

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND THE CHURCH  
by Leopold W. Bernhard

Since the beginning of this year I have attended a one-month course at the Urban Training Center for Christian Mission in Chicago where I heard two presentations by Milton Kotler of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. I consulted with Dr. Kotler for three full days in Columbus; had a conference with Dr. Kotler, Miss Janet Langen, an Animal Behaviorist from Washington, and with Mr. Messerman, Director of the Legal Clinic of the Law School of Ohio State University, and I spent a full day in consultation with Milton Kotler, Mr. Herzstein of the law firm, Arnold, Fortas, and Porter and the co-directors of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. A course I teach on Urban Ministry at the Methodist Theological School in Delaware, Ohio, gave me the opportunity to re-study several books on the Church in modern urban society-- among them those by Martin Marty, Gibson Winters, William Stringfellow, Hans Rudi Weber, and others.

At the moment I am in the process of requesting the Institute for Policy Studies to create a charter for a Community Foundation to be established in the geographic area in which First English Lutheran Church is located, and to prepare proposals for the establishment of vital community service for submission to agencies of the Federal government and to several large Foundations with the request to finance these services.

In connection with all of this, some very basic considerations of great urgency have arisen which I shall attempt to present in this paper. These considerations are my chief concern but their evaluation must also determine whether or not an application for a research grant to facilitate arrangements with the Institute for Policy Studies should be made.

THE CHURCH'S PROBLEM

For several decades the Church has been wrestling with the problem of its role in the emerging urban society. For nearly 25 years I have been engaged in dealing with many of its complexities.

For the Church, the major challenge remains to make the Gospel relevant to men in modern society. How can the Church make the life-giving Word of God understandable, audible, effective? It is clear that this question involves first the matter of semantics, the translation of Biblical and theological language into the language of the people, and the re-stating of religious concepts in ways which are meaningful to modern man. This is, of course, a perennial challenge which the Church has had to meet throughout her history. It involves mainly the worship of the Church, which is the heart of her life, with particular reference to liturgy and preaching. It seems to me that the Church has tremendous experience and expertise in these areas, even if she may find it difficult to achieve satisfactory (from the Church's point of view) results, because the Church's worship can never be fully guarded from distortion by the fragile human factor, namely the insight, the capacity, and flexibility of her clergy.

It has also been clear since the Church's earliest history that her preaching and its effectiveness and indeed the very essence

of the Word of God are inseparably related to her effectual care for human beings in their physical and material needs and to her active concern for the corporate existence of men in society. That is to say that the ministry of the Church is inseparable from social action in the most inclusive sense of the word. Church history tells of the many developments of the diakonia of the Early Church, of their theologically legitimate and illegitimate expressions of the countless dangers which even today continue to pervert these developments.

### THE PRESENT SITUATION

It is of course clear that the worship life of the Church and her social action endeavors are closely interrelated, even if at least in the beginning of this paper I have to deal with them separately and must now concentrate on the area of social action.

In passing, I simply mention the fact of liturgical renewal, its rather pathetic degeneration to the largely irrelevant controversy over "high" and "low" church performances, its forays into "folk-liturgies," its recapturing of ancient traditional forms and concepts with more or less happy results, its renewed discovery of the great value of communication by way of symbols, its essential function in the reviving of family and private devotions and its inestimable benefit as a teaching instrument.

In the area of social action the care of the individual has led to the most concentrated efforts in pastoral counseling, although one can hardly overlook the threat of certain misdevelopments in this area which could easily prove dangerous.

It is quite evident that a congregation located like First English Lutheran Church can become relevant only as it proves its concern for the people of the community by offering them needed services as token and expression of that love which it proclaims. Yet it is exactly in this context that knotty problems continue to arise.

### DIFFICULTIES

One very practical question is how far can and may the congregation go in offering social services to a community. Social services are costly. Yet they must be offered in sufficient measure to be effective enough to make the concern of the congregation credible. It is of course also mandatory that these social services are not misused as evangelism tools. Their success may not be measured by the number of new members the congregation gains. Social services rendered by the Church are expressions of that divine love which compels the believers and may not look to any predetermined benefits desired by the Church. The problem is that the Church-at-large must provide the funds for these social services. As such services are effective and are being accepted by the community, they expand and require increasingly larger grants by the Church. How long can the Church provide sufficient funds for that kind of operation? What happens when funds are cut off and needed services hitherto provided are curtailed or entirely discontinued? It is safe to say that, in this case, community residents would conclude that the services pro-

vided had been nothing but a "come-on," a kind of bribe to induce people to "join" the Church. Once such an impression takes hold, further work with unchurched community residents would become practically impossible. Yet, since the expense of social services is so great that the Church-at-large could meet it only for a few scattered congregations, an effective urban ministry throughout the Church on the scale required in modern society would be impossible.

Realities of this kind together with the theological problems which arise when the Gospel becomes "Social Gospel" in the historical sense, and when a congregation develops an actual social service agency whose clientele is larger than its membership, have led to grave doubts and sharp criticisms of this approach. There are those who declare that the Church must dare to be poor among the poor, that social action as an expression of Christian love must be restricted to the personal activities of each believer, that the congregation must go among the poor with nothing but the Gospel, that the current form of the parish church is outmoded, that the Church must develop new kinds of ministries which are entirely separate from any congregational structure, that the local church, needing only the barest skeletons of organization, buildings, and staff, has no other function than to provide Word and Sacraments for the scattered believers as they briefly gather on Sunday mornings. It is said that the ministry of the clergy in urban society must be directed chiefly, if not exclusively, toward the faithful and their religious needs, etc.

Without reflecting on the value and validity of these propositions it can be stated that the varying current suggestions for a proper urban ministry agree in the judgment that the traditional congregation neither can nor should be maintained, since it no longer serves as the vehicle for the Gospel. The large edifices of many congregations in the inner city and in changing neighborhoods are regarded as white elephants and as reprehensible monuments to misconceptions about the "place" in the world which the Church covets for herself.

#### A NEW DEPARTURE

Within the last few years community organization has developed into a kind of movement which offers the hope and the most viable possibility for the renewal of society on the basis of justice and human rights. The social revolution which is in progress finds in community organization the most promising tool to achieve its ends. The freedom movement of the Negroes, which is the most visible factor in the current revolution, is proceeding from demonstrations to community organization. The rapid emergence of cybernetics which appears to make inescapable the most profound changes in values as well as in mode of living, seems to demand urgently that drastic measures be taken to prevent a complete breakdown of society. Community organization seems more likely than anything else to meet this need. Community organization therefore seems to be the impelling necessity of the hour and the new instrument for the re-establishment of the new society with justice, respect for human dignity, rights, and well-being.

The Church can hardly stand aloof from this movement which often courageously and effectively advances many of the ideals which she preaches. Practically, the situation is simply that the Church has proclaimed the demands of justice and the promise of God's healing love in such broad general terms that the so-called power structures have rarely heard what the Church said, and even more seldom felt obliged to apply the Church's declared principles to their actions. The injured, neglected, and deprived multitudes have grown tired of words, even of the pious, high sounding words of the Church. Now that community organization is going about the business of making justice, human rights, and welfare reality, the broadly general preachments of the Church sound hollow and hypocritical. If the Church believes what she says and means what she professes, the Church must be involved in the establishment of justice and healing through community organization or the Church will lose her last tenuous hold on modern man.

Theologically the situation is complicated by the renewed recognition that God accomplishes His loving will through many means and agencies, not just through the Church but quite conceivably and apparently through such movements as community organization. The divine truth, pronounced by the Church so vaguely and unrealistically as to cease to be truth, is expressed directly, unequivocally, starkly, realistically by other means--by the people, by the poor, by the outcast. The Church must listen to these voices. The Church must repent and join forces with the despised and their efforts. That is to say, the Church must identify with the deprived, and be vitally involved in community organization.

As one considers the total situation, it seems that, while on the one hand a very real and desirable and indeed absolutely necessary renewal of the Church is thus in the making, on the other hand the Church is burdened with crushing liabilities. Her structure, her congregational life, her piety, her worship, her preaching, her possessions, her buildings, all are hindrances to be overcome, liabilities to be shaken, errors to be corrected, even offenses to be removed.

It is not my purpose to examine the validity of these insights. That they contain a great deal of truth is common knowledge. But a danger which is very real must be pointed out.

#### DANGER

It seems to me that, after nearly two decades of very serious and conscious efforts to develop a legitimate, effective urban ministry, the Church has not made any appreciable progress. The endeavors of the Church come too late and remain too few. They hitch on to movements and instruments that have come into being without her and threaten to obscure her essential character. The too late and too little of the Church's efforts is perhaps most obvious. Most blatantly and most ominously this fact is revealed in regard to the struggle for racial justice. Now that at long last the commitment of the Church to racial justice is clearly established, the battle is practically won. Its saints and heroes who will be long remembered and celebrated did not represent the

Church. Some may be church members and professing Christians, but they acted out of personal conviction and daring. They were not supported by their Church; they were not inspired by the Church's life and message. Worst of all, even now when the racial issue is actually settled, many congregations, hiding behind their privileges as private, charitable religious corporations, maintain racial barriers which no other institutions are permitted to maintain under the law, and many simply do nothing to remove such barriers, while other institutions are enjoined by law to do so.

The role which the Church has played in the struggle for racial justice has contributed nothing to her relevance or to her acceptability in modern society. Men like Louis Lomax express this fact in the most unmistakable words; and a Negro police sergeant in Chicago made that fact clear to me in the most radical fashion, with his cool, very polite and sincerely puzzled inquiry: "May I ask why the Churches are suddenly so interested in Negroes? Are they trying to jump on the band wagon?" I foresee over the next decades increasing difficulties in the Church's efforts to minister to Negroes; and, since the core cities of our nation are increasingly inhabited by Negroes, that augurs ill for the urban congregations and their ministries.

The persistent tendency of the Church to be too late seems to me confirmed by the fact that no decisive expressions of the Church's awareness of the effects of cybernation have penetrated to the parish level, so that I am inclined to believe that the Church has not yet come to grips with the problem. If, as I have heard it expressed by scientists of many different disciplines, our whole economy will be cybernated within 5 years' time, radical changes will come upon us. Certainly not the least of these but the most shocking and potentially most dangerous one will be the necessity for the re-appraisal of the value of man. Cybernation will call for decisive action on the part of the Church, especially in the inner city congregation. Nothing indicates that the Church is ready for such action or is making serious preparations for it.

Another example of the too late-ness of the Church is the new Parish Education material, especially its 3 year course for confirmation instructions. Twenty years ago the material would have been sensational, but today its middle class concepts and its picturizations of all-white, comfortable suburbanites are offensive in urban congregations with large percentages of Negro teachers and pupils and with growing numbers of poor whites. It seems imperative that the Church devise completely new materials for confirmation instruction somewhat like the latest public school materials and the often creative materials of the Freedom Schools. Unless this is done the amateurish efforts of individual urban ministers to create their own material will do more harm than good.

#### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

At the moment the Church appears to be on the verge of hitching on to community organization in an effort to participate in the motion of modern life. This is my chief concern here.

It is undoubtedly right that the Church cannot possibly ignore the community organization movement. My question is if the Church must once again ally with a social movement in a form that belongs to the past.

I understand community organization somewhat as follows: Community organization seeks to unite the people of a given area who, due to their poverty and because of social prejudices, are helpless pawns in the hands of the power structures. The focus of community organization is power. Its aim is to seize power for the deprived in order to free them from the consequences of the actions of the power structures which pursue their self-willed aims without regard for the needs, the rights, and the wishes of the deprived.

The method of community organization is "creative conflict." To arouse the deprived and to convince them that they are able to resist wilful manipulation and to obtain their demands, community organizers rally the helpless, hopeless deprived against anyone who would be readily defeated by group pressure. Boycott of some merchant for some alleged offense may force him to sell his business. His offense may have been wholly imaginary and his disappearance from the scene may in no way change the lot of the deprived. But community organizers have successfully demonstrated to the hopeless that, organized, they have power. That this demonstration entailed the deliberate destruction of an innocent man and his business concerns no one. Community organization then proceeds to go after bigger game.

In general, community organization seeks to create sufficient power for the deprived to obtain certain improvements, alleviations, and rights in contests with the power structures. These contests may include negotiations, demonstrations, strikes, and similar means. Community organizers choose the goals to be obtained and the means to obtain them. That in the deplorably neglected and abused communities of the deprived community organization of this kind brings much very real relief, rights many intolerable wrongs, heals many appalling wounds cannot be denied for a moment. That the church cannot be indifferent to the distress of the deprived and cannot stand aloof from their efforts to win relief and justice is self-evident.

I understand that, in some quarters, among them UTC, serious thought is being given to the possibility of making ministers effective community organizers. Others wonder if theological seminaries should introduce obligatory courses in community organization. Others again consider the feasibility of requiring theological students to take such courses at a school of social work. It seems indeed desirable and necessary for ministers to have a working knowledge of community organization; just as it cannot be doubted that the Church must be involved in this movement.

There are, however, some very serious questions. They have been raised all along but no fully satisfactory answers have been given.

One of the most difficult questions is, of course, whether or not the Church can legitimately be a participant in or supporter of activities which involve "creative conflict" as a principle of procedure. Community organization's principle of "creative conflict" avers that the end justifies the means. Can the Church live with that?

Furthermore, in this kind of community organization the Church becomes one of the weapons in the arsenal of the community organization in its struggle for power. In this struggle the Church is asked to aid the methods of community organization by which power is to be grasped. That is to say the participation of the Church in community organization is in no way distinct; it is exactly like that of any other group. It seems to me highly questionable that the Church could place herself into such a position for it could all too easily appear that the Church, by participating in community organization, actually seeks the favor of the deprived, and expects that, in return for the Church's help, they will support the Church, if only by "joining." This would make the Church's involvement in community organization in turn a means to an end. In this instance clearly indefensible and theologically offensive. Of course, there is sufficient beautiful and persuasive rhetoric available to reject such insinuations: "The Church must identify with the community and its deprived. She must share their plight and their aspirations and must be involved in their struggles which seek to bring justice and healing for God's beloved creation."

That the truth which may be contained in such rhetoric will become discernible to those who have learned that the end justifies the means seems doubtful. The uncomfortable fact remains that when community organization of this kind enlists the support of the Church, it does not accept the Church's principles nor her message but only the Church's muscle.

How a minister can function as a community organizer of this type is something I cannot readily see. That a community organizer of this type can also function as a minister I find nearly impossible to envision.

#### COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Milton Kotler has in this connection raised consistently the question: "Should not the Church be the Church?" His plan for community organization seems to me not only uniquely creative but also appears to confront the Church with the particular challenge to which the Church must rise.

Milton Kotler calls his approach "Community Foundation." Its nature is political and economic. Its orientation is gratitude requiring celebration. Its fundamental method is self-government empowered by law. In it the Church, functioning as the Church, is essential.

For a detailed explanation of Community Foundation I refer to Milton Kotler's Memoranda Nos. 1 through 7. Here, the briefest sketch of this possibility must suffice. Kotler's Community Foundation is an effort to recapture something of the Jeffersonian

"ward republic." A comparatively small section of the inner city, defined by such natural boundaries as highways, main streets, viaducts, etc. is the area covered by a Community Foundation. The Community Foundation is chartered--a highly complex and creative endeavor--as a tax exempt corporation. Members of the Foundation are the residents in the defined geographical area. Preferably the residents would be somewhat organized in block clubs and would, through these, also participate in the Community Foundation. The board of governors of the Community Foundation would be a certain number of community residents, elected either directly by the annual assembly and/or by the block clubs. Block clubs and/or annual assembly determine the needs of the community residents and the Community Foundation programs services to meet these needs. The proposals for these services with staff requirements and budgets are submitted to government agencies and foundations with a request for grants.

Needed services would include basic social services but would by no means be restricted to them. They would also include new educational endeavors, the development of legal services with the possibility of arbitration for non-adjudicable disputes, the development of "sub-professionals" from among the unemployed in the area, etc. The services would be so structured as to offer important training and research opportunities for universities in the fields of social work, medicine, law, education, architecture, art, home economics, political science, and many others.

Universities would be asked to participate in the services, offering their particular skills to the Community Foundation, while finding here the urgently needed opportunity for field experience and experimentation. (That this approach is not a matter of wishful thinking is evident from the fact that the current limited programs of the Neighborhood Center of First English Lutheran Church have in fact attracted Ohio State University and Capital University and Seminary as educational opportunities for their students. Social work students of Capital University are doing their field work for credit at the Neighborhood Center of First Church. Seminarians of Capital University are doing their required field work in pastoral counselling in the congregation. Ohio State University students from the School of Social Work are doing pilot research projects; so are students from the Colleges of Education, Medicine, and Law. In addition other agencies are engaged in experimental programs at the Center, among them the American Association of University Women, with a pre-school for culturally deprived children; the Jewish Community Center is sending high school seniors from privileged areas to the Center to find here the opportunity for extracurricular activities which will enhance their chances for being accepted at college; Roman Catholic students for the priesthood are to participate in the summer activities of the Center to receive their first vital exposure to an inner city ministry. And there are others. This whole aspect of the ministry of First English Lutheran Church may be examined in another paper if it should seem to be helpful. My personal conviction is that the Lutheran Church in America ought to make its own intensive examination of what has been happening in our congregation.)

The local congregation would also be invited to share in these services, offering its particular talents and resources to the Community Foundation and finding here the opportunity to demonstrate God's loving concern and healing for men in their misery and

Particularly at the beginning, the Community Foundation would depend very definitely on the cooperation of the Church and of the University. Government agencies and Foundations ready to finance Community Foundation projects would look to Church and University to give stability to the Community Foundation. It may therefore prove necessary to include in the board of governors of the Community Foundation a representative from the Church and from the University whose seats would be permanent for the first 3 years.

Church and University would encourage grants from government agencies and Foundations by offering "matching funds" for the proposed services. This would, however, not involve actual expenditure of money, since the grants for these services would reimburse expenses of Church and University due to their participation in them.

The whole arrangement would make large sums of money available for needed community services, sums of money which the Church could not begin to raise on her own.

#### THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In the Kotler plan, the existing external and internal structure of the congregation becomes a positive asset. That in itself is new in the by now traditional lament that the Church's structure is a hindrance to a relevant urban ministry.

The buildings of local congregations become the focal point, the center of the new community. In the case of First English Lutheran Church, as in that of the majority of core-city Churches, the buildings of the congregation are the only substantial, large edifices in which community life can take place. From these buildings many of the needed services quite naturally have to emanate if they are to be rendered at all. For, it appears that government agencies and Foundations are in a position to make funds available for programs, while they would not be able to give money for the erection of buildings.

Most important is the congregation's relationship to the community and its residents. Like no other institution or agency, the congregation knows the community in which it is located. The congregation is familiar with and intimately related to the sociological development of the community, and has positively or negatively shared in its experiences. The congregation knows the people of the community and their problems. This intimate knowledge of the congregation is of irreplaceable value in any attempt to institute such community services as will be of the greatest value to the people.

The presence in the community of a structure with organizational experience and with the ability to engage in action through committees and groups is another crucial value of the congregation.

For, the hopeless plight of the people in the deprived areas of the inner city is due largely to the absence of community. The people's sense of complete isolation, not only from the total community and especially from its privileged areas but also from each other, leads to frustration and despair, sets people against each other in suspicion and hatred, and drives them into ever deeper isolation. The only actions which seem possible to them appear to be those inspired by spite, resentment, and revenge, expressed in delinquency, crime, violence, and destructiveness.

The congregation, organized for action, committed to positive goals to be attained through a variety of approaches which are coordinated and which supplement each other, constitutes the most positive force in the community.

On the other hand, the congregation remains the Church in Kotler's plan of the Community Foundation. While it contributes to and participates in needed community services, the congregation does neither determine what services are to be offered nor how the services are to be administered; nor is the congregation the source from which these services flow and through which alone they become available. While it is involved in needed community services, the congregation is not the recipient of government or Foundation grants for the enactment of such programs and services under the congregation's auspices for possible ecclesiastical benefits.

The Community Foundation is the tax exempt corporation which programs and budgets services deemed necessary by it. The Community Foundation applies for subsidies and grants, and is their recipient. The Community Foundation administers and expends these funds, and agrees to conditions and rules laid down by the donors of the grants. The Community Foundation submits its operations for inspection, criticism, and possible re-direction to the agencies and Foundations which fund its activities. The congregation, however valuable and necessary for the Community Foundation and however involved in its services, does not become an arm of the government or a laboratory for the experiments of Foundations.

In my judgment, the critical point here is that the Church does not seek and accept guarantees and securities for the existence of the congregation. Support for the congregation is not drawn from government subsidies nor from Foundation grants. Nevertheless, in the early years of the Community Foundation subsidies and grants for community services may be forthcoming only on condition that the Church participate in the Community Foundation in order to give it stability. Yet even if the Community Foundation initially has to "rent" the congregation's physical facilities and to "buy" staff time for consultation, there is no guarantee that such arrangements would or should be continued. As the Community Foundation gains strength and experience, it may be able and prefer to acquire or rent unused buildings in the community and to employ professionals not connected with the congregation. Whether or not the congregation plays its proper role in the Community Foundation depends entirely on the congregation's willingness and ability to relate its message and its life to the community. This area of concern is to be pursued later in this

paper. Suffice it here to make the point that the congregation's participation in the Community Foundation does not give the congregation any kind of security, guarantee of "outside" support, or any non-evangelical means for making converts.

In another very practical way this kind of detachment is of very real importance for the Church. Our own involvement in community services through the Neighborhood Center of First Church has raised several grave difficulties. While I believe that we may claim to have avoided the danger of misusing the social services we render as an evangelism tool, in the sense that beneficiaries of our services would have been made to feel that they were expected to "join" the Church in return for benefits received, we may have been so scrupulous in our concern to evade this danger that we did not always present the call to faith and commitment to Christ as clearly and compellingly as we should have done. The extremely slow growth of our membership may indicate this. Personally, I am convinced that this is not what has happened. There are other factors which make it particularly difficult to win deprived people and especially Negroes for the Church. But the possibility must be conceded that evangelistic efforts may be toned down in order to preserve the integrity of the Gospel in the face of social services rendered by the congregation.

An undeniable difficulty which arises when effective social services are rendered through the congregation itself is that of supervising and coordinating a large, professionally and denominationally diverse staff. Genuine social services which are more than ineffectual pious notions, which anger rather than help people, bring sociologists, social workers, physicians, and other professionals either directly into the staff of the congregation or relate them intimately to it. Basic principles of these professionals and their religious orientation, especially if they are not Lutherans, are by no means as a matter of course in harmony with the theology of the congregation, not to speak of that of the senior pastor who is responsible head of the staff. We have found the interaction of diverse professionals most stimulating and greatly enriching but also extremely time and energy consuming. In a setup like ours, the senior pastor must spend increasing amounts of time with staff members. Additional time is required for the pastor to keep abreast of development of services, especially when other professionals on the staff are, as they must be, creative. Still more time must be spent in briefing large numbers of frequently changing student and volunteer personnel from non-congregational groups and associations. The latter is mandatory not only in order to assure the necessary orientation of these workers but also in order to give, particularly to students, the educational opportunities which are the prerequisite for their participation as agreed upon with the colleges which send them. These large claims on the senior pastor inevitably cut down his ability to serve his congregation as he should. To make matters worse, the senior pastor's concentration on these matters causes the members of the congregation to feel that they must learn more about the social services rendered and about their meaning.

Quite naturally the members of the congregation expect their pastor to supply them with that kind of information. Thus, in his less frequent contacts with the members of the church, the pastor finds himself stressing, interpreting, explaining the social services of the congregation with the result that the Church members get the impression that social services are the heart of the Gospel, at least as far as their pastor is concerned.

It would be of inestimable value if the supervision and coordination of professional and non-professional staff were the responsibility of the Community Foundation. Such an arrangement would not preclude professional interaction nor the giving of such courses of orientation for professionals, students, and volunteers as the Community Foundation would request occasionally from the pastor or other staff members of the congregation. The fact that the pastor would not bear full and final responsibility for the operation of the social services, their staff, and programs is decisive. The Kotler plan would make involvement of the congregation in the community possible, while the Church remains the Church.

#### THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

The Kotler plan is a matter of community organization which, in comparison with others has values important to the Church. That the Kotler type of community organization is not based on the principle of "creative conflict" in which the end justifies the means can hardly be a matter of indifference to the Church. That, in the Kotler plan, the Church is not reduced to a tool of the community organization but is free and a sought after participant in the life of the community seems to me a vital concern to the Church.

The point here is not for the Church to judge the moral qualities of one type of community organization over against another. In a different context such moral judgment may be incumbent upon the Church. Nor may it be assumed that in the Kotler type of community organization conflict is excluded. On the contrary, the Kotler plan not only leads to conflict quite naturally and unavoidably but also views the "natural" conflicts which ensue, due to the Foundation's legal and legitimate activities as a positive factor to be used judiciously and creatively. The point here is rather to recognize the relationship of the Church to community organization. It seems to me that in the Kotler plan the Church, although genuinely involved in community, preserves her essential freedom. She does not become one among many other factors and forces serving the aims of community organization; nor does she participate in community organization in order to secure her position or to maintain her existence.

The other crucial point is this: the Kotler community organization does create local community in the fullest sense of the word. To do so is its primary aim. One of the greatest problems for the effective proclamation of the Gospel, especially in the deprived areas of our growing metropolitan centers is the loss of local community. In mass society the individual no longer has identity as a responsible person. He becomes a pawn, the isolated,

unidentifiable, ineffectual particle of the crowd, the mass, which is used, pushed, shoved by infinitely remote power structures. Of course, all men are facing that predicament in mass society but the culturally deprived are much more threatened than others. Their lack of education, of financial ability, and political expertise makes any kind of effectual participation in the ordering of mass society completely unthinkable. That is one of the chief reasons why, in the core city, there is no community but only mass; only the crowd of resigned, frustrated, totally isolated persons without identity, incapable of envisioning any kind of responsibility for others. The problems of these people are centered in each lonely, hopeless, unrelated, tormented self. To make matters worse, the efforts of the power structures to improve the lot of the deprived through benefits such as urban renewal, public housing, and, most of all, through welfare programs only serve to destroy the halting, tentative efforts of the deprived to build some kind of community.

When old, dilapidated neighborhoods in which the poor have fashioned some kind of relationship to each other are torn down, the people are simply dispersed or corralled in housing projects. There they become subject to regulations which are foreign to them and prevent the building of community. Because aid to dependent children is given only to women whose husbands have deserted them, men who cannot find work pretend to leave their families in order to make it possible for their wives to receive ADC. Welfare departments, in order to protect public funds against fraudulent claims, are given authority to inspect, unannounced, the living quarters of ADC recipients. Investigators may and do break into tenements day or night in order to trap any husband who may not really have deserted his family. Thus even the basic community of the family is deliberately destroyed.

Since there is no community in the core cities, and since therefore people have no identity and bear no responsibility, it becomes almost impossible to proclaim the Gospel effectually. "Relevant" preaching, which speaks to the actual conditions of life, deals, as far as the deprived are concerned, with generalities, with conditions over which they have no control. Nothing becomes specific, nothing a challenge, nothing a call to which they could respond, for there is no community in which the people bear responsibility.

The Kotler Community Foundation envisions the creation of local community with local responsibility, in which individuals have the ability and the duty to participate. In this setting, whatever its other strengths or weaknesses, the Gospel may be proclaimed effectually.

On the basis of what has been said about the relationship of the Church to the Community Foundation, and granting that the Community Foundation is indeed capable of creating local community, it is clear that the task of the Church in such a setting is the perennial, ever new and ever old hermeneutical task. The question is: can the Church discern and believe in God acting in history, namely in the evolving local community, and can the Church find the symbols, both in word and action, to communicate God's will and grace to the people of the local community.

This hermeneutical task is the eternal calling of the Church. In the setting of the Community Foundation, this calling is in no way altered but is precisely the challenge confronting the Church. In its own terminology the Community Foundation urges the Church to meet exactly that challenge. In fact then, the task of the Church in the Community Foundation is the traditional task of the Church in the world.

Only her relationship to the Community Foundation may present a new opportunity for the Church. For many reasons Church and world have grown so far apart that communication between them has nearly ceased. Rightly or wrongly the Church has been identified with special interests and groups, particularly with power structures and privileged class. As a result the Church has alienated the deprived and is in their eyes often identical with exploitive oppressors. The Church has become a class institution and has for all practical purposes lost access to the masses of the outcasts. It took First Church over 4 years to overcome that attitude at least partially. To be sure, the Church is keenly aware of this situation and is making numerous sincere and valiant efforts to create a new image and to recapture her mission. Yet, many prophetic voices claim that these efforts have little if any chance of success, and require no less than the tearing down of all the traditional forms of the Church, especially the discarding of the congregational structure.

The Community Foundation views the Church and particularly her parochial structure as a great potential for the building of genuine local community which in principle and intent is humane, just, and respectful of the rights of the individual. A congregation which, like First Church, over several years of community services rendered at great cost and with utmost integrity, has won the confidence of the people living in its neighborhood and has come to be regarded as trustworthy friend, confidante, and sincere helper, would be able to relate to the Community Foundation on the basis of friendship and trust, and could begin to communicate the Gospel to the people.

In that sense the Community Foundation presents a new opportunity for the Church to relate to the world in fulfillment of her traditional hermeneutical task, through her God-given means and through the structures developed during the course of history, ever purified by His Spirit. The Church would act as "patron" in initiating the Community Foundation. Dr. Kotler claims that when a congregation which has won the confidence of the people acts that role with integrity, that is sincerely concerned for the welfare of the people and not for its own position, security, and maintenance, the congregation meets a very real need legitimately. Be that as it may. This much seems clear: when a concerned and accepted congregation encourages Community Foundation without ecclesiastical ambitions and without theocratic illusions, its hermeneutical task would be undertaken under auspicious conditions. Would it be to discern the action of God in history if the Church were to accept such conditions as God's gracious gift? It seems to me that Community Foundation may indeed be a God-given opportunity for the Church in our day.

## HERMENEUTICAL ASPECTS AND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Participation in Community Foundation which I understand as involvement in the world, means for the Church no more than an open door, a possibility to fulfill her specific calling. Some may judge that the cost to the Church for so little is too high. I cannot share that view. For, participation in Community Foundation does not exact from the Church any surrender of her freedom under God, nor any compromise in principle or doctrine, nor any adjustment of her forms to the demands of the world, but only the expenditure of money, and above all, loving concern for people. That kind of expenditure is incumbent upon the Church. The cost may be high, indeed it undoubtedly will be, and the return will be no more than that open door, without any assurance of the kind of gain for which the Church so fervently hopes and prays. But the fact is, of course, that the success for which the Church labors and gives herself can never be bought at any price it is always God's gift of grace. It is for the opportunity to fulfill her calling that the Church spends herself and her resources. Community Foundation is such an opportunity, perhaps the most promising opportunity confronting the Church today. The real task begins once such an opportunity has been grasped. That task is in relation to Community Foundation, as it has always been in relation to the world, the three-fold duty of the Church to present her kerygma, to manifest her koinonia, and to engage in her diakonia.

The new opportunity of Community Foundation would require renewal in all three. Basic for such renewal is constant alertness and openness to God's activity in history which, in the new community of Community Foundation becomes extremely specific, local, tangible, timely, and acute. The Church must learn anew to guard against the temptation of reducing the Gospel to an eternal verity and to everlasting principles. The Church must be ready to meet in the Gospel the living God Who indeed has acted for once and all in Christ, yet Who addresses us today, Who pursues His goals through current events, Who is presently involved and at work in His creation. The Church must hear and recognize the God Whom she knows in Christ through the Spirit as he acts here and now. She must discern His deeds and announce and celebrate them. She must make known His will at this moment for this man in this fellowship. She must pronounce His judgment upon betrayal. She must become His tool of healing for this ill.

What I am trying to say is this: the new opportunity requires that the Church come to grips with the hermeneutical problem today. How does the Church preserve the purity of the Gospel and our Reformation heritage without making "pure doctrine" the fortress, the means of security on which she hides from

the God of history? How does the Church maintain the truth of Christ and at the same time take absolutely seriously the God whos speaks to men now?

Certainly a great deal more than semantics is invovled here. When the hermeneutical task is reduced to a language problem the result can only be the kind of "blood and guts" preaching peppered with spicy tales - "apropos" - which so often and so futilely parades as relevent proclamation?!

As fareas the kerygma of the Church in the new opportunity is con-  
cerned, the task would seem to be to relate preaching to the joys and sorrows, the strengths and the weaknesses, the successes and the failures of the new community in the Community Foundation, and to let the Word of truth and healing shine into the hidden corners of its misery and injustice. Another most fascinating kerygmatic task would involve the kind of liturgical development which could conceivbbly becapture the dynamics of the worksip life of the early Church. It is interesting to note in this connection that Dr. Kotler insists that one of the basic needs of genuine community is "the celberation of life." How vital that is, especially for the deprived for find identity in community, is startlingly obvious. How readily "the celebration of life" can lead to dist' trous, even monstrous distort ons is not only all too clear but is amply demonstrated in history. But solid Biblical basis for such celebration and its truly evangelical character seem to escape even the current "liturgical movement". In the setting of the new community the Church would be challeng-  
ed to daring liturgical ventures. For, no one but the Church is capable of celebrating the evidences of the grace and power of God in the light of His love before the foundation of the world and in the light of His victory in Christ. It is that kind of celebration of life which alone is legitimate and profoundly needful. It may well be possible to celebrate, as the early Church did, God's loving actions done though individuals of the Community and through the community's achievements, using new symbols which are rooted in its experience. Such "celebration of life" could illumine the fact that the act ofkthanksgiving is one of man's basic responses to God through which His beessings are claimed and appropriated, as occurs climatically in the Eucharist.

In the new community in which men have identity as responsible beings, the koinonia of the Church would become of crucial sign-  
ificance as place and opportunity for grateful celebration, as source of strength and power for the fulfillment of duty, as wellspring of comfort and forgiveness for weakness and betrayal of the neighbor. In the new community the corporate action of the koinonia would become critically important. The koinonia's intercessions, the Prayer of kthe Church, would become vital when community is again reality and stands in need jof defense, stren  
gthening, healing, correcting.

In the setting of genuine community, the koinonia would be called to vicarious suffering by enduring the misery of the despised. It is this aspect of the Negro freedom movement and of Martin Luther King's non-violent action which deserves the most careful study of the Church. For it seems that freedom leaders may have developed a pattern for vicarious suffering which the koinonia of the Church must endure in order to practice faithful discipleship.

In the new community the diakonia of the Church would be the congregations; involvement in the community services rendered through the Community Foundation. Here a new dimension of diakonia is envisioned and made possible. This diakonia could no longer be fulfilled by contributions of money but would require direct involvement, both individually by the members of the congregation and corporately by its actions. Such direct involvement would become a distinct possibility for each member through the development of so-called sub-professionals.

Finally, the Community Foundation seems to offer a new opportunity for ecumenical encounter and activity. It is a commonly known, completely undisputed fact that an effective ministry of the Church in the core of cities of metropolitan areas cannot be developed on a denominational basis. Interdenominational cooperation including the Roman Catholic Church, is mandatory for any meaningful attempt at an urban ministry. Yet - this demand is not met with because effective, responsible co-ministry across all denominational lines is simply impossible. So, the old futile patterns are continued, all token cooperation to the contrary notwithstanding. "Urban strategies" are developed at great cost in man power and money by each denomination, independently of the other. In the section of Columbus in which First English Lutheran Church serves, the situation is this: in addition to numerous "store front" churches, there are in the area 6 Baptist, 4 Methodist, 2 Presbyterian, 2 Disciples of Christ, 1 ALC and 1 LCB, 1 Episcopal and 2 Roman Catholic churches. The Episcopal Diocese and the Presbyterian Synod are about to send one full time "urban-church planner". From financial assistance from the Board of American Missions the First English Lutheran Church has developed an "effective" urban ministry. Over the past 3 years Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians have more or less intensively studied our ministry. Executives concerned with the urban Church from the national offices of these denominations have sat with me for hours on several different occasions; local jurisdictional executives have interviewed me, our staff, and many of our members. They have visited our service activities and attended our worship services for many months. We have welcomed their interest and willingly shared with them all our experiences, impressions, reflections, and plans. The Methodists have thought our experiments important enough to make me an auxiliary member of the faculty of their Theological School in Delaware, Ohio, which sends a group of seniors for a 2 hour seminar per quarter for credit to First Church. The Roman Catholic Diocese has invited me to give lectures on the

urban ministry to their students for the priesthood.

Yet, I am convinced and I have repeatedly said so that our so-called success is due simply to the fact that we actually did something to come to grips with the situation while others did nothing. The need is so great and so manifold that anyone who does anything can but "succeed". We were able to "do" something because in the beginning, we still had reserve funds, while later the Board of American Missions facilitate our work, through generous grants. Since we were the ones to initiate services to meet the needs of people, we have a jump on the others. We are "established", and for a while the momentum will carry us even though "competition" from the "others" has begun and will become very keen with the arrival of their urban experts and the appropriation of funds. Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and as yet a lesser degree Disciples, and Methodists have begun to offer the same kind of services which we have been rendering. Shortly the situation will be ludicrous.

As long as denominations develop so-called urban strategies unilaterally, these misdevelopments are inevitable. "Comity" agreements are unacceptable. The surmounting of denominational barriers on the local jurisdictional level is a dim hope for future. That is the situation, and no one can be blamed for it.

The Kotler plan offers a new opportunity here which has the most exciting possibilities. Since not any Church but the Community Foundation determines, plans, and funds the needed services, all churches of the area are eligible to become centers from which certain types of services under the direction of the Community Foundation emanate. All Churches are free to contribute stability to the Community Foundation and all Churches may in their way relate their kerygma, their koinonia, their diakonia to the new community. Their common concern and responsibility brings the Churches together in the Community Foundation and gives them the possibility to "cooperate" without compromising their doctrines and principles. At the same time their cooperation in the Community Foundation opens the door for dialog which may be as intensive as they desire but which will certainly have very definite focus. It is, for example, not at all a fanciful assumption that the Churches could agree on certain "celebrations", done in their own way yet observed on the same day with the same general emphasis. It seems to me that the Kotler plan has the potential for a new approach to the absolutely mandatory local ecumenicity.

Let no one be trapped into thinking that this kind of cooperation is possible without that type of community organization. The key to the problem, is sad as it may seem money. Of course, national agencies of different denominations may agree on ecum-

CONCLUSION

If the Church is to become effective in urban society, she cannot escape involvement in the community organization movement. The Community Foundation appears to me the most promising type of community organization. Therefore I urge the Church to experiment with it.

The situation is this: the Kotler Plan is up to now a plan; it has not as yet been tried. Milton Kotler finds First English Lutheran Church not only congenial but well prepared to serve as instigator and research center for his plan. First Church has won the confidence of the deprived of the area and has developed many significant community services. These could readily be so augmented and supplemented by additional related services that government agencies and/or Foundations would be interested in funding them.

Milton Kotler proposes to charter a Community Foundation for First English Lutheran Church with the help of the famous law firm of Arnold, Fortas, and Porter of Washington, D.C. One of the firm's partners is so interested in the project that he offers to develop a Community Foundation charter free of charge, involving only actual cost for research, consultations, and court procedures. Milton Kotler will draw up the different service proposals, including staff requirements and budgets, and will submit them to government agencies and Foundations. The work to be done would involve about a month and a half. Dr. Kotler would on his part seek consultations with experts in many different fields. All of this would cost roughly \$6,385.00. Dr. Kotler is submitting a detailed budget for the project. I have secured the approval and cooperation of the Church Council of First English Lutheran Church which, on May 10, 1965 adopted the following resolutions: "The Church Council of First English Lutheran Church looks with favor upon the development of documents and proposals needed for the establishment of a Community Foundation by Dr. Milton Kotler of the Institute of Policy Studies, Washington, D.C., with such assistance and consultations as he deems necessary, provided that the funds needed for this project be made available by the Board of American Missions or other sources, and with the understanding that the plan and its development be constantly and carefully examined by competent agencies of the Lutheran Church in American.

2) Therefore the Church Council encourages the Pastor to proceed with the necessary applications for a research grant for this purpose. The Church Council furthermore declares its willingness, if requested to do so, to accept such a grant and to expend it for the project indicated according to a project budget to be submitted by Dr. Kotler, and upon receipt of proper bills and invoices relating thereto.

3) If the plan to be developed by Dr. Kotler is approved by the authorities of the Church, the Church Council will gladly cooperate in its implementation. It is the earnest and prayerful hope of the Church Council that the plan may prove feasible to the end that First English Lutheran Church may concentrate on the task of relating the Gospel so effectively to the life of the

community that its residents may be open to the call of the Holy Spirit to faith in Christ, our Lord and Savior, and to participation in Christ's Body, the Church."

Therefore I respectfully and urgently apply to the Board of American Missions of the Lutheran Church in America for a research grant of \$6,385.00 for the development of the Kotler plan and I request the Board and the Division of American Missions of the National Lutheran Council to consult with Dr. Kotler and me during the period of the plan's development, and to examine and evaluate its feasibility at its completion.

What appeals to me so greatly is that for the expenditure of about \$6,000.00 we will acquire a complete, detailed plan for the most far-reaching action without incurring any further obligations of any kind. Should, in the judgment of the Board, the plan, when completed, not appear feasible for any reason, nothing further would be required. Should the plan appear feasible and advisable, its enactment would involve no further expenditures, since community services would be made available as grants for them would be received. If grants for augmented services now rendered through the Neighborhood Center of First Church are made available, these services would be transferred to the Community Foundation, and their current cost to the Neighborhood Center would be deducted from the grant now given by the Board of American Missions to First English Lutheran Church.

It is my conviction that it is of great importance for the Church to fully investigate this possibility. In it may be hidden the new opportunity for an effective urban ministry in our day, well within the ability of the Church. All of us have been looking for this opportunity for many years. I have spent my ministry in this search.

May it please God to move the Board of American Missions to explore this untrodden path.

cs/kk  
62565