

## TUESDAY EVENING

Synod. Recognizing that these are challenging days in the life of the Church and that there exists a desire for change in many areas of concern, the Report Committee presents to the General Synod its observations, evaluations and recommendations for action. Tonight you have received the Biennial Report of the Board for Homeland Ministries which presents in graphic form many aspects of the work of the Board. The variety of programs and the diligence with which they are implemented is in obedience to Christ in the areas of justice and reconciliation. We are grateful to Robert Newman of the staff for conducting the interviews and otherwise producing the Report which reveals the personal aspects of those who have contributed to its content, but the real credit belongs to hundreds of people throughout the country who are involved in this work. We must always remember that it is the individuals working and giving in the local churches who make all of this possible.

The Report Committee reviewed the six major areas of concern of the Board for Homeland Ministries. These areas are Evangelism, Health and Welfare, Publication including *United Church Herald*, Christian Education, Higher Education and the American Missionary Association, and Church Extension. Each area of concern was the responsibility of a subcommittee which reviewed in great depth the activities of that area. The total committee then reviewed the work of the subcommittees and presents it to you here as its report.

### Evangelism

The Report Committee recognizes that the local churches in our time are sadly lacking in depth relationships and that many people in great spiritual need go away empty.

We consider valid the Board's concern with the declining rate of growth of "main line denominations" and "pastoral dropouts." As a solution to this problem, research experiments have been attempted stressing the embodiment of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of persons in the local congregations.

This is stressed especially in the Human Potential Movement which represents the coming together of many ideals, longings, and hopes. This movement is committed to a simple concept: "The limit of Human Potential is still unknown. Our culture propagates a stunted image of Man. Our schools neglect many basic human capacities (especially in the realm of feelings, relationships, use of our bodies and senses, intuition and alternate states of consciousness). Specific ways can be worked out to educate these capacities."

1. The General Synod recommends that the continuing implementation of "The Local Church in God's Mission" be a major function of the Division of Evangelism, Board for Homeland Ministries.

Voted.

2. The General Synod recommends that research be continued by the Division of Evangelism to develop new interpretations of evangelism, such as  
restyling local leadership, both lay and clergy;  
making conflict creative;  
facilitating communication and thus dialogue, and encouraging trust and thus honesty.

Voted.

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3. The General Synod recommends that a new title be considered for the Division of Evangelism which would more appropriately describe its functions. There was debate, after which it was voted to delete recommendation 3.

The following substitute recommendation was adopted by vote:

3. The General Synod directs the Division on Evangelism to study the reasons for our decline in membership, the New Testament, and plans and programs of other communions in their evangelistic approach and make available for local churches plans, programs and suggestions in keeping with our changing times that will help and inspire local churches toward a greater and more sincere witness for Christ, both in our society and to individuals in our communities.

69-GS-104 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the foregoing recommendations on Evangelism as amended.

### Health and Welfare

Ministry to the health and welfare needs of persons is an historic and continuing imperative for the Church that would be true to the Lordship of Christ.

1. The General Synod affirms anew its commitment to programs and agencies that help people. It looks to the Division of Health and Welfare of the Board for Homeland Ministries for leadership and vision in traditional ministries, and in new and viable ways of caring.

Adopted by common consent.

2. The General Synod recognizes the need for professional persons to direct the Division of Health and Welfare and supports the Board for Homeland Ministries in its commitment to seek out and employ a qualified staff.

Voted after discussion.

3. The General Synod asks the Division of Health and Welfare to direct its staff to engage primarily in the encouragement of and development of non-residential Health and Welfare ministries, giving special attention to the needs of the poor and of minority groups for whom there is a serious lack of needed services.

Adopted by common consent.

4. The General Synod urges the Division of Health and Welfare to undertake increased responsibility in interpreting and affecting public policy in the Health and Welfare sphere; and in developing appropriate styles for church relationship to secular agencies in related services.

Adopted by common consent.

5. The General Synod calls upon churches and Conferences to be supportive of the eighty Health and Welfare agencies related to the United Church of Christ with services to children, services to handicapped adults, health services, settlement houses and services to the aging. It sees in these agencies a significant expression of *diakonia*.

Voted after discussion.

69-GS-105 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the foregoing recommendations on Health and Welfare.