Chapter 1 : Catholic Church in Crisis: Exclusive Interview Part 2 - Liberty Nation

KELLY HUDSON: Four years ago, Sharon Baptist Church moved from its inner-city home in Philadelphia to this new sanctuary near the middle-class suburb of Bala Cynwyd.

Are They Really Being Helped? Insuring That Support is Provided References Introduction In recent years, terms such as crisis, at-risk, marginal and endangered, are used with increasing regularity to describe the plight and condition of young Black males Taylor-Gibbs, ; Kunjufu, ; Anderson, The reason such stark and ominous terms are used with reference to Black males is quite clear: Whether the indicators relate to employment or education, health or crime, Black males are consistently clustered toward the end of the spectrum generally regarded as least desirable, and most vulnerable. As awareness of the acute nature of the problems facing young Black males has grown, an array of innovative educational programs aimed at preventing hardships and addressing the particular needs of Black males have been initiated. These have included various mentoring and job training programs which match youth with adult role models McPartland and Nettles, ; rites of passage programs aimed at socializing and preparing young males for manhood, fatherhood and community responsibility Watson and Smitherman, ; and the creation of all Black, all male schools which have been perhaps the most radical and controversial of all Leake and Leake, 1. The common theme underlying each of these initiatives is an assumption that the needs of Black males can best be served through efforts specifically targeted at them, even if it may require isolating them in order to apply the intervention. Often this assumption is combined with the belief that adult Black males are the most appropriate persons to provide the services and support needed by Black male youth Hale, Furthermore, it is contended that some form of separation and exclusion from other youth all other races and ethnic groups, as well as females generally is necessary in order to maximize the benefits of intervention Ampim, ; Myers, Yet, regardless of how benevolent or well-intentioned these efforts may seem, history would suggest that great risks are involved with advocating and promoting separate treatment for African Americans, whether they be male or female. Slavery and Jim Crow segregation were rationalized and sustained by the notion that Blacks should be separated and accorded different treatment from the rest of the population because of their racial inferiority Fogel, ; Franklin and Moss, In more recent times, there has been growing awareness that special education programs and schools specifically designed for dealing with troubled youth often target Black males because of persistent prejudice, assumptions of innate inferiority, and deeply ingrained fear and hostility Milofsky, ; Wilson, Rather than helping those served, such interventions have frequently been criticized for stigmatizing Black youth and depriving them of access to mainstream programs Taylor-Gibbs, Interestingly, although these programs were never explicitly created for the purpose of addressing the needs of Black males, the fact that in several cases Black males comprise a disproportionate number of those served has furthered the perception that these young people are fundamentally deficient and different from the rest of the population. Increasingly, many of these programs have come under attack because there is now considerable evidence that the vast majority have done little to actually improve the academic achievement or behavior of those served Wilson, Despite these criticisms, there is a renewed effort to address the "crisis" facing young Black males by creating new programs based on a different set of assumptions. Often managed and directed by individuals who empathize with those served, and who often share a similar background and experience, the new initiatives are rationalized as being better able to help Black male youth because they are " culturally authentic" and "culturally appropriate" Garibaldi, As a result of recent court challenges to the premise that not only race but gender separation is necessary, many of the programs that have been initiated in public schools have included Black girls as well. These initiatives are different from past efforts to separate Black youth in that they are not based on the premise that those served are intellectually deficient or culturally deprived. Rather, the new efforts are based on the assumption that Black youth from low income urban areas possess the potential to excel and succeed if provided with proper guidance and support in a culturally affirming environment. Recognizing that such efforts have been implemented largely because of a growing perception that extraordinary measures are needed to address the needs of Black males, this paper will attempt to illuminate some of the risks associated

with furthering the separation and exclusion of Black males and Black youth generally. In recognition of the pressing needs of so many Black youth, I will also discuss some of the considerations that should be taken into account in order to avoid the tendency for even well intentioned efforts to lead to further marginalization and reinforcement of stigma. It will be argued that in certain cases separate programs and even separate schools may be necessary to provide adequately for Black youth who have not been served well by traditional programs and institutions. However, when such arrangements are made, special efforts must be taken to insure that the young people targeted for such services are in fact being helped, and are not being marginalized and isolated by providers who claim to want to help. Data obtained from research carried out at a continuation high school in northern California, will be utilized to examine the advantages and risks associated with racially separate programs. This case differs from most of the current efforts to support Black youth in that it was not created for the purpose of providing support and cultural affirmation. Rather, the school served as repository for troubled students considered unfit for enrollment in traditional schools. The school, which shall be called East Side High School for the purpose of this analysis, 2 is particularly well suited for such a study because it originally resembled the more traditional type of intervention program targeting troubled youth. Established for students who had been removed from regular high schools for either academic or behavioral reasons, the school was widely perceived as a dumping ground for bad kids, and in many cases, bad teachers as well. District administrators rationalized the racial imbalance at the school as an unavoidable consequence of the need to provide these students an education in a separate facility. Interestingly, over the course of the four years in which data was collected, race played a role in several of the dramatic improvements that occurred at the school, related both to student and school performance. As the school improved, a more conscious and deliberate effort to affirm the culture and social experience of the students was adopted. In this case race went from being ignored and simultaneously implicated in the marginalization of students, to being recognized and subsequently integral to the effort to improve the school. Given this apparent paradox, the way in which race is conceptualized and responded to in intervention efforts of this kind will also be a central theme of this paper. Much more than a combination of physical attributes and cultural traits, race is a highly politicized social formation which is treated with inordinate significance in American society Omi and Wynant, Racial categories serve as one of the primary social boundaries between groups and individuals in American society. In a racially stratified society race also invariably becomes a signifier of power, privilege and social status. Assimilation of the dominant culture has historically served as one of the requisites for mobility and advancement, while a lack of conformity has traditionally been penalized Baker, Despite the costs, rather than retreat from racial identification many African Americans have sought to challenge and invert the stigma associated with Black identity through various forms of affirmation Ogbu, ; Hooks, ; Dyson, In so doing, race consciousness has played a major role in various efforts to uplift and improve conditions for Black people. As the experience of East Side High School will show, this school reform effort aimed at helping Black youth has followed a similar path. Dimensions of the Crisis and the Nature of the Response There is now little disagreement that large numbers of individuals, who happen to be Black and male, face an inordinate number of problems and hardships which set them apart from the rest of the US population. The preponderance of evidence supporting such a conclusion is almost mind numbing. In professional and managerial positions, Black males are vastly underrepresented, and in some fields e. Numerous studies indicate that despite the existence of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, Black males are widely regarded as less desirable employees and therefore are substantially less likely to be hired in most jobs Massey and Denton, ; Hacker, ; Feagin and Sikes, At the aggregate level, disparities in income persist, so much so that it continues to be the case that the average Black male with a four year college degree earns less than the average white male possessing only a high school diploma Hacker, Health indicators for black males reveal similar hardships. For the last ten years, Black males have been the only group within the U. The homicide rate for black males ages is the highest for any segment of the U. Moreover, since , the suicide rate for this age group has surpassed the white male rate, and all indicators point to a sharp and continuous increase West, ; National Research Council, Black males are also at greater risk of substance abuse, of dying during infancy, or dying prematurely due to heart disease, hyper tension, diabetes and AIDS. Finally, where Blacks generally, and males in particular, once

saw education as the most viable path to social mobility Anderson, , it now increasingly serves as a primary agent for reproducing their marginality. Nationally, Black males are four times more likely than white males to be suspended or expelled from school, and nine times more likely to be placed in special education classes Meier, et. However, since there has been a sharp and precipitous decline in Black college enrollment which has disproportionately impacted males National Research Council, Moreover, at colleges and universities throughout the U. Finally, for growing numbers of Black males prison rather than college is a more probable destination during adolescence and young adulthood. In , one out of every three Black males for white males the rate is 1 out of 10 between the ages of 18 and 30, were either incarcerated or in some way ensnared by the criminal justice system Noguera, Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence that Black males are confronted with an array of chronic problems, the notion these conditions constitute a crisis is problematic. First, the term crisis implies a deviation from a more stable norm. It suggest a period of temporary urgency, or even a short term emergency, and not a prolonged and persistent degenerative condition. Secondly, the term crisis also suggest that a better and more secure period preceded the present condition, and that once the crisis is over, conditions shall return to the former state, which even if not ideal, was clearly superior to the way things are at the moment. For African American males in the US, there is no evidence indicating that present conditions are temporary, or that by some means presently unknown, there will eventually be an improvement. Not only are the problems which particularly afflict Black males persistent, but all signs indicate escalating rather than declining severity. Moreover, while data from various sources suggests that conditions for Black males may indeed be growing worse, the deterioration is of course measured in relation to prior conditions which most observers agree have been bad for a very long time. For example, while unemployment rates for Black males in the U. Still, there is no doubt that severe problems exist for many individuals who are both Black and male. However, can we or should we conclude that these problems are primarily caused by or somehow related to the race and gender of those individuals who experience them? Or, is there lens other than one which fixates on personal attributes which can be used to understand and study these social issues? If so, why are these social problems measured and discussed primarily in terms of race and gender rather than by some other criteria? I will attempt to provide answers to these questions as I examine some of the responses to the "crisis" that have been developed in educational institutions. Responding to the Black Male Problem In a probing inquiry into the problem of youth violence, Greenberg and Schnieder ask the following: Rather, by playing on what has become construed as a natural association between young Black males and violence, the authors hope to compel their readers to reexamine their assumptions. This they accomplish through an analysis of the many factors environmental, economic, etc. In so doing, they demonstrate that the way in which a question is posed strongly influences the framing of the answer. By focusing almost exclusively on race and gender, other factors which may be relevant to understanding the causes of social problems like crime, drug trafficking, student performance or violence, often go ignored. Most important among the omitted factors are the influence of class and geographic location. Many, though not all, of the problems cited as afflicting Black males are most prevalent in poverty stricken urban areas. These are typically communities which lack a sustainable local economy, where community institutions are weak or barely existent, and where environmental degradation and an absence of social services are primary characteristics of the social landscape. However, the problems facing Black males and Black youth generally are increasingly not discussed in the context of their interaction with these types of conditions. Instead, race and gender are employed as explanatory categories, resulting in an explanation of the crisis facing Black males which focuses almost exclusively on cultural rather than structural factors. For the scholars and writers who advocate this perspective, these cultural factors can include the matriarchal Black family Glazer and Moynihan, ; Kunjufu, ; oppositional attitudes and behavior Ogbu, ; Solomon, ; Fordham, ; or the violent and destructive culture of inner city streets Anderson, Such explanations tend to reinforce and perpetuate many of the negative images and stereotypes that have historically been associated with Black males and Black people generally. In the past, propagation of negative stereotypes could be understood as the by-product of racist and racially biased theories of Black behavior. However, in the current, period these ideas are being produced by a wide assortment of journalists, scholars and political actors, many of whom perceive themselves as sympathetic to the plight of Black males, and some of whom

also happen to share their race and gender. Given the history of exclusion and given the persistence of negative images associated with Black males, good intentions often are not enough to prevent the marginalization and stigmatization of Black males even in programs that were theoretically designed to help them. Particularly if efforts designed to help Black youth are based on the assumption that race and gender are the key attributes which must be addressed in order to help them, such efforts may only overlook other important factors related to the social and economic conditions in which young people live which have tremendous bearing on their behavior and attitudes. Moreover, such formulations may also inadvertently reify the stereotypes and images that have been instrumental in maintaining the subordination of poor Black youth in the inner city. The efforts undertaken by a middle school in an economically depressed section of West Oakland to address the problem of disruptive students illustrates how an intervention designed to help Black males can end up producing the opposite effect. Teachers had been complaining for some time to the site and district administration that they had too many disruptive students and that many of them felt unsafe at school. The teachers argued that the disruptive students were preventing others from being educated because a few individuals took up most of the class time. The district administration had been pressuring the school to improve its test scores for some time, but was unable to get cooperation from the teachers because they insisted that the disciplinary issues should be addressed first. Teachers were asked to put forward the names of their most difficult students. The principal then created a list of the names which came up most frequently, and these students were selected for placement in the new class. Not surprisingly, given the history of behavioral problems at the school, all twenty-one of the students selected were African American males. To address their special needs and to insure that the students would be helped, the district assigned a young Black male teacher, who was specially trained in Afrocentric education, to teach this newly created class. Once established, the class was publicized as a unique and "innovative educational opportunity" which in addition to providing a culturally enriched curriculum, would also provide work experience, mentors and other special services for its students. If successful, the district administration planned to use the class as a model at other schools throughout the school district. Trapped together in the same classroom for four and a half hours a day, and isolated from the rest of the school, the students soon began to resent their placement in the special class. Much of this resentment was taken out on the teacher, who had grown increasingly short tempered and authoritarian toward his class as the frustration of the students escalated.

Chapter 2 : Sorry, this content is not available in your region.

Jersey City's struggling low-income families know that educational enfranchisement is the key to their children's futures, and indeed is the key to economic opportunity and social justice in today's America.

KOPEL One of the central strategies of the gun prohibition advocates has been to tell Americans that they are all in immediate peril of gun violence. The strategy may involve exaggerating the rate of gun accidents, or announcing an epidemic of suicide among mentally healthy teenagers-caused by gun availability. Or the strategy may attempt to place Americans in fear of gun crime. For example, Fortune magazine touts handgun prohibition while warning its wealthy readership that the recent rise in youth homicide puts all Americans at imminent risk, for "this onslaught of childhood violence knows no boundaries of race, geography, or class. For inner-city black teenagers, the homicide rate is astronomical. In the suburbs, where legal restrictions on guns are generally less severe, the mortality rate has stayed about the same. And if one looks at statistics for particular age groups, one finds a substantial rise in murder arrests. The homicide rate has stayed at about nine or 10 homicides per , population for the last three decades. And happily, preliminary major city figures indicate that most cities saw a leveling off of homicide rates in To look simply at the category "youth," however, is to miss the real story. The white youth homicide arrest rate has remained stable, while the black rate has skyrocketed. The murder arrest rate of whites aged 10 to 11 was the same in as in having dipped in the middle of the decade, and then risen to its former level. But whereas in the black arrest rate was four times the white rate, by the black rate was eight times the white rate. The conflation produces the erroneous impression of a widespread serious problem with gun crime, rather than of a disastrous problem with gun crime among racial minorities. Katherine Christoffel, of the American Academy of Pediatrics, told Congress, "A resident of Seattle is five times likelier to be murdered with a handgun than is a resident of Vancouver, just miles to the north. A black or Hispanic resident of Seattle, however, faces a much higher risk of gun violence. All this is not to say that America does not have a serious homicide problem. But America cannot begin addressing the murder problem without a realistic understanding of the issue. Unless the problems of the inner city are addressed, the murder crisis will continue. Some public officials argue that the problem of teenage homicide is directly related to the availability of firearms. In a narrow sense the argument is accurate, because the majority of murders are committed with guns. Yet it is not accurate to claim that there is a correlation between the availability of guns and the frequency of homicide. If there is any relationship between gun density and homicide in the U. In other words, the regions with the most guns are the regions with the lowest homicide rates. For example, while homicide rates were rising in the late s, firearms sales were stagnant. But based on modern research, Professor Toch has found: Furthermore, the fact that national patterns show little violent crime where guns are most dense implies that guns do not elicit aggression in any meaningful way. Quite the contrary, these findings suggest that high saturations of guns in places, or something correlated with that condition, inhibit illegal aggression. Another, perhaps more important factor in the association of high gun ownership rates with low crime rates is that American areas with the highest rate of gun ownership tend to be rural and small-town. In rural and small-town America, family structures are relatively strong, and communities are often more stable and unified. Thus, the problem of violence in American inner cities may have less to do with the fact that guns are available there as they are everywhere else than with the fact that so many families are dysfunctional, and that so little sense of community can be found. Whatever may be said about rates of gun ownership in America, it is obvious that America has more guns--and more gun murders--than other industrial democracies. As a widely-reported study by Centers for Disease Control researchers noted, the American murder rate for teenagers is much higher than the rate in most industrial countries, where gun control laws are generally stricter. The researchers concluded that the U. For example, England has harsh gun laws and a low homicide rate, but the historical evidence seems to show no cause and effect between the former and the latter. The lowest rates of violent crime and homicide in England did not occur in the period with the strongest gun laws the late s and s , but in the era with the weakest gun laws. At the turn of the 20th century, there was virtually no violent crime in England, and virtually no gun control.

Anyone children included could buy any type of gun, no questions asked. There were no background checks, no forms to fill out, and no safety training. All that was needed was ready cash. Yet gun homicide and other crime was only a small percentage of the current British rates. At the turn of the century, Victorian social morality was strong; it was a more effective check on British criminal impulses than are the rigid gun laws of today. Scotland has rigorous gun laws, and its murder rate for males aged is over three times as high as the rate in Switzerland. By looking only at firearms, the Centers for Disease Control study did not consider other factors which might explain why American males aged 15 to 24 are so much more likely to kill each other than their counterparts in other nations. America is the only country studied that has a three-and-a-half-century history of enslaving and degrading a major part of its population. And America is the only country studied where demand for drugs is sky-high, and the only country with an all-out drug war. After declining for several years, the black teenage homicide rate began soaring upward in That year was not marked by any sudden increase in the availability of guns sales were flat. What did happen in was that the drug war suddenly intensified, at the same time that drugs themselves became more dangerous. The cocaine overdose death of college basketball star Len Bias and the popularization of crack cocaine produced an unprecedented media and political determination to fight a "drug war" in the U. They note that crack like PCP and alcohol, but unlike hemp and heroin , often reduces inhibitions against violence and stimulates aggressive behavior. Without denying the destructive effect of crack, other scholars trace the roots of the violence to governmental drug policy. They note that the "war on drugs" has lived up to its name by producing a genuine war in inner-city America. Economist Sam Staley argues that the war on drugs and the criminalization of the drug trade generate levels of violence that make the inner city unlivable, with levels of violence far higher than would occur in a world where drugs were controlled by means other than the criminal law. Since they cannot rely on the police for protection, they must, to survive, protect themselves. When drug dealers engage in commercial transactions with each other, there is no Uniform Commercial Code and state district court for resolving disputes about the quality of goods sold. Disgruntled buyers, having no other means of redress, may resort to violence. Similarly, the addicts who sell drugs often end up consuming the drugs which should have been sold; because higher-level dealers have no legal means of handling salespersons who stole the merchandise with which they were entrusted, violence often results. Other drug users buy goods on credit, but fail to pay their debt. Since the seller has no lawful means of debt collection, violence again may result. Eighty-seven percent of the homicides were related to territorial disputes, debt collection, or cocaine deals gone bad. If currently-illegal drugs were sold in liquor stores, gangs would no longer be able to profit from selling substances at the artificially high prices created by prohibition laws. Despite the youth violence engendered by drug prohibition, it may be that the prohibition strategy yields benefits that outweigh its negative effects. Any realistic analysis of American drug policy should, however, acknowledge the substantial toll of violence that is a, perhaps necessary, price that America is paying for current laws. Almost anytime a child is murdered with a gun, or dies in a gun accident, the event is at least a statewide news story--as such a tragedy should be. But it is not accurate to conclude on the basis of news coverage that gun-related deaths of children are among the major killers of children; it is not correct to assume that the amount of press coverage devoted to any event correlates with the frequency of the event. The number is about the same as the children in those age groups who die of heart disease. The most common form of homicide against younger children is child abuse murder by a relative or caretaker. Reduced availability of firearms might, however, reduce the not insignificant number of younger teenagers who lawfully shoot abusive relatives in self-defense. For older teenagers 15 and up , the number of firearms murders is higher, especially for urban minority teenagers. Under what circumstances do those teenage murders take place? The American Academy of Pediatrics writes: The most common event precipitating a shooting is an argument, often over something later seen as trivial. Such shootings are usually impulsive, unplanned, and instantly regretted. That study, however, did not claim that teenage homicides did not involve "crime, gang activity, or premeditated assault. The studies of adult murderers have shown that murderers are not "nice" people who happened to get too emotional in the presence of a handgun. Rather, murders are generally people with long records of criminal violence. The pattern for teenage homicides is similar. The persons who are most likely to be killed by a teenager with a gun are gang

members, gang hangers-on, and other teenage criminals. While there are a great many innocent victims, there are not many innocent murderers. The authors of the most extensive study of the gun-carrying habits of modern juvenile felons found them to be: Even at that, one is struck less by the armament than by the evident willingness to pull the trigger. From the viewpoint of public policy, it matters less, perhaps, where these juveniles get their guns than where they get the idea that it is acceptable to kill. It may be convenient to think that the problems of juvenile violence could be magically solved by cracking down or getting tough, but this is unlikely. The problem before us is not so much getting guns out of the hands of juveniles as it is reducing the motivations for juveniles to arm themselves in the first place. Convincing inner-city juveniles, or adults, not to own, carry, and use guns requires convincing them that they can survive in their neighborhoods without being armed. So long as this is not believed to be the case, gun ownership and carrying in the city will remain widespread. No set of criminal justice approaches focused on "gun control" are likely to reduce the inner-city problems regarding guns. Solutions must be found in dealing with the more complex pathologies of the lack of hope and economic opportunity, and the decay of cultural values. At the same time, some conservatives make the same mistake with gangs and drugs that liberals make with guns. Some inner-city youth are attracted to gangs because the gangs "give estranged youth something meaningful to which they can belong, an identity otherwise lacking. Gangs express the pathology of inner-city life and the new urban culture of violence, but are the consequences of these developments, not the cause. The many youthful lives wasted through illegal drug abuse are tragic. But if there were no narcotics, these lives would be wasted through alcohol abuse, or some other method of numbing the mind to the bleakness of ordinary life. A century of sternly enforced drug prohibition has resulted in drugs being more available than ever to inner-city youth. The fact should offer a caution to liberals who imagine that gun laws can succeed where drug laws have failed, and somehow keep a commodity away from a market that demands it. And the fact should suggest to conservatives that a better strategy to reducing drug abuse should be to offer inner-city youth a future brighter than the false and numbing consciousness offered by drug pushers. As long as the debate over the decay of inner-city America focuses only on symptoms-guns, gangs, and drugs-there will never be a solution. As Professors Wright and Sheley put it:

Chapter 3 : Crime: The Inner-City Crisis

The church, he said, was in the grip of a "small group of elite organisationally minded evangelicals who think the church is a biddable, shapeable, governable body, and that's not the case.

The Changing Face of Religion: As middle-class blacks migrate to communities outside of urban environments, where do they go for spiritual development? How is religion in urban America shifting and changing in light of the "outmigration of nonpoor black families? How do suburban communities react to black church development in these areas? These and other questions are important to the continued viability of the black church institution as it moves to address these issues facing the 21st century church. As authors, Gerald Jaynes and Robin Williams state, "the suburbanization of the middle-class is changing the face of religion in urban America. Blacks and American Society, the authors write: Increased social stratification within the black community, suburbanization of the middle class, and losses of worshippers as well as many talented ministers The popular media has touched on this developing movement in the black church. In , the now defunct Emerge magazine published an article, "Growing in Glory," which described what is fast becoming a cause for concern for some churches in the central city, the "mega-church. Much has been written on the black underclass in inner city America and the social problems in urban communities. However, little attention has been given to where middle class blacks, particularly those living in suburban communities, worship. Middle class blacks, taking advantage of liberal fair housing policies, better schools and less crime move to predominantly white suburbs, leaving behind inner city neighborhoods. Studies showing how this outmigration effects the inner city church do not appear available at this time, however, its is apparent that loss of membership in inner city churches could be examined in the future as a corollary to this situation. The migration experience of blacks moving from city to suburbs, in some ways mirrors the black migration of an earlier period. Southern blacks fled the oppressive conditions of post-Reconstruction and Jim Crow laws in search of full and equal citizenship and a better way of life. They migrated in record numbers to northern cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit and Cleveland between A large number of southern blacks settled in Chicago and many places of worship were established. Black Chicago showed a dramatic increase to , in and by , more than , blacks called Chicago home. Chicago Commission on Race Relations, Woodson describes the classes of people who sought refuge in northern cities in his book, A Century of Negro Migration. This migration contributed to the economic, social, political, and spiritual life of the city. One place where the influx of these new migrants was felt was in the black church. Many houses of worship, already struggling, struggled harder to meet the needs of this new population. Some churches, however, did benefit from this influx as membership rolls grew significantly. By , reports show a membership of 10, Fisher, During this period, the black church experienced great growth. The northern urban church became a hub of activity and helped to give meaning and purpose to the new migrants life, much as the church in the south had done from slavery to freedom. The black church of the Civil Rights era, was very influential. Sociologist Aldon Morris writes: The great migration of blacks from rural to urban areas between and was responsible for the tremendous growth of the church throughout that period. The Great Society programs of the s also helped the black church. Churches were able to secure funding to operate day care centers, obtain federal funds to build low income and senior citizen housing often named after the church pastor and purchase vacant or abandoned property for additional church parking. African centered worship services emerged in churches as ministers took off their traditional long black robes and replaced them with dashikis or robes adorned with African fabric. The face of black religion began to change. Blacks, who benefited from desegregation in education and housing, experienced employment gains and enjoyed a more favorable economic picture. By the s, middle class blacks in once stable communities in cities like Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland, began to move. Once in senior housing and some no longer driving, many had to rely on church transportation systems to travel back and forth to church. Those who located in suburban communities were faced with a dilemma: Thus, the need for suburban African American churches began to increase. Suburbia is defined in geographic terms. The characteristics of black suburbanization patterns are similar to white migration described in many early

sociological studies concerned with fair housing policies or discriminatory real estate practices. The institution provided a place for African American spiritual and social growth and a training ground for most aspects of black life. However, with the outmigration of middle class blacks to suburban communities, we see a change in church attendance and a possible cause for urban churches to experience declining church memberships and loss of members due to locations in high crime and drug infested communities. White church movement to suburban communities was a concern of the s and s because it was viewed as an abandonment of its Christian mission to the inner city. Winter, In an interesting shift, now, however, inner city neighborhoods are faced with the potential loss of black churches to suburban areas. This presents new challenges to communities already in crisis. When inner city black churches take flight and move to the suburbs, the services, i. The suburbanization of the black church is part of the changing face of religion being experienced in the black community today. The Negro in Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, University of Chicago Press, , pp. Blacks and American Society. National Academy Press, The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change. The Free Press, The World of the New Urban Poor. The Suburban Captivity of the Churches. A Century of Negro Migration.

Chapter 4 : Catholic-School Comeback?: Inner-city kids would be the big winners. | City Journal

Early Church Apologetics. The onslaught of urban folk religions in tandem with the myriad social problems already confronting the inner city has left many churches scrambling.

In part one , Weigel addressed reports of sexual abuse in the Church, and allegations that Pope Francis reinstated and promoted a proven sexual predator. Being the shepherd of a flock numbering more than a billion souls is a job arguably as difficult as President of the United States. George Weigel has seen Popes come and go over the last half century, and the official biographer of Pope John Paul II and Senior Vatican Analyst for NBC says trying to change the subject to how the Catholic Church is embracing politically correct, progressive policy positions is exactly the wrong approach: Pope Francis has been drawn into the leftist side of a number of political debates. Most recently, the Archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal Blase Cupich, said on NBC that answering the allegations brought by the former Papal Nuncio, or Ambassador from the Vatican, was not a priority for the Pope since he had more important things to worry about, such as the environment and immigration. Now, this Pope seems to the layman like me to be drawn into these debates by progressive forces within the church hierarchy. Is this true and does this Pope have the kind of strength and leadership skills necessary to actually take on this issue and right the ship? I think we have to all hope and pray that Pope Francis finds it within himself to really get to grips with stuff, not only in the United States, and not only with this particular case of McCarrick and what led up to that, but in Chile, in Honduras, in Great Britain, in Ireland. He was elected in under the banner of reform. That somewhat parallels what happened in I mean, when it really gets to crunch time, Catholics know, as all Christians know, that they have to turn to the Lord, which is the big point in my Wall Street Journal piece, and that bailing out on the Lord is not the answer to these problems. Catholic Church attendance in the United States is still far higher in terms of regular practice than any place else in the developed world. It does seem to have been slipping slightly year by year during â€¦ Frankly, during the present pontificate. You are quite right to point out that this creates a special set of problems for ministry to young people and young adults, because if all they know this past 16 years is one bit of bad news after another, that creates real problems. The financial side of this is not an easy or simple one. Estimates of how much the church and its various institutions have lost over the past 16 years because of these abuse settlements I think are now in the billions of dollars. It is certainly the case that the ministries of the church, particularly things like its inner city schools, which are crucial for the health of America, not just for the Catholic Church. Catholic schools are the schools that work in inner city America. One of the things you write in your piece in the Wall Street Journal is that Bishops have been putting institutional maintenance ahead of evangelical mission. Is the Catholic Church too bureaucratic, too hierarchical? But I think Catholics have learned from the experience of the past several hundred years, and frankly from their encounter with evangelical Protestants, that institutional maintenance has to take a backseat to evangelical mission. Institutions exist as launchpads for mission. Remember to hit the best aggregator for conservative news and commentary â€" WhatFinger.

She challenges church members to do what they can and to consider how church facilities can be used to support families in crisis. Verne Gilkes is a church elder at Knox Presbyterian Church in Vankleek Hill (half way between Ottawa and Montreal). A retired police officer, he is concerned about the opioid crisis and, after consulting with his minister, Rev. James Douglas, convened a community meeting on March 27,

It included their institutions as well â€" churches and synagogues. And when they left, those congregations were often criticized for abandoning their urban communities. Now, a growing black middle class and the lack of available land in cities are luring some African-American congregations to suburbia as well, depriving their old neighborhoods of the ministries that had served them. We get locked into doing something one way so long that we have a hard time moving and transitioning to the move of God. Four years ago, Sharon Baptist Church moved from its inner-city home in Philadelphia to this new sanctuary near the middle-class suburb of Bala Cynwyd. We could no longer grow, we could no longer be effective as we were before â€" we became that large â€" so as a result of it, we came to the conclusion that maybe God is trying to push us out of our nest, out of our comfort zone, so that we can become even broader and more impactful. Sharon Baptist is one of many increasingly affluent black churches that have recently moved from their inner-city homes. While many applaud the success of these churches, there is also concern among some people that this suburbanization is leaving a void in the neediest neighborhoods, like this one. The neighborhood was a troubled neighborhood. You could go two blocks in any direction and run into all types of chaos and trouble that was there. The church was a protected area. We ran drug dealers off the corners because of the presence, the activity that was going on because of the church. Sharon was now reaching beyond its immediate community to serve middle-class blacks commuting from surrounding suburbs. We were turning people away. You have to understand. First, we put people in the basement with no monitor â€" they were just listening over the loudspeaker, and finally we got a TV down there. Sharon, now located close to a major highway, increasingly serves a membership from as far away as Delaware and Maryland. Historically, black religious institutions have had to play the role of the house builder, the psychologist, the bank â€" all kinds of roles. And so in neighborhoods where black churches have been present, of course, for a church to leave could present a crisis for that neighborhood. The thing that is so strange to me is, why do we look at the church abandoning their communities when they grow? So they not only have impact where they were, but they also have impact where God has taken them to be. The addiction ministry works with other churches in their old neighborhood. On this night, two members deliver clothing to a halfway house. Sharon has started a community-based credit union and says it plans to build low-income housing. It also buses members from its old neighborhood to Sunday services and other events. We tried to stay in the West Philadelphia area. The biggest challenge was, where do you find eight acres in the city of Philadelphia? To help make up for its absence in West Philadelphia, Sharon made a commitment to lease its former building to another church. Sharon had a great impact on the neighborhood. They won a lot of souls. Like when I came home from work, it was late at night. Some guys over there were always going in and out. They always had a kind word to say. They know how to touch the heart. That goes a long way. Meanwhile, Sharon has been enormously successful in nurturing its new church community, which now exceeds 7, members. Is the community the geographic neighborhood surrounding the church, or is the community the set of people who have attended your church for a long time and who are now also your source of revenue, and who are now leaving to the suburbs? So ultimately, the question is about how religious institutions understand community and understand their mission. The leaders of Sharon Baptist insist they have not abandoned the people of their old neighborhood. But their move does highlight the potential costs of success for inner-city churches and the communities they serve.

Chapter 6 : As traditional believers turn away, is this a new crisis of faith? | World news | The Guardian

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting in Baltimore addressing the sex abuse crisis affecting the church will not vote on actions as originally planned at the "insistence" of the Vatican.

Pinterest Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. Except, say critics, rather than taking the church into the mainstream, as Blair did with Labour, the focus on evangelism risks placing the church firmly on the fringe, in the hands of zealots. Many among the clergy and in congregations are uncomfortable and distrustful of charismatic practices such as speaking in tongues. There is also a belief that the established church of the country should be broad and inclusive â€" even if that means a little fuzzy â€" rather than narrow and uncompromising. St Thomas Norwich holds five services on Sundays, and has grown from 50 to attendees in two years. But you have these two things happening at the same time: They also claim that the congregations of church plants do not reflect the demographics of their inner-city locations, but are overwhelmingly white, middle-class young professionals. The ways in which [evangelicals] talk about God are fundamentally offputting. And the formula was perverse â€" if [church] attendances fell, you got more money. It was the wrong incentive structure. Some of those parishes, historically the backbone of the Anglican church, are wincing in pain. Some study at St Mellitus College , an HTB-inspired ordinand training centre based in London with outposts elsewhere in the UK, which is the fastest-growing ordinand college in England. St Mellitus had nine students in its first year, Last year the number was Evangelism and evangelicalism were different, he pointed out; people from any tradition in the church could evangelise; but evangelicals insist on the Bible as the sole authority. Listing 18 out of 42 dioceses with evangelical bishops, Paul wrote in the Church Times in February: Some in the broad middle feel marooned and neglected by the scale and pace of reform. The reality is complex, messy, knotty. More people are turned off than turned on. One of the roles of the church is to present the message of the gospel to each generation. If we only present it in one particular way, to one particular generation, people will vote with their feet. Services are characterised by the wearing of vestments, incense, bell ringing and silent prayer. Many opposed the ordination of women and the appointment of women bishops, and resist liberalisation of the stand on gay marriage. Some have left for the Roman Catholic church. Traditionalists Probably the largest if least vocal grouping. They believe in God, Queen and country â€" and a church presence in every town and village. Think Vicar of Dibley and the local church fete. Liberals Believe the church must be responsive to the world. The gospel can be â€" and has to be - reinterpreted for changing circumstances if the church is to be relevant to society. Women and gay clergy are embraced. Church of England liberals tend to be active in social action schemes and interfaith projects. God is green â€" and occasionally female. Evangelicals The authority of the bible is paramount and, for some, not open to reinterpretation. Evangelicals seek a direct and personal relationship with God. Conservative evangelicals are biblical fundamentalists, but many British evangelicals â€" represented by Holy Trinity Brompton and the popular Alpha courses â€" appear more inclusive, although they are still theologically conservative.

Chapter 7 : Inner City Churches on the Move | February 6, | Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly | PBS

Church plants and mercy ministries may be increasingly popular in inner-city contexts, but the difficulties overwhelm many well-meaning Christians. Churches with hopes of change but poverty of wisdom and experience can burn out or become disillusioned.

Chapter 8 : Inner-city education fails without the church | Acton Institute

It is certainly the case that the ministries of the church, particularly things like its inner city schools, which are crucial for the health of America, not just for the Catholic Church. Catholic schools are the schools that work in inner city America.

Chapter 9 : Baltimore Sun - We are currently unavailable in your region

By implying that this crisis is the "greatest" in the Church's history, Der Spiegel is taking the Church at its own word. It compares the Church's own teachings with what is practiced or proposed by Pope Francis.