

## WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 2

Conference Executives, and the Ministers for Racial and Social Justice. The President of the Church shall be an ex-officio member without vote and convene the first meeting.

This Committee shall establish criteria and make recommendation toward substantial use of investments of all national Instrumentalities and Conferences to promote maximum social impact based on established General Synod policies. These criteria upon the adoption by the Executive Council shall be considered as guidelines for investment policy of national Instrumentalities and Conferences. The Committee is charged to report the results of its deliberations not later than March 1, 1970, to the Executive Council to be acted upon by the Council at its next meeting and to be reported thereafter to the Church at large. This Committee is to be funded out of the budget for special committees under the OCWM contingency fund.

After discussion and debate, it was

69-GS-118 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the foregoing resolution establishing a Committee on Financial Investments.

The Moderator declared the General Synod to be in recess until the next morning.

## WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 2, 1969

The Seventh General Synod was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 2, 1969, by Assistant Moderator Ports. The meeting opened with the singing of "They'll Know We Are Christians," "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" and "Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens Adore Him" led by Dr. Frank Harrison. Mr. Ports expressed the appreciation of the General Synod for the assistance and leadership of Mrs. Marjie Horner Hawthorne, the pianist, and Dr. Harrison.

### *1. Action on the Report on the Emphasis:*

#### *"The Local Church in God's Mission"*

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Harold C. Hollinger of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, Chairman of the Report Subcommittee on the Emphasis on "The Local Church in God's Mission," who presented the following report of the subcommittee:

#### **Preamble**

The world has changed radically. Every major institution in society is called upon to respond, to update its style, if it is to fulfill its function in the "right-now world." The local church is no exception. The 1968-69 emphasis on "The Local Church in God's Mission" is being carried out within the context of this necessity.

The major purpose of the emphasis 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 aim of the emphasis is to update the style, the words and the deeds of the local church. Its major intent is to build planning as a style into the life of the local church.

## WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 2

The emphasis finds its major theological grounding in the World Council of Churches' "Missionary Structure of the Congregation" study. Here a significant operational perspective concerning the mission of God has emerged. It is reported in the World Council of Churches' book called *The Church for Others* and in simpler terms in *Pilgrim's Process*.

A basic perspective of the emphasis is that theology must again become the task of laymen and that contemporary theology must inform the planning of the local church leadership style.

Because change in society calls for the response of change on the part of institutions which make up that society, leadership is a crucial factor. The emphasis is therefore deeply involved in and concerned about leadership development.

The leadership style pointed to here is a non-authoritarian, along-sided ministry, skilled in calling forth the creative powers of persons and groups. Within this context four major skills are lifted up: the skill of sharing leadership and responsibility; the skill of making conflict creative, rewarding enough so that conflict is no longer resisted as evil; the skill of encouraging trust and thus honesty; and the skill of facilitating communication and thus dialogue.

The emphasis will formally close at the end of 1969. The General Synod, therefore, notes appreciation for leadership of the emphasis in its chairman, the Rev. Gabriel Fackre; its Executive Director, the Rev. Gerald J. Jud; and the policy committee consisting of Mrs. Edwin M. Alcorn, Mr. Henry L. Burnett, the Rev. Edwin R. Edmonds, the Rev. James O. Gilliom; the Rev. Nathanael M. Guptill, the Rev. Ernest M. Hawk, the Rev. James W. Lenhart, Mr. Lucius B. Lyman, Jr., the Rev. James W. Moyer, the Rev. Victor Obenhaus, the Rev. Ernst Press, the Rev. Ray S. Utterback, Mrs. P. Wayne Van Kirk; Executive Council representatives: the Rev. Ben M. Herbster, the Rev. Jack E. Yates; Instrumentality representatives: the Rev. Truman B. Douglass, the Rev. Harold H. Wilke, the Rev. Willis E. Elliott.

The biennial emphasis for 1969, "The Local Church in God's Mission," was introduced to the General Synod as God's mission. The emphasis recognized that the mission is God's and he intends the redemption of the whole world. He is working to free man of all captivity and bondage. Our task is to join God in the world he loves. The distinctive mission of a particular church proceeds from this center. The emphasis urged each congregation to recognize it was under mandate to discover and fulfill God's specific assignment where people were lonely, searching for meaning in the midst of crisis, longing for deliverance from whatever crippled or imprisoned their spirits. This discipline is a continuous process imposed upon the pilgrim people of God, calling for a clearer perception of our world and a fuller realization of our distinctive mission. This undergirding motivation has characterized the emphasis and the General Synod cherishes its continuation as a process into the future.

### **Recommendations**

1. The General Synod urges each Conference and/or Association to make maximum use of persons who have attended a major training conference on the emphasis.
2. The General Synod urges each Conference and/or Association to conduct its own four- or five-day training sessions on the emphasis leadership skills.

3. The General Synod notes the close correlation of the 1968-69 emphasis to the 1970-71 emphasis, "Crisis in the Nation." The process espoused by the present emphasis is admirably suited to help local churches respond to the crisis in such a way that they may be renewed rather than rent asunder. The weakness of many local churches in responding to the "Crisis in the Nation" is often not a lack of good will but a lack of adequate "know-how".

4. The General Synod urges the churches to remain, or to become, involved in "The Local Church in God's Mission." The goals to which we have set our hands are large and continuing goals. To reach these goals will require many years of skillful leadership. Therefore, the General Synod urges the Executive Director of the 1968-69 emphasis to oversee the continued availability of the emphasis resource materials.

5. The General Synod notes the careful evaluation now being made of the emphasis and instructs the present Executive Director to make an overall evaluation of the 1968-69 emphasis and to make the findings available to the Church.

6. The General Synod notes that one of the goals of the emphasis is "Local Church Planning with Other Churches." It therefore adopts the paper "Clustering of Local Congregations" in order to implement the emphasis.

#### *Clustering of Local Congregations*

Engagement of the Churches in the problems and opportunities in the society has become increasingly intense during the years of the 1960's. National boards and judicatories and some local churches have changed or adapted their priorities and structures during this decade. Their internal programming reflects these changes and has caused many of the members to think seriously about the requirements of ministry and mission. Also the society has become aware of the churches' role in the community—life as a body which grapples with the questions of freedom, justice, power and responsibility.

A considerable amount of *institutional change* is occurring in the life of the church as it seeks to respond more adequately to the task of ministry and mission. New coalitions of judicatories have been set up for joint strategy and action. New training centers have been created, churches have organized new institutional forms to create and support responses of the church to the issues of housing, education, community organization and economic development. Most of these institutional changes have been at the regional or national scale.

There now is a growing interest in the *community scale*—the locality of congregations—as a unique matrix of opportunity and resources. Only congregations can work from within these communities toward what is responsive to human need and aspiration as understood by the people there. Although the other levels of strategy and action—national and regional—will remain crucial arenas for church involvement, the locality of the congregation must have its base of initiative and movement. Single congregations have attempted to provide such a base but they discover that they neither have the capabilities in their members or they are in conflict with other congregations of their community. The co-operative structures of joint congregational participation often cover too large an area so that the community issues are lost in the shuffle for agenda time.

Members of local congregations within the same community are increasingly aware of need for communication, co-operative support and action. The channels of *communication* among congregations need to transmit not only news about institutional affairs but to up-grade the levels of awareness and concern of the clergy and laity. Joint congregational efforts are needed to *support* the process that helps groups of persons think through the implications of their Christian commitments.

## WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 2

for their responsibilities as citizens, property owners, consumers, employers, educators and as members of a family. Co-operative congregational *action* gives dreams the potential of reality as this action contends with the collision courses in the society: between fragmentation, isolation and rigidity on the one hand and openness, diversity and adaptability on the other. Through joint congregational efforts there is a greater possibility to realize the goals of congregational presence; namely, a sense of wholeness and common purpose in the community.

Structures for communication, co-operative support and action at the community level need to link these local congregations. Eventually a wide variety of specialized structures will need to be developed, but the priority now is the formation of groupings of congregations for specialized tasks so that congregations together may develop the readiness to re-examine old patterns of action in contemporary church life, increase the ability to more adequately diagnose the points of critical need, and to provide initiative for responsible action.

To accomplish these tasks new structures need to be available to the church. Throughout the country congregations are joining together for the sake of shared ministry and mission. Many describe this process as clustering—that is, establishing institutional links among a number of congregations for the task of communication, support and action. Congregations are selecting the clustering style not as a strategy of survival but as a means to provide additional options for church life and mission.

The clustering of local congregations will be exploratory and experimental. It is a search for wisdom as well as knowledge. Those congregations exploring this cluster style make the judgment that it is indispensable if the church is to perform its task of training the laity for contemporary mission and if the church is to have a viable base for responsible participation and innovation in community affairs.

The Report Committee on "The Local Church in God's Mission" recommends that the General Synod:

1. Support the formation of associations of congregations within a limited geographical area committed to shared ministry and mission.
2. Recommend that judicatories offer assistance and resources to facilitate the development of clusters and give priority and consideration to proposals developed by viable congregational clusters.
3. Recommend that United Church of Christ congregations initiate and join such clusters by official congregational action.
4. Recommend that United Church of Christ congregations also work to the development of ecumenical clusters in their locality.
5. Commend the following purposes for congregational clusters; namely,
  - a. To foster the renewal of the local congregation.
  - b. To investigate and respond to the needs of the community with specific approaches.
  - c. To develop community strategies.
  - d. To maintain lines of communication and information to all congregations in the community, and to develop recommendations for specific action in programming and in policy by the governing board of congregations.
  - e. To develop funding sources and processes for all programs.
  - f. To motivate, train and involve the laity in all programs.
  - g. To involve the community in the formation of policies for congregational services in community affairs.
  - h. To unite congregations in mutual efforts to bear witness to Christ through persons sharing their faith and the gospel in the community.

Upon motion and second, it was

69-GS-120 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the foregoing report on the Emphasis on "The Local Church in God's Mission."