson: Recreation and the Total Personality, p. 34-66

creation, Slavson also points out one of its more undesirable factors. Recreation, he says, is conditioned and permeated by the competitive motive, and consequently its value for the health of the total individual can be decreased. For, he explains, competition is distinguished from rivalry by its drive for mastery and possession. There is an element of destruction, even hostility, involved. Rivalry sets up a goal, but competition is a mental set, and an attitude which pervades all of life.<sup>1</sup>

It is also important to be selective in the type of activity, in that self-expression is not to be regarded as the sine qua non of education; this is only true if it is progressive. Any form of self-expression, or recreation, if it is regressive, and stays so, is of no value to the individual at all.<sup>2</sup>

Leadership is a consistently important factor in any group activity. It consists of three elements in recreation: the ability to understand and respond to desires and needs of the group, the capacity to help the group express its needs, and the power to focus attention upon oneself. A negative type of leadership -- too strict withholding of negative impulses -- may result in lack of group morale, and disorganization within the group. The recreational leader must seek

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1. Ibid., p. 89-93

2. Ibid., p. 123

to meet four basic needs of the life pattern, which are freedom of the individual, status, participation, and responsibility. Even in one particular group, however, it is noteworthy that the leadership function often shifts from one person to another, according to his particular gifts and abilities.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. Summary

Aware of the need in present-day youth culture in New York City, the Youth Board has made outstanding contributions in the area of gangs, methods and principles in dealing with these particularized groups. The value of recreation, too, in these programs designed to meet the needs of teen-agers, is examined more closely to determine worthwhile elements which will aid in the adjustment and growth of the individual in the crucial period of adolescence.

### IV. CHURCH RESPONSE

#### A. Introduction

The Christian Church as a whole has failed miserably in its response to conditions in the inner city. Statistics show that, in direct proportion to the deterioration and commercialization of the heart of the city, with the immigration of various races, religions and nationalities, the Church has moved out. Truman B. Douglass, in an article called

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1. Ibid., p. 145-53

"The Job Protestants Shirk", in the November, 1958 issue of Harper's Magazine, says, "In its dealings with the city Protestantism also suffers from its chronic moralism. This is derived not from the Christian ethic, but from its own rural past." He claims that the sin of the city is much more harshly judged than the so-called "nicer" sins of rural life -- "small-town gossiping, philistinism, and cruelty toward the nonconformist." Instead of the joy and rejoicing that should be present when races, nationalities and cultures are integrated into the Church, in a true fellowship, the Church regards this largely as an undesirable state of affairs.<sup>1</sup> In a day in which the role of the Church is being re-thought, and religious activity is becoming increasingly emphasized, "the Church could and ought to be the fellowship of redemption which proclaims the love poured out in fullness for sinners otherwise lost."<sup>2</sup>

Spiritual carelessness on the part of Christians leads to such mistakes as overlooking the importance of saving and redeeming young people, while concentrating on institution-building programs, or holding condemnatory attitudes toward offenders, without the spirit of Christian humility and love. Christians often take their sinful pride and self-righteousness into church with them, turning it into an

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1. Harper's, Nov., 1958, p. 46-7
2. Presbyterian Life, Nov. 15, 1958, p. 9

exclusive fellowship.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. Types of churches

The transitional downtown church has a wider scope than the traditional, and has been more directly responsive to the needs of the local situation. It has been responsible for pioneering in the practical implications of Christianity for the individual and society.

The institutional church is located in the economically depressed areas fringing the central business district, and combines social service with its religious ministry. It attempts to present organized assistance for material and spiritual needs. However, where there is a de-emphasis upon the religious ministry, the work has been reduced to a social-service center. "Religion loses its vitality in an uncontrolled and inundating welter of secular activities. Jesus never failed to point out the spiritual significance of His activities and service."<sup>2</sup> The efforts of the church then become weak, with little real motivation and almost no support.

In regard to the youth in such areas, the church must ask itself: why are these children without adequate value orientations and motivations? why do they get into so much trouble? are they really delinquents or rather, victims of

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1. Miller, op. cit., p. 56ff.

2. Shippey: Church Work in the City, p. 102-6

social neglect? are society and the church doing all they can and should to help them?<sup>1</sup>

### C. Ideal program

Whatever program the church adopts, it must be a comprehensive one, involving the whole life of the church, and must be concentrated. It must be organized in terms of the neighborhood need, with inclusiveness as an unavoidable goal. It must have adequate support and a continuity, and duration of effort is essential.<sup>2</sup>

Miller suggests several helpful ways of service. The church should have an adequate and balanced program of week-day and Sunday activities to provide fellowship, learning, worship, and wholesome associations, to develop a study emphasis on the Word of God; a program which should educate for dating, courtship, marriage, intergroup relations; it should deal with such problems as excessive drinking, gambling, etc. It is absolutely imperative that the church maintains an attitude of prayerful, critical, self-evaluative alertness to changing needs, new techniques, and its own degree of general effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> Secular elements need to be assessed at their contributory value, but, correctly emphasized, they can be a bridge to religious life, and can

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1. Miller, op. cit., p. 30
2. Sanderson: The Church Serves the Changing City, p. 242
3. Miller, op. cit., pp. 174-83

express Christian love in practical service. The church needs to interpret right and wrong carefully to the individual -- especially to the youth. He needs value definitions for his behavior, and help in learning to discipline himself. However, the reliance on mere verbal teaching and exhortation is not enough. The youth's relationship to the church can be enhanced and deepened by the offer of genuine trustworthy friendship, with understanding, sincerity and honesty. Relationships with children of high delinquency risk are apt to be too limited, casual, and superficial.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. Examples of response

St. Augustine's Mission of Trinity Parish is located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, on Henry Street, a well-known area of deprivation, multiracial and multilingual. It is a center of gang culture, and often warfare, and the Mission seeks to help any of these people wherever it can. It has on the staff the vicar, six other priests, several social workers, clerical and lay assistants. These people make themselves available day and night in homes, courts, dance halls -- wherever they might be needed. Each night the vicar's apartment is turned over for teen-agers to use, for social activity, discussion.

The organized gangs are brought into the parish pro-

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1. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 145ff.



gram whenever possible, and Father Myers and his staff have held many near-violent discussions as the boys aired their grievances against other gangs, other races, or society in general. In discussions with a war council, he has helped avert a "rumble", the gang-fight feared by the whole neighborhood, and even by the boys themselves.

Personal counseling is tremendously important in this work, and the staff at St. Augustine's have listened to many heart-breaking stories of boys and girls unwanted, unloved forced many times into circumstances beyond their abilities to handle. In his recent book, Light the Dark Streets, Father Myers cites several instances when the counseling had good results, and just as many when they failed miserably.

The parish is uncompromisingly church-oriented, and attempts to bring the young people into the fellowship by mediating the love of God to them in these practical ways. By showing their love and concern -- in taking them into the parish house, to live if they need a place to sleep; there is always a meal for any hungry boy, they will make job contacts for anyone, they protect them from real enemies and danger, refer dope addicts to Riverside Hospital for treatment -- they relate this ministry to the love of God in Christ for each individual who can listen.

The priests work closely with the Youth Board of New

York City, the Lower East Side Neighborhood Association, social agencies and workers, the police and concerned parents in the area. They have often intervened in police cases, taken a boy into the parish house on probation, held meetings of the Neighborhood Association to determine what must be done concerning the violence of gangs, race riots, etc. Father Myers believes that where the community bands together to combat these problems, there can be a solution reached, but it is not to be left to civil authorities and social workers to solve.<sup>1</sup>

Judson Memorial Church is located on the south side of Washington Square, a section which includes many types of culture and people. It is on the edge of a slum area, near Greenwich Village with its artists, intellectuals, and actors, close to New York University, and also not far from the luxurious apartments at the lower end of Fifth Avenue.

As a result of its location, its program is varied, and it includes one for children and adolescents of the nearby underprivileged, substandard area. It is designed to meet the needs of delinquent and pre-delinquent boys between the ages of 14 and 20, and makes no attempt to proselyte.

Their program is termed "permissive", or "unstructured", and allows the boys to come and go as they wish. The basement rooms are given over to the use of small clubs which

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1. Myers: Light the Dark Streets, p. 124, 172ff.

the boys have organized. These clubs are the direct counterpart of the delinquency-breeding "cellar-clubs" which have grown up in the city.

The staff members are always available, friendly, ready to go to shows and recreation areas with the boys, to invite them to their homes; they find jobs for them, and spend much time in informal conversation -- on street corners, in the gym, or in church offices.<sup>1</sup>

#### E. Summary

Because of the unique situation of the city church, the time-honored traditional approaches have little or no effect upon the urban population, and especially the youth. There are good possibilities for the development of effective programs, but they must be all-inclusive, and require sincere dedication on the part of the whole Church. It needs to enlist the aid of the community, as well as agencies of social service, that its outreach will be as far as possible. St. Augustine's Mission and Judson Memorial Church are two churches which have responded in ways which they consider adapted to the conditions to which they minister, one with more emphasis on the spiritual element.

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1. Miller, op. cit., p. 171

## V. SURVEY OF THREE METHODS

### A. Introduction

Since psychology and the study of modern urban society has brought to light many factors not understood heretofore, the Church is also responding slowly to this new knowledge, and seeking to use it in its presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the inner city in New York, there are some organizations, church-oriented and otherwise, which are experimenting with different methods in youth work. The following section is a sampling of three of these, observed first-hand, and speaking to the young people in ways which the leaders consider effective.

### B. Church of the Good Neighbor

The program at the Church of the Good Neighbor (New York City Mission), in East Harlem on 106th Street, is made up of two groups -- the Young People's group and Young Adults. The young adult group is largely in the range of 20-30 years, and is of little concern in this survey.

The Young People's group has a membership of between 30 and 40 teen-agers, boys and girls about evenly divided. Nearly all come from low-income families in the Spanish neighborhood. The parents of approximately fifty percent of the boys and girls are members of the church, and seventy-five percent of the teen-agers are actively involved in

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other church activities, such as Sunday school, choir, and Boy Scouts.

The structure of the organization is rather loose, with a president, secretary, and three advisors to the group. The officers handle the business of the group, with the advisors taking the responsibility of making contacts, of both new and old members.

When the group was first organized, the advisors spent a large part of their time visiting in the homes of those young people who might be interested, whether connected with the church itself or not. It might be well to state that of the three advisors, one was Spanish, one Negro, and one Caucasian. Meetings at the time of its beginning were no more than just a few getting together with the advisors, and discussing purposes for the organization, what they would like to accomplish, for themselves and for the church. They spent almost the whole first year with this type of meeting, getting acquainted with each other, with the advisors who offered them friendship, both spiritual and practical advice, fun and recreation.

The young people's group here has responded well to conventional techniques within the church-related organization. Films and film strips have a good reception, with discussion playing a large part in the meetings. Discussions are usually led by one the advisors, concerning subjects

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which are applicable to their lives. The youth often define their own interest area, and the permissive leadership of the advisors brings out the natural leadership in the group.

About twice a year, the group has a "fireside chat", in which they fire any and all questions they may have at the two ministers and advisors, who serve as the "board of experts". This is considered an excellent opportunity to instruct in Biblical truth, church doctrine, and moral issues. They have also utilized the "bull session" in small-group discussions concerning the Bible.

Connected with the Church of the Good Neighbor is the Community Center, which ministers to the needs of the young people in the area, but it is largely a social agency, and serves almost an entirely different group. The Center serves as a recreational and counseling agency, and enters into the lives of the young people in whatever area they most need help -- vocational, legal, social service, scholastic, personal. There is no spiritual emphasis here at present, but if and when the goals and purposes of Church and Center become integrated, the Christian witness there will be real, vital, and practical.

#### C. Church of the Son of Man

The Church of the Son of Man is one of four churches belonging to the East Harlem Protestant Parish, which in

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itself is a unique type of ministry. The Parish seeks to involve itself in the life of the people by means of four major disciplines; economic, vocational, political, and religious.

The youth program at East Harlem is based upon the same principles as the Parish; i.e., commitment to Christ and the vow to follow and serve Him enables one to share in the redemptive community which is the Church, the Body of Christ; and to join in His work by serving one's fellow men in love and forgiveness. Like the Parish, the youth groups seek to minister to all areas of life, to show forth the love of Christ in practical ways.

There are two youth groups at the Church of the Son of Man, on East 104th Street. Both comprise a loosely structured organization called "Squadron", which has been divided into two age groups, junior high and senior high. Both groups have 10-12 members, with no formal structure -- there are no officers, no standing committees.

To become a Squadron member, the youth must be 13 years of age, must have completed the Youth Membership Course or the Communicants' Course, and be received by the Church in a worship service. He receives an emblem for his sleeve and the Squadron manual. There are two ranks for which he must complete several requirements; "Follower" and "Disciple". The requirements fall into three categories -- objective

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knowledge of the faith of the Church, the Bible, participation in church activity, and social and civic action.

The meetings of both groups are always held in the minister's home, which is located in the neighborhood. There are always refreshments, and the atmosphere is warm, friendly and welcoming. The minister's home is always open to all who wish to drop in -- for counseling, for practical advice, or just to chat. Mr. George Calvert, minister, and youth director, is convinced that it is most important that the young people find love, acceptance and others who are interested in them and their problems -- and they attempt to provide such a situation in their home.

He also firmly believes that young people have a definite need to have conversation with youth their own age and with interested adults, concerning the things which are most important to them. This is a need often ignored, and largely impossible to fulfill, in the home or school, or even church. So the meetings, which are held once a week for each group, and last two and one-half hours, are of the small-group type of discussion. Bible study forms the basis of discussion, the youth themselves often introducing relevant and practical subjects which make the study more meaningful for them. The leader always seeks to relate and apply the truth of the

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Word of God to the issues most important in the teen-agers' life. At present, only two members of the high school Squad are members of a gang. One has just been elected president of a fighting gang, and the hope was expressed that his witness would have an influence on the activity of the gang, developing socialized activity.

Their projects and activities are designed to be the out-working of Christian truth and principles, a witness to their being the expression of love and concern for God and for others. For instance, the senior high Squad cooked and served dinner to a group of teen-agers from a church in Scarsdale, New York; they also plan to join the Youth March on the White House, in behalf of integration.

The discipline of the group is primarily internal, and although the leader is important, the group does not center around him. The leadership within the group shifts according to their skills and abilities. There are two senior high Squad members who help with the junior high group, leading Bible study, organizing and directing activities. So the leadership training is developed within the group in practical experience, with guidance.

Mr. Calvert emphasized the importance of the time element. This type of work takes a great deal of time in planning, in meetings, in activities, but also in casual conversation with the young people. The discipline is also much more apt to break down with a leader who is only part-time.

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#### D. Centurion Christian Cadet Corps

The Centurion Christian Cadet Corps has an unusual emphasis and technique not heretofore used in Christian work in the inner city. Conceived and directed by Benjamin Moring, the Corps has a rigorous military discipline. The appeal of the military program is perhaps the best drawing card the organization has. Moring's main thrust is contained in his statements to the Centurions, a challenge; "Christianity is nothing to be ashamed of", "You don't know what it is to be tough until you become a Christian", and "What is harder than loving your enemy?".

The military program includes close-order drill, rifle drill, judo classes, the usual military discipline. During the school year, there are frequent drill sessions, using the manual-of-arms, and each meeting is concluded with Bible study, directly applying it to the lives of the boys. The group is divided into squads, with officers and all the accoutrements of the Marine Corps -- with a definite spiritual emphasis.

The summer camping program of the Centurions is an intensive one, of two four-week periods, with those boys who show promise staying the second month. The training includes calisthenics, obstacle course, hikes, field work, and devotions each evening. Occasionally there is an hour of "sharing", when each boy brings to the group questions and subjects for

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discussion, with relation to Christ, and His meaning for their own lives.

There is unconditional acceptance within the group -- none of the boys is asked what his history or background is -- he is accepted for what he is, and expected to meet the standards of the Corps. New members and contacts are usually made by the Centurions themselves, bringing in friends who they know are interested in the program. "They know we're a tough gang, and they have to be tough to join the Centurions. But we have something better to offer -- we know the Lord," one said.

The leadership in this case is dynamic and understanding. Moring has grown up in the same type of background as his boys -- "he's the baddest of us all" -- and knows what Christ can mean to these boys, besides being imaginative enough to apply these unorthodox methods which have their appeal to this type of adolescent. "He doesn't have to preach -- you can see Christ in his life," one of his lieutenants said of him.

Moring has a flair for the dramatic, and tells Bible stories with great fervor, making each character live. He explains that Christ had a "gang" of twelve disciples, and they were "ruffians like Peter, the sons-of-thunder James and John, Judas the double-crosser," using language they can understand, appreciate, and apply. One of his best methods is having the boys act out their situations in plays that he has written.

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He has a great many personal interviews with his boys, counseling them in problems they have, helping them as much as he can out of trouble. In cases of truancy, he has helped to reinstate a boy in school. His apartment is open to any of the boys day or night, and they all know they are welcome.

In defense of the military motif of the Corps, Moring has listed some of the contributions which the Centurions have to offer the teen-age boy, and particularly those whose lives have been seriously affected by the conditions in which they live: 1) he learns respect, for himself and for others; 2) he learns responsibility; 3) it develops leadership; 4) he learns basic concepts of group living, particularly in the summer camp; 5) he learns discipline, basic to the Christian's spiritual life, and it is first learned through the primary physical relationship, then applied to the intellectual and spiritual.

The Corps maintains the right to be aggressively Christian, that the time has come for those who are Christ's to declare themselves to be His. "The unquestionable importance of the gospel demands that every conceivable effort be put forth in order to win men to the cause of Jesus Christ." The tight nucleus around which the Corps is built is now a group of concerned Christian boys to whom their witness for Christ through the Corps means everything. To the Centurion, this is not a way of life, it is life itself.

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## VI. IMPLICATIONS

It is evident, then, from a survey of the unbelievably complicated patterns of life in the inner city, that the techniques and methods of the Church for presenting the gospel of Christ effectively, must be changed to address themselves to the situation as it exists. It is evident, too, that the response of the Church cannot be a limited one, because in that case, it would be only a superficial attempt at reconciliation. The effort must be concentrated, by dedicated Christians, and involving not only the church program, but the lives of its members in a very real, vital way. This kind of communication occurs only between persons, and is not very effective through a program alone.

The methods and techniques adopted by the Church should utilize the knowledge gained from various agencies and studies concerning the culture of the inner city, and the psychological factors which involve the people who live there.

Most important, the Christian life must be lived, as well as preached, if it is to proclaim the love of Christ to all mankind. The individual approach, the concern for the person is especially important in youth work, for this is a period of adjustment to the world and to people, and the love of God in Christ can be effectively communicated only in concrete ways.

The delinquent youth has some characteristics which

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distinguish him from other adolescents, and the appeal of the Church to him may be adapted to his particular condition, such as the military motif of the Centurion Corps, but the basic problem remains the same -- personal relationships are of prime importance; the appeal of Christ is in the Christian.

Meaningful conversation, in small-group discussions with his peers, has been found to be most successful with the teenager. Concrete relationships and practical outworkings of theory, of Biblical truth, bring him to a deeper understanding of God and Christ, and can lead him to a new relationship with God.

Another universal principle in dealing with these young people is the importance of patient instruction, and much time given to working with them. Discipline is not only a necessary element, but desired by the young people; and the Word of God presents a discipline which can be communicated and understood through human relationships. For those youth who are sincerely looking for the meaning of their lives, this is their answer.

The Church must always keep its spiritual emphasis. There is always the danger of de-emphasizing the spiritual, until it becomes only a social agency. The Church, therefore, must keep ever before it the Life of the Person of Christ, making Him the center of its own life.

The youth of the inner city, then, who stand in such obvious and heart-rending need of this Saviour, will have before them this living witness of the love of Christ.

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