

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 1

All of these programs have been substantially implemented. A series of Corridor meetings embracing the Black constituency have been held whereby needs for empowerment were delineated and lifted up. Types of resources by which these needs might be met and training in the history, structure and polity of the United Church of Christ were an integral part of the session. Resource materials have been developed and training in the use of these materials have been carried out.

A model of minority church development in transitional communities has been firmly implemented in the Chicago community whereby future development can be greatly enhanced.

The grant funding portion of the Black Church Empowerment program has been exceedingly rewarding for many of our Black Churches, and related institutions have been able to develop and continue programs of significant impact through the resources provided, for example:

Franklinton Center, Enfield, North Carolina  
The Church of the Good Shepherd, Chicago, Illinois  
The Corona Congregational Church, Corona, N.Y.  
Rush Memorial Church, Atlanta, Georgia  
Eliot Congregational Church, Boston, Massachusetts  
Ecumenical Metropolitan Ministry, Seattle, Washington  
Pilgrim Congregational Church, Houston, Texas

and many others.

Out of this experience and fully aware of how much more needs to be done, the United Church of Christ should boldly continue the significant program of Black Church Empowerment and make available comparable dollar resources. Every local church, Conference and Association of the Church should be made aware of the validity of this program and the potential social change it harbors.

### 30. STATEMENT ON CONTINUING SEARCH FOR FAITH

The Moderator recognized Dr. Washburn. On behalf of the business committee, Dr. Washburn referred the delegates to Advance Materials, Section II, pp. 55-56, to the Background Statement on the Continuing Search for Faith and moved its adoption. The Moderator recognized Mrs. Breitling who moved to amend the motion to adopt the alternative statement on Continuing Search for Faith. The motion was seconded. It was

75-GS-89 VOTED: The General Synod adopts the alternative statement on Continuing Search for Faith:

#### CONTINUING SEARCH FOR FAITH

WHEREAS General Synod reaffirms the continuing presence and power of God at work in the world;

WHEREAS General Synod affirms a Christian witness as evident in the history of the U.C.C. as a significant part of our national heritage;

WHEREAS General Synod affirms the need to strengthen our own faith by acknowledging the testimony and witness of our forebearers;

THEREFORE General Synod recommends that the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, in consultation with the Historical Council and other appropriate agencies, continue to make available to the churches materials that illuminate the richness of the U.C.C. heritage, give new direction to the mission, and provide spiritual dimension for the future of the church.

WHEREAS General Synod wants to know the word, spread the word and do the word;

WHEREAS General Synod affirms that Jesus Christ is Lord;

THEREFORE General Synod recommends that the Instrumentalities continue to develop and integrate programs (such as Faith Exploration, ACTS Evangelism, and other Christian education endeavors), materials, and structural relationships to reflect the theme of the Centrality of Christ in Contemporary Experience.

WHEREAS Diverse groups of citizens throughout the nation will be focussing on the issues outlined by the American Issues Forum Calendar, opportunity for wide involvement in exploration of serious issues affecting our nation is being occasioned, and

WHEREAS "Our Heritage, Our Hope" program provides an opportunity for Christian witness;

THEREFORE General Synod recommends that the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries continue to develop the American Issues Forum. "Our Heritage, Our Hope" is an American Issues Forum program consisting of nine program packets.\*

Our search for faith rests on a deeper trust—the trust that faith is always possible even though it is not always evident. This trust underlies our church participation in seasons of dryness as well as in seasons of abundance. It underlies our mission activity in times when all connections between faith and action are not explicitly clear. And it underlies our personal struggles to live in light of the gospel during periods of changing values and expectations.

Faith can be described as that fusion of our intuitions about self, society and gospel which illuminates reality and bestows meaning on our existence. While we often speak of the search for faith, we also recognize that faith is a gift of grace—an overwhelming insight that is ours despite our efforts to capture it, or to elude it.

One of our modern-day theologians has characterized the time in which we live as "moving toward an increasing readi-

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(\*Explanation: Each packet will consist of one 30-minute tape cassette edited from interviews with distinguished persons who have particular expertise and commitment to the issue, along with a person who would represent the average citizen. The cassette would be accompanied by a study guide and background material developed for each of the nine issues. This program is integrated with a series of nine radio tapes that would also be available the first of each month, free of charge, to the local stations for local public service broadcasts. The broadcast tape would be the same as the study tape in the packet. Local groups are encouraged to contact their local radio stations and urge their use of the broadcast tapes. Emphasis would be placed on the first week of each month dealing broadly with the issue for that month.

This project will be sponsored by the National Parent-Teachers Association, the Educational Commission of the States and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries. The Board for Homeland Ministries will act as fiscal agent and developer of the project, study, and radio series which will jointly sponsor with the National Parent-Teacher Association; and make this resource available to all our churches as soon as possible.)

ness for Job." A re-reading of Job is an instructive exercise as we continue the search for faith for our time. The plight of the United Church of Christ, as one of the historic bodies of "main line Protestantism" is strangely analogous to that of Job. Our adversities are painfully and embarrassingly described for us almost daily in our financial woes and in our declining membership. Our friends are continually reminding us of our failures and our institutional self-confidence is badly shaken. All of this readies us for a new affirmation of faith, a new "song in the night" which will reveal again to us for our time the ultimate source of life and meaning. No other agendum is of greater importance for the United Church of Christ than this continuing search for faith for our time.

"As long as Job was lost amidst his ashes, the flame of life was extinguished and the things of his world were without wonder or mystery. Then, his world was miraculously transformed, and with it, his heart. In his acceptance of the Whirlwind, Job's world is altered, it becomes regenerated as a place of and for life. Now he sees his world as the creation of a Primal Artist. In accepting the Lord, Job opens himself to a new mission of life that simultaneously brings self to birth: he renews a commitment to proceed, to forge from the crucible of experience a personal mode of existence."\*

Recently 18 leading theologians issued "An Appeal for Theological Affirmation." The appeal begins with the statement that "The renewal of Christian witness and mission requires constant examination of the assumptions shaping the Church's life. Today an apparent loss of a sense of the transcendent is undermining the Church's ability to address with clarity and courage the urgent tasks to which God calls it in the world." A number of principles which underlie this call are essential in our search.

1. The search must be both historical and contemporary, both biblical and modern. Our faith cannot become captive of the thought forms and cultural idioms either of this century or of one historical period.

2. The search should include the effort to recover a sense of history. Our biblical heritage, our national heritage and our specific denominational heritages—Congregational, Christian, Evangelical and Reform—have all contributed to the shape of our current life and can be a valuable resource for reforming our life and mission.

3. The search must be conducted within the Community of Faith. To interpret salvation as individual human fulfillment is to trivialize the Gospel and to interpret worship as the promotion of individual self-realization is to misunderstand communal worship.

4. The search must recover the sense of the transcendent through which our authority is given and the immediate issues of life are put into perspective. The awareness of the transcendent points us toward God's own designs for the kingdom which confronts our utopias, surpassing us with judgement and redemption.

5. The search must utilize the language of religion which goes beyond the concerns of scientific rationality to the symbolism of the liturgy which points to the ineffable reality of our Creator.

6. The search must provide ways of joining in mission with the God who struggles against such oppressive and

dehumanizing structures as are manifested in racism, sexism, war and economic exploitation.

7. The search should address the contemporary alienation of peoples from governmental, social, political and economic structures throughout the world.

### IMPLICATIONS

In light of these principles, how the UCC conducts a search for faith in the years ahead is of critical importance. Certainly, "programs" are of limited value. Yet we need a variety of corporate activities within which we may come to new insights and perceptions.

1. The United States' Bicentennial provides an opportunity for activity that combines a number of our principles. A re-examination of our national history in light of the religious heritage which has informed our way of life; exploration of our current structures in light of the concepts of freedom and justice; renewed dedication to future possibilities that realize our ideals—these are the broad outlines of the ways through which our faith interplays with our corporate life as a nation.

2. We must continue disciplined inquiry into the meaning of faith. This includes continually developing curricula for church use, exploration of faith events, evangelism which relates faith to new life-styles and world perceptions and serious dialogue through a variety of media.

3. We need to emphasize the ways by which faith is apprehended by non-rational, intuitive communications through symbols of liturgy, music, drama, dance and all forms of art.

4. A number of contemporary religious movements challenge our traditional approaches. We need to learn more about their appeals to people today, and how they can inform our own comprehension of modern culture.

5. The Synod Theme, "Jesus Christ Frees and Unites," is itself a statement of faith. Continual attention should be paid in the period ahead as to what that theme implies for our churches, our society and the world.

### 31. STATEMENT ON EVANGELISM

The Moderator recognized Dr. Washburn. On behalf of the business committee, Dr. Washburn referred the delegates to Advance Materials, Section II, pp. 52-53, to the Background Statement on Evangelism and moved its adoption. The Moderator recognized Mrs. Breitling who moved to amend the motion to adopt the alternative statement on Evangelism. The motion was seconded.

The Moderator recognized Steven Clifford (OH) who proposed two amendments that were accepted as friendly amendments not requiring votes, that in the paragraph on Membership Issue the word "message" in the first line be deleted and the word "gospel" be substituted in its place, and in the second line of the same paragraph the phrase "decline be reversed" be deleted and the phrase "be strengthened in numbers and in spirit" substituted in its place. It was

75-GS-90 VOTED: The General Synod adopts as amended the alternative statement on Evangelism:

### STATEMENT ON EVANGELISM

#### Biblical—Theological

1. Believing that the United Church of Christ has begun to recapture the strong biblical—theological concepts that undergird our word-in-deed emphasis on evangelism, and

\* Edward F. Mooney, Sonoma State College, California