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In spite of the increased interest and involvement of institutions and individuals in defining and meeting the problems of the urban Negro ghetto, very little has occurred to substantially alter the conditions of the overwhelming majority of ghetto residents --- either in terms of material or spiritual change. Much has been said about what the Church has done and must do in order to hasten change, but in light of explosions in a number of urban areas in the past two years, it is clear that the Church must not only find ways to speed change, it must also be prepared to react faithfully and intelligently when lack of change results in violent and understandable eruptions.

A riot in a black ghetto in any urban area is a profoundly political event. Its implications and results are powerful not only on the local scene but nationally and internationally as well. The Church at many levels is properly and inevitably involved.

In the above outlined context, The Episcopal Church may have the opportunity to play a unique role, while taking up its responsibilities side by side with other churches and religious groups in the community. Because of his authority and visibility, The Episcopal Bishop of a given area - together with The Methodist Bishop, The Roman Catholic prelate, The head of the state or local council of churches and prominent clergy in the community --may be a focus of ecumenical action. He is likely to be sought out by agents of government to participate in or lend his authority to critical decisions. He, of course has the responsibility of pastoral guidance to his clergy and laity. He is also likely to be sought by the press for interpretation of events.

The following suggestions indicate some lines of action that may help during a period when great confusion is likely to exist.

There are five major areas of responsibility that must be dealt with. It is suggested that a small group -- perhaps six people -- can serve as an emergency staff during the crisis period and divide these responsibilities among them. The group should meet daily --- probably in the early morning and once again in the late afternoon and maintain 24 hour contact throughout the crisis period. The major areas are: 1) Government agencies; 2) Public media; 3) Crisis area; 4) Ecumenical action; 5) Pastoral care.

1. Government agencies

- a. The Bishop should be in direct contact with the mayor, governor and President and/or chief federal official in the area.

One of the staff --perhaps CSR executive, urban executive or Suffragan Bishop should have prior contact with appropriate staff persons in the offices of the governor, mayor, F.B.I. and Justice Department. It is also helpful to be in contact with the Commissioner of Police, Chief of Police and National Guard Commander.

The person responsible for these contacts should have personal interviews with the six or seven appropriate officials to determine what plans, if any, have been made and who the key persons will be in case of a crisis.

The Bishop, on the basis of his staff reports, should communicate with the mayor, governor and president, making any suggestions that seem appropriate and indicating his readiness to be personally involved (Needless to say, all information, correspondence and contact names should be kept in a file accessible to all the "staff").

2. Public media:

- (a) The Bishop should issue a public statement as soon as possible in order to indicate his involvement. It is particularly important to state his contact with the crisis area, i.e. "my clergy are on the street in -----area and I am in touch with them," and his contact with

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government officials: i.e. I have spoken with (or wired) the Mayor, governor etc. NOTE: Both the elements are important --involvement in the area as well as with government - and should be included in the first public statement. Calls for law and order are gratuitous.

- (b) If there is an ecumenical instrument available in the community, an appropriate joint statement can be encouraged. If not, the Bishop might immediately call together religious leadership and announce that in his first statement.
- (c) A "staff" person should be from the crisis area itself. He should be in contact with other clergy in the area as well as reporters both as a source of information and as a means of interpretation.
- (d) Someone should attempt to monitor all public media to keep abreast of necessary information, to determine when public statements might be needed, and to prepare for the task of interpretation.

3. Crisis area:

- (a) The Bishop should have a constant flow of reliable, on the spot information. A primary source would be clergy in the crisis area. In addition, contact should be maintained with key persons in civil rights groups, community agencies, police, reporters and residents in the area.
- (b) The staff person with this responsibility should be a priest or layman who is familiar with the crisis area, able to give objective information, and advice and somewhat free of localized responsibilities during the crisis period. One of his important jobs is to develop an objective chronology of events for later use.

4. Ecumenical action

- (a) The period of crisis may be an opportunity for new institutional commitments at the top level of religious leadership and a new move of involvement in the affairs of the city. The material from Los Angeles is illustrative. The Bishop's role may be critical -- at least in The Protestant sphere.
- (b) "The religious community" has an especially important function in relationship to every aspect of official government action. Law enforcement, legal rights, relief, responsible words and deeds on the part of officials --- all must be scrutinized. It is perhaps unnecessary to point out that the active involvement of the "religious community" may provide a non-partisan source of disinterested influence that can make the difference between increased hostility and bitterness and creative use of the forces of reconciliation.

5. Pastoral care

- (a) The Bishop should be prepared to get a pastoral letter into the hands of all the clergy of the diocese at the earliest opportunity. In a major crisis, most clergy will have to speak to the hopes and fears of their individual members and to their congregations as a whole---by and large without much first-hand involvement or information.
- (b) Relief work is, of course, necessary. Lack of food, medical care, electricity, etc. may take several days to remedy. Experience indicates that many individuals and congregations are readily available to be of service. Diocesan facilities should be set up to facilitate such service.

Several general points may be made in closing: a) contact should be established immediately with The Executive Council and the Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches of Christ, U.S.A. They have

experienced staff available and can frequently facilitate contacts at the National level of governmental agencies.

(b) During the time of crisis there will be an almost constant round of meetings at every conceivable level. Generally, The Bishop should be at the top level meetings but representatives should be delegated to attend every possible gathering and report to the Bishop's office.

(c) It is important for The Bishop to go to the crisis area as soon as possible. A good way to do so is to call a meeting of his clergy in the area. This need not be covered publicly but it is extremely important both for the personal impact and the establishment of authority in interpretation.

(d) A full report of The Bishop's involvement should be given to the Diocese shortly after the crisis. It may be written but might better be done at major gathering of clergy or clergy and laymen where the process of pastoral care and interpretation will be continued.

The legacy of a riot may color relationships in The Diocese and community for many months or even years. No effort should be spared to bring about a confrontation with the full meaning of the events and a deepened involvement in the process of resolving underlying problems.

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