

Racism from page 5A

large numbers of students in the audience, Cunningham urged them "to walk away from your churches and synagogues" if your pastors, priests and rabbis refuse to exchange services with Detroit religious institutions.

Noting that Sunday morning is the most segregated time of the week, he asked: "What would happen if this community — a community of leaders — if everyone from this and that church invited their brothers and sisters in Detroit to pray together?"

"People are on the expressways on Sunday morning to change the way we live. It's going to take a little bit of work."

Cunningham presented a different view of what's going on in Detroit than the chronic picture of a city in dire straits.

"Detroit is a difficult place to live in — because it's a community on the move." There was a reason it was the last stop on the underground railroad, Cunningham said, and that today "the top rung of the ladder for black people in America is Detroit.

"That's why we have, despite the recent tragedy of Malice Green, a completely integrated government structure — both black and white and male and female."

"This city is 30 years ahead of Chicago," Cunningham insisted. "There is going to be pain, exploration. No one gives you a trip-tik."

■ 'What would happen if this community — a community of leaders — If everyone from this and that church invited their brothers and sisters in Detroit to pray together?'

Father William Cunningham



when you're on the edge of changing customs."

Cunningham said: "We're the only ones in the world making significant roads on apartheid. No Catholic priest in the Vatican ever spoke to an audience as diverse as this."

"Your job is to show the world the richness of this diversity."

A father's lesson

Cunningham said a lesson he learned from his father here in the Birmingham-Bloomfield area shaped his life.

His father, a real estate broker,

sold a house in the "Judson-Bradway" neighborhood in Bloomfield Village to a Jewish family, but the subdivision deed restricted Jews from buying homes. His father took the case to court — and lost.

"I'll never sell another house here," said his father, who left the business. And following the Detroit riots, Cunningham left the classroom because "the only thing a priest can do is get out on the streets."

"I will do anything to change the way things are," Cunningham said. "This is one of the few things worth dying for."



STEPHEN CANTRELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Looking for solutions: Beverly Knight, center, makes her point to Chuck Johnson and Judy Ernst as they discuss a specific example of racism. The conference was co-sponsored by The Birmingham-Bloomfield Task Force on Race Relations and Ethnic Diversity, Focus: HOPE and the Race Relations Council of Metropolitan Detroit.

OCC board takes up travel policy tonight

Education Center, 2480 Opdyke Road, Bloomfield Hills.

As part of its agenda, the board is scheduled to take action on en-

ergy conservation in Building "J" on the Orchard Ridge campus.

The board's travel policy is also up for discussion.

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