

The Rev. Eugene C. Wehrli, Missouri Conference, submitted the following motion:

The General Synod instructs the Executive Council to establish an office of worship for the United Church of Christ with staff and budget, in co-operation with one or more other denominations for the purpose of

(1) maintaining continuous communication with ministers and churches for developing and enlarging our worship as an act of the whole people;

(2) co-ordinating the resources needed today as interest in contemporary forms of worship grows;

(3) participating responsibly in the ecumenical endeavors in worship study and development.

The motion was seconded.

Mr. Gunnemann commented that the Commission on Worship through its decade of existence has been able to operate on a very modest budget. He paid tribute to the members of the Commission who have given freely of their time and efforts but stated that the time has come when the kind of work which needs to be done cannot be accomplished by volunteers. He urged the delegates to support the motion.

Because the motion involved a budget consideration, it was referred to the Budget Committee.

A question was raised about the advisability of producing the new hymnal in loose-leaf form. The Rev. Benjamin R. Andrews, Connecticut Conference, chairman of the Hymnal Committee, said that this idea had been given a great deal of thought but the committee felt that a bound book is the most practical format.

6. Report of the Theological Commission

The Rev. Perry D. LeFevre, Chicago, Ill., chairman of the Theological Commission, called attention to that Commission's report in *Advance Reports*. There were no questions from the delegates.

7. Report of the Historical Commission

The Rev. Ray Carlton Jones, Sioux Falls, S.D., vice-chairman of the Historical Commission, presented the Commission's report as found in *Advance Reports*. There were no questions from the delegates.

8. Report of the Commission on Christian Unity and Ecumenical Study and Service

The Rev. James D. Riddle, Chapel Hill, N.C., chairman of the Commission on Christian Unity and Ecumenical Study and Service, offered that Commission's report set forth in *Advance Reports*.

The Rev. Henry R. Rust, Massachusetts Conference, moved that the resolution from the Commission on Christian Unity and Ecumenical Study and Service as printed in the Commission's report be adopted. The motion was seconded.

The Rev. Lionel A. Miles, Illinois Conference, suggested that because the language in the COCU Plan of Union can be interpreted in various ways, it would be desirable for the Commission to print a commentary stating its interpretation of the words used. Mr. Riddle responded that at its next meeting the Commission will begin the process of preparing this type of material.

The Rev. Mrs. Muriel I. Olson, Indiana-Kentucky Conference, raised the question as to what vote, other than a vote to withdraw, is available to a local church.

President Moss reviewed an action of the Administrative Committee in December, 1970, which interpreted an action taken by the 1965 General Synod on local churches joining any new denomination resulting from further church union, as follows:

1. The local church can participate in the process of study and revision of the Plan of Union now going on.
2. It can participate in discussion at a congregational level and the Conference level before General Synod action is taken.
3. If the General Synod acts to submit the Plan to the Conferences for ratification, the congregation's representatives will vote at the Conference meeting.
4. Once ratification has occurred, the congregation will then vote on whether it wishes to enter into the new Church.

It was then

71-GS-15 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the resolution from the Commission on Christian Unity and Ecumenical Study and Service, as follows:

The General Synod is convinced that God can do a new thing in the church and that the church is a continuum carried by faithfulness to its gospel and mission and not by the forms of its institutional life. The first draft of *A Plan of Union* of the Consultation on Church Union proposes a polity greatly at variance with the polity of the United Church of Christ and of the other Consultation on Church Union communions. The most important part of the plan is the new style of parish life which offers opportunity for new vitality, stronger fellowship, and a greater ability to serve the mission of the church. The General Synod urges the members of the United Church of Christ to carefully study the structures proposed by the plan in light of the objectives set forth in Chapter One of *A Plan of Union*.

The General Synod hopes that groups and churches, after ecumenical study, will make their varied reactions to the document specific by forwarding concrete suggestions for changes in the document to the Consultation on Church Union offices and to the Chairman of the Commission on Christian Unity. The Consultation on Church Union study guide, "What Does God Require of Us Now?", should be helpful to a thorough examination of the plan. The center-fold response form in the study guide should be used as a guide in formulating suggestions for change.

The General Synod supports the method of study recommended by the Consultation on Church Union and endorsed by the Executive Council for the first draft of *A Plan of Union*, namely, that communions and their churches study the proposal ecumenically at all levels with their respective counterparts within the Consultation on Church Union communions and others not related to the Consultation on Church Union until January, 1972, and then denominationally until June 15, 1972.

The General Synod urges each Conference staff and Board to take initiative to contact other Consultation on Church Union communions in their regions and to promote at every level ecumenical joint study of *A Plan of Union*.

During this time of study and in the years after 1972 while the Consultation on Church Union delegations are revising the document in light of reactions to it, the General Synod encourages local churches to move forward in the creation of ecumenical parishes and task forces and Associations and Conferences to explore and implement district and regional level ecumenical groupings and shared staffs.

9. Unitary Program Presentation: *The Faith Crisis*

The Moderator recognized Mrs. M. F. Jaroszewski of Houston, Texas, a member of the Executive Council, for the purpose of introducing the Unitary Program Presenta-