

### XIII, WEDNESDAY EVENING

Over 500 responses were received. They were of such excellent quality that the letters were coded and the data put on IBM machine. So the first position paper dealt with by the policy committee was a report of this important data.

A group of 20 national staff consultants representing all instrumentalities met before and after each policy committee meeting.

Before and after each policy committee meeting retreats and conferences were held with pastors and laymen to get feedback on the developing policy relative to the emphasis.

The exploration guide which you have in your hands tonight has gone through several editions and on two of these editions feedback was requested and received from all conference executives as well as many others.

This July when we train 500 persons who carry portfolio relative to the emphasis process, we will again receive important counsel relative to the next stage of the emphasis.

The emphasis has been shaped by the people of the United Church of Christ and not by a small committee working in a corner. It is for all of the churches and people of the United Church of Christ. And, as Dr. Guptill would say, for swingers and squares alike.

The goal of the emphasis as formulated by the policy committee is: "that each local church sharpen its discernment of the call of God in the present world, in the gospel, and in its own life and make faithful response to that call through its distinctive mission."

The emphasis is process-oriented and intends the building of planning into our churches style of life, not as a program that will last only the two years the emphasis lasts, but permanently. Those of you who have read the exploration guide know that this process is broadly outlined in the guide and as we participate in the emphasis its meaning will come increasingly clear.

But we do not want you to think that this emphasis is simply the lifting up of the secular process of planning. It is deeply grounded in the Biblical faith and in the conviction that it is in our relationship with the living God, the arena of whose action is human history, that our hope lies.

Thus there is to be found in the emphasis  
Something old—the Biblical faith  
Something new—the planning process  
Something borrowed—plenty from many of you  
Something blue—the exploration guide.

That quatrain belongs to a wedding. And that is the way I feel tonight. Like a wedding celebration. My prayer is that we tonight, just as at a wedding, may have the hope of creativity and of new life being born.

I now gladly introduce to you the leaders of our celebration. Dr. Gabriel Fackre, chairman of our emphasis policy committee and incidentally Professor of Theology and Culture at Lancaster Theological Seminary. Mr. Bernie Bachman, dramatist, folk-singer and student at United Theological Seminary. Rev. James O. Gilliom, pastor of Mercer Island, Washington, United Church of Christ.

## **2. Report on the Emphasis: The Local Church in God's Mission**

Mrs. Stephen J. Tracy presented the report of the Sub-Committee on Emphases, stating that to the report which had been distributed under the title of the Sub-Committee would be added as a fifth point, section VII of

the report of the Report Committee on the Board for Homeland Ministries. The report, as adopted follows:

1. The General Synod commends the Emphasis on "The Local Church in God's Mission" to Conferences, Associations, and Churches, and urges them to participate in it as fully as possible.

2. The General Synod urges that this Emphasis be shared in Association meetings, in Lay and Clergy retreats, in Schools of Churchmanship, etc., and that proper committees and personal encounter with church leaders be provided.

3. The General Synod recommends that each Association study its churches and report live what has happened as a result of this emphasis, and that this be shared with the Conference and the Emphasis Committee. It is hoped that such action would provide "models" which would encourage other churches to pursue this process.

4. In order that adequate and appropriate training and evaluation be carried on in this emphasis, the Report Committee petitions General Synod, through the Budget Committee, for a minimum of an additional \$50,000 to complete this project.

5. Trusting that the Mission to which we are called is God's, that he intends the redemption of the whole world, and that he is the God of the Exodus, working to free man from all captivity and bondage: our task is to *participate* in his Mission, to *join* God in the world he loves.

The distinctive mission of a particular church proceeds from this center. Each congregation is under mandate to discover and fulfill God's specific assignment where people are lonely, searching for meaning, hungry, blind, lame, longing for peace, needing deliverance from whatever cripples and imprisons their spirits.

Therefore, the General Synod enthusiastically commends the emphasis, "The Local Church in God's Mission", and urges full participation and support of all agencies, instrumentalities, conferences, associations, and local churches.

### **3. Action on the Report on the Emphasis: The Local Church in God's Mission**

67-GS-200 VOTED: To adopt the report of the Sub-Committee on the 1968-1969 Emphasis: "The Local Church in God's Mission".

### **4. Further Report on the Board for World Ministries**

Item #6 in the Report on the Board for World Ministries had been referred back to the committee for further study. The Rev. Charles R. Zweizig, Chairman, presented the committee's substitute resolution for #6 of the original report. The substitute, as adopted, follows:

1. General Synod recognizes that the use of tools and technical skills in the work of the United Church Board for World Ministries can become meaningless, if not demonic, unless doer and recipient involved act in an authentic, sensitive and open climate in which all men are seen as persons.

2. General Synod recognizes and encourages the United Church Board for World Ministries in its work of meeting emergency food needs and of encouraging food production, especially in its efforts in conjunction with the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, and urges all churches to contribute far more generously to the One Great Hour of Sharing—Share Our Surplus Offering.