

## NEW YORK CITY METROPOLITAN MISSION TRAINING FACILITY

A proposal submitted to the members of J.A.M. and the Board of M.U.S.T.

### I. BACKGROUND

A variety of developments over the past several years have now converged to the point that the creation of a mission training facility has become an urgent necessity for the task of Christian witness and service in the New York City metropolitan region. These factors include the following:

- A. Theological "reformation" through which many Christians have come to the affirmation that the church and its institutions exist to share in God's work of shaping history for the sake of human life. It is the mission of the church to share in transforming, redirecting, and making manifest the destiny of the city as a rightful expression of God's grace for the good of man. Such a theological consensus as seems to be emerging among responsible church leaders in New York City makes it possible to change the focus of concern from institutional preoccupation and self-interest to the more significant questions as to how our present institutions can better serve God's purposes for our city.
- B. Growing recognition of the irrelevance and superficiality of much contemporary church life. In the face of the problems which confront human life in the modern metropolis, the church has often been impotent or disengaged. From many quarters and in many forms Christians are calling for help in finding their rightful work of mission and the forms through which they may fulfill God's purpose.
- C. Over the past several year, "Joint Action in Mission" (JAM) has become the concern of mission board and local denominational executives as they have considered the work of the church in this city. Out of many conversations has come a mutual respect and confidence that now makes possible a genuinely corporate ecumenical proposal for a joint Mission Training Facility.
- D. Methodist initiative in proposing training center for laity and clergy in New York City, with an interdenominational board, has served as a catalyst in bringing to common attention the need for a substantial program of training and research for the mission of the church. Since April, 1965, preliminary steps have been underway for such a training center, including development of a Board, some consideration of program, and the securing of funds for this program called MUST (Metropolitan Urban Service Training).

## II. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In developing this proposal for the joint consideration of the members of JAM and the board of MUST, we have operated on the basis of a number of presuppositions. Let us make them clear before proceeding further.

- A. Our task is to come up with a proposal broad enough to include the concerns of MUST, the use of funds that may be forthcoming from the Ford, or other, Foundation, and aspects of other present training programs in the city which ought to be part of a joint missionary training facility.
- B. The basic focus of this proposal will not be upon men (clergy and laity) to be trained for metropolis, as with the Urban Training Center in Chicago, but upon the mission of the church in this metropolitan area and the kind of training needed by those who are presently engaged in this mission or who by their location in society ought to be called into missionary service. In other words, we are not concerned to train men in general, but to give attention to training the Christians in this city as more faithful instruments of God's mission in this time and place. In terms of methodology, this implies a great emphasis upon "reflection of actual involvement."
- C. We understand the mission of the church, both corporately and through its laity in their individual commitments, to include the following elements:
  1. Knowledge of the world and its struggles to fulfill human life for all men. Here all the resources of the social sciences as well as a biblical perspective is essential.
  2. Service in the world. The Christian exists to follow the pattern of his Lord in relevant service to the needs of men. In this involvement, he is grateful for the partnership of all men of good will. It requires not only a compassionate heart, but often political wisdom and much technical knowledge.
  3. Witness in the world to the gospel. The Christian seeks always and everywhere to testify to the faith that is his and to point to the Lord of history who provides for all men the purpose and goal of their existence.
- D. Such an understanding of the mission of the church makes ecumenical cooperative and joint action no longer optional, but essential.

- E. Training for mission will have at least two fundamental elements that will provide a creative and vital tension for the churches:
1. Need to involve the present congregations and institutions of the church in deeper and more significant missionary witness than at present. This is the concern to help discover and utilize "structures for a congregation in mission."
  2. Development of new forms of church life and witness required by the mission of God in our metropolis. It is clear that the local congregation as we have known it is no longer the only normative form for church life and service.
- F. Metropolis must be the unit of concern for any training facility. Not only are the problems of the central and inner city unmanageable apart from the whole metropolis, but in terms of human inter-relatedness there is no other unit that encompasses the intersections of life about which the church must be concerned. In New York, the training facility must face the reality of the powerful white Protestant churches ringing the city in their suburban habitat, while in the five boroughs, with the exception of wealthy status churches, and a dwindling number of small white congregations, most of the Protestant witness is found in the Negro and Puerto Rican ghettos.
- G. Finally, we assume that we do not begin with answers to the problems of the city or any clearly defined body of information that will enable the church to do its job in an urban world. Part of the validity of a training facility will be its freedom to search for new patterns of obedience, to have resources for the kind of experimentation that may involve many failures in finding one clear path ahead, and ability to take seriously the emerging shape of the world even as it seeks to be faithful to the traditions of the past. Much of the specific programming of the center ought to develop slowly, as staff is hired and the authentic needs in New York brought clearly to view.

The significance of our problems at this point needs further underlining, for clear agreement will be necessary for all concerned with the development of the training facility. In spite of assertions to the contrary, the Christian church has yet to come to any clear theological and sociological conclusions about its mission in an urbanized industrial society. A great many statements have been made and a great many experiments have been tried, but they

do not yet furnish the kind of confident "consensus" of which some have spoken. In fact, the very attempt to define such a consensus has led to the production of theological slogans and overreliance on one or another method of social analysis.

For this reason, any effort at metropolitan mission in the largest and most complex urban area in North America must be as concerned for its theological basis and its tools of social analysis as it is concerned for program, staff and budgets. Both preceding the final plan and built into every possible program operation should be a process of theological inquiry and deliberate examination of the various socio-political analyses by which metropolis can be understood.

### III. ELEMENTS OF A UNIFIED PROGRAM

#### A. The Congregation in Mission

A significant element in any training facility will be the concern for significant and deeper mission involvement of the present congregations in the metropolitan area. This problem can be attacked through training in a variety of forms:

1. Orientation to the city: Basic course of perhaps six months offered to all clergy new to the city (along lines of Presbytery proposal). In the form of lectures, tours, etc., but also with a component on the theology of mission and the doctrine of the church.
2. Full year of training and supervision for interns assigned to churches in the metropolitan area. Opportunity for theological reflection on their work as well as orientation to the city.
3. Refresher course for clergy in theology and missions, using resources of metropolitan theological seminaries.
4. Clergy study courses for particular groups or areas, e.g.
  - a. Courses on mission and involvement for Spanish pastors, storefront ministers, etc.
  - b. Assistance to clergy in an area of the city in developing mission, discipline of life, etc.
  - c. Clinical training based on parish pastoral problems.
5. Pilot projects with several congregations on developing patterns for renewal and mission involvement.

6. Retreats, training programs, etc., involving joint participation of inner city and suburban laymen.
7. Saturday school of mission for laity. Responsible academic work plus involvement in urban life.

Present Resources to be Co-Opted or Supplemented

East Harlem Protestant Parish Metropolitan Missioner  
 United Church of Christ Metropolitan Missioner  
 Presbytery program for clergy training  
 Baptist Training Centers  
 City Mission Plans for Training at Good Neighbor  
 Union Theological Seminary Program for Continuing  
 Theological Education

Other Resources

Urban Center at New School for Social Research  
 Theological Faculties  
 Schools of Social Work

B. New Forms of Missionary Presence and Service

Another major element in the training facility must be the development of new forms of church life and the assistance to and study of such new forms as emerge not only in New York but elsewhere. The facility is not to become a missionary society but to evoke new forms through existing church structures wherever possible. At the moment, a number of projects are in the works which might well be developed as part of the training facility while maintaining their own denominational lines. Possibilities which seem urgent include the following:

1. Protestant ministry to public education. The program of the Presbytery ought at once to be expanded with staff, seen as a service to all the churches, and be related to the training facility as its base of operation.
2. Protestant Poverty Office. In terms of metropolis, the federal poverty program, in addition to many other poverty projects, needs to be given attention, and on two levels:
  - a. Prophetic efforts to call attention to the dangers in the programs that emerge.
  - b. Information for all the churches on how best they may relate to the various programs.

3. Pilot projects in Laity Training for Secular Witness.

New York has been almost devoid of any significant efforts to help gain a sense of Christian perspective on their secular involvements, e.g. political, vocational, etc. Several training facility staff members should give major time to this area, offering training focused on these secular points of reference.

4. Publication of a regular periodical with materials on Mission to Metropolis, related primarily to our task in New York City. A New York version of RENEWAL, related directly to the concerns and work of the training facility would serve as a very helpful instrument.
5. Evangelical Academy type conferences, seeking to evoke church-world dialogue on significant issues or in conflict areas.
6. Intensive course, residential in character, for laymen who wish to continue in secular vocation, but want solid study in theology, ethics, and mission. Perhaps one month in length or less. Open to laymen across the country.

#### Resources Presently Available

Plans to develop a New York City edition of RENEWAL  
 Presbytery program in area of Public Education  
 Office of Religion and Race of Protestant Council  
 Faculties and Facilities of New York area theological seminaries

#### C. Student Training and Urban Involvement: Serving the Whole Country

While a fundamental principle of the training facility is the focus on the development of the mission of the church in this region, there must also be maintained a genuine concern with the wider responsibility not only to interpret what is happening to the whole church, but also to provide direct assistance to the overall training problem which the church faces in this country. At two points, we seem ready to undertake significant projects:

##### ]. Judson Student House for College Graduates

Countless able and concerned college men and women, upon graduation, have a great earnestness about life and willingness to invest themselves

at some significant point, but have been unable to find the right focus. It is proposed that a group of 25 be recruited for a ten month period during which they would undertake secular jobs in the city and be involved in an intensive and demanding seminar on human life in metropolis that would seek to give them a sense of the possibilities of urban life and help them find the vocational direction that would enable them to enter responsibility into the public sector.

## 2. Metropolitan Internship for Seminary Students

The value of the first year of the Union Seminary Intern Program on metropolitan society suggests that New York City could take on at least four such programs, one each in the Lower East Side, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Harlem, and East Harlem, open to seminary students from all seminaries that wished to cooperate.

### Resources Presently Available

Judson Student House as base for college graduate program

Experience of UTS-EHPP Intern Program for seminary students.

## D. Continuing Study, Research, and Feedback

]. Study groups to be formed at once:

a. A theological committee should be convened to examine more fully some of the questions raised by the World Council of Churches study on "The Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Church and the World." Without some common understanding of the relation between creation and redemption, and of the relation between church and world (or at least a clear definition of alternatives), the project would be in constant danger of confusion over objectives.

b. A study group of political scientists, economists, sociologists and other social analysts (or a seminar group from one of the area's educational institutions) should be employed to examine the extent to which various models of the operation of metropolitan society are influencing the choice of alternative strategies for mission and for mission training.

Both these groups should be represented on the planning committee for the project, and should give guidance in initial planning, in the development of curricula, in the formulation of criteria, and in the evaluation of program. Wherever possible, the results of their discussions should be drawn up in papers which would be available both for internal use and, when appropriate, wider distribution.

## 2. Research and Evaluation:

This calls for a statement of goals, methods, criteria and the like against which evaluation can be made. It should also be possible to relate the general philosophy and goals of this particular training institute to other similar projects in this country. The implementation of this phase of the work may necessitate the assignment of a staff person at an early stage.

### Resources Available

Academic institutions of the area  
Church Planning and Research Division of Protestant Council  
N.C.C. Committee on "The Church's Role in the Region"

## IV. PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Base of operations in Manhattan, accessible to public transportation. Need office space, library and meeting facilities, dining space, limited residential space for overnight group and visitors. No doubt space in theological seminaries and city churches can also be used for large programs on weekends, evenings, and other times.
- B. Conference Center for overnight groups. Present resources of denominations may be available. Parish Acres is a good possibility, immediately available.

## V. STAFF REQUIREMENTS

### A. Primary Needs:

1. Director with overall responsibility
2. Assistant Director, with administrative responsibility
3. Program Director for Renewal Projects
4. Staff for New Forms Arena
  - a. Publication Editor
  - b. Staff man for ministry to public education
  - c. Vocational task force program man.
  - d. Staff man for ministry in poverty area.
5. Director of Student Training Programs  
(plus 5 1/3rd time men, one for each unit)

6. Program Director for retreat center
  7. Director for local congregation renewal pilot projects
  8. Research staff
- B. Present Resources that should be related fully:
1. UCC Metropolitan Missioner
  2. EHPP Metropolitan Missioner
  3. Presbyterian Training Program staff
  4. Office of Religion and Race (Payton)
- C. Additional Resources
1. Staff of New York City Mission Society
  2. Program of Presbyteries under Orion Hopper
  3. Methodist Metropolitan Staff
  4. Biblical Seminary
  5. Continuing Education programs at Drew & Union

#### VI. BUDGET FOR FULL YEAR

A. Staff	
10 full time professionals	\$150,000
6 part time	20,000
Business office	15,000
Secretarial	25,000
Housekeeping	10,000
B. Retreat Center	25,000
C. Publications	15,000
D. Instruction	
Fees to faculty	25,000
Materials	3,000
Library	5,000
E. Subsidy and Scholarships for Students	25,000
F. Rent and Operation of Facilities	20,000
G. Administration of all kinds	15,000
H. Contingent: for new developments, experiments, miscellaneous	37,000
I. Research Component	25,000
	<u>\$415,000</u>

This figure does not include co-opted resources presently budgeted by denominations, etc.

## VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THESE PROPOSALS

- A. That MUST should be seen as an integral part of one comprehensive program that seeks not only to fulfill the expectations of the original Methodist plan but now is able to go forward on a deeper and broader basis, free to engage in experimentation and research for mission as well as to seek to train and equip those presently involved in the work of the church in our area.
- B. That such staff as now are emerging in denomination structures with responsibility for new forms of mission, metropolitan assignments, and the like, should be part of the team of the training facility and under the direction of the Board and Director of the facility for the major part of their work. Specifically, this would involve men like the new metropolitan missionary of the UCC, James Crawford of EHPP, perhaps one member of Presbytery staff, part of the time of Carl McCall, Orie Hopper, etc.
- C. The Board of Directors might well be the group that has assumed the direction of MUST plus additional representatives that are appropriate in the light of the full proposal. This might mean including laity of the Metropolitan area from the denominations represented in JAM, additional executives from constituent groups, etc. The Board ought to have full authority for program and operation once the general criteria and goals have been established by the constituting groups.
- D. Initial Staff must take time to learn everything possible from the experience of such groups as the following: Urban Training Center; Ecumenical Institute in Chicago; Institute of Advanced Pastoral Studies, Parishfield.
- E. Careful attention must be given to working out the complex relationships between this program and other work of training and mission in the city. Also, the Board of the program will need to develop in some detail matters of policy and authority under which the staff gains its mandate, sees clearly its responsibility, and is aware of the limits of its freedom.

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