

## SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 3

### 8. REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE

The Assistant Moderator acknowledged Chester Eaton, Agenda Committee Chairperson, who reported scheduling of Division Reports for the balance of this Synod:

- Division F — 8:30 A.M., Monday, July 4
- Division D — 2:00 P.M., Monday, July 4
- Division C — 3:45 P.M., Monday, July 4
- Division A — 7:30 P.M., Monday, July 4
- Division E — 8:30 A.M., Tuesday, July 5

Assistant Moderator Mistlin advised that the next order of business would be the open hearing on the proposed 1978-79 budgets. Anybody wishing to remain after the close of plenary for questions was free to do so.

### 9. BUDGET HEARING

The Assistant Moderator recognized Mr. Myers, Finance and Budget Committee Chairperson, who invited

members of the Executive Council to come on stage, and addressed questions from the floor.

Discussion centered around the anticipated \$500,000 increase in funds seen for 1978; the salary compensation package; salaries of certain national staff persons; and the \$2,060,000 allocated by the United Church Board for World Ministries for World Wide Program. At the end of the discussion period, Mr. Myers offered that this open hearing was a response to wishes of previous Synods for fuller, open explanation of program and other funding allocations to agencies.

Ms. Barnhill acknowledged the frustration of delegates who had been having difficulty receiving full data on Division Reports. She reported that materials were being reproduced as fast as possible and asked delegates to be patient.

Assistant Moderator Gary E. Mistlin recessed the session at 11:00 P.M.

## MONDAY MORNING, JULY 4

### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND PRAYER

Moderator Robert K. Nace reconvened the Eleventh General Synod at 8:30 a.m. He then offered the opening prayer.

### 2. INTRODUCTION OF REPORT OF DIVISION F

The Moderator called for the Order of the Day with the Report from Division F, and recognized Tom Eckert, Chairperson. Holly Henderson was the facilitator.

Mr. Eckert first announced that today is the birthday of his daughter, Kathy. The delegates and visitors sang "Happy Birthday" to Kathy.

It was then noted that today is also the birthday of our Nation and the body sang "Happy Birthday" to our Nation.

### 3. RESOLUTION ON IDENTITY IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Mr. Eckert called attention to the Advance Materials, Section II, pp.92-93, and the two documents distributed to the delegates. He then read the "Resolution on Identity in the United Church of Christ for the Eleventh General Synod" and moved its adoption. After considerable discussion by the delegates, it was

77-GS-28 VOTED: The Eleventh General Synod adopts the "Resolution on Identity in the United Church of Christ."

#### Resolution on Identity in the United Church of Christ

WHEREAS, The local church needs to strengthen its sense of belonging to the wider church, and

WHEREAS, The relationships among local churches and their associations, conferences and national agencies need to be built on a base of mutual respect and trust,

RESOLVED, That:

1. We call upon the national agencies, conferences, associations and local churches to reflect on our theological and ecclesiastical self understanding and practices for the purposes of developing covenant agree-

ments which embody our relatedness and common mission.

2. We urge the Office for Church Life and Leadership, the Board for Homeland Ministries and the Office of Communication to develop aids to support congregations to develop their own covenant of membership (through confirmation and reaffirmation) and to affirm their responsibility to the Association, Conference and national agencies.
3. Request the Board for Homeland Ministries to:
  - a. Explore the meaning of membership in the United Church of Christ
  - b. Develop new resources for confirmation education and leadership training
  - c. Develop new resources to assist members, prospective members, and the general public to understand the history, heritage, and present day mission of the United Church of Christ.
4. Call upon the resources of the closely related seminaries and the Historical Council to work with the various bodies of the United Church of Christ in preparing clergy and lay leadership for understanding and interpreting the history, mission and polity of the United Church of Christ.

### 4. BLACK CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Eckert then turned to the "Resolution on Black Church Development" (Advance Materials, Section II, pp. 101-102, and page 2 of the Division F document.) Mr. Eckert moved the adoption of the Resolution. The use of the word "priority" was discussed at length.

Lois Selmar, a member of the Business Committee, moved the following amendment: In line 3, eliminate "priority"; in line 4 substitute "action" for "priority"; in line 9, substitute "concern" for "priority"; and in line 18 substitute "action" for "priority." It was

77-GS-29a VOTED: The Eleventh General Synod adopts the Amendment in the "Resolution on Black Church Development."

After discussion and clarification of the budget implications for this Resolution the Moderator called for the final action. It was

77-GS-29 VOTED: The Eleventh General Synod adopts the "Resolution on Black Church Development," as amended.

### **Resolution on Black Church Development**

The Eleventh General Synod AFFIRMS the action of the Tenth General Synod in regard to Black Church Development in the United Church of Christ and declares the continuing need for attention to this matter at every level of the church's life; this action should take the form of new Black churches in the strategic areas of the nation, increasing support for existing congregations; recruitment, development and support of leadership, comprehensive research and program planning.

The General Synod, therefore, COMMITTS itself to Black Church Development as a continuing concern of the highest order.

The General Synod COMMENDS the Commission for Racial Justice, the Office for Church Life and Leadership and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries for their collaborative efforts in Black Church Development during the last biennium.

The General Synod further CALLS Upon the Conferences, Associations and local congregations of the United Church of Christ to emphasize Black Church Development and join in covenant with each other in this pursuit.

The General Synod DIRECTS the Executive Council to monitor and advocate the implementation of this action by the whole church and to provide special funds during the next biennium to facilitate substantial movement toward the achieving of viable goals and objectives in Black Church Development.

## **5. EXPLOITATIVE BROADCASTING PRACTICES**

Mr. Eckert turned to a "Proposed Pronouncement on the Use of Gratuitous Violence and the Exploitation of Sex in Television Programming" which was distributed to all delegates prior to the General Synod. After discussion which included suggestions for editorial changes Mr. Eckert moved the adoption of the proposed Pronouncement. It was

77-GS-30 VOTED: The Eleventh General Synod adopts the Pronouncement on "Exploitative Broadcasting Practices Including The Use of Gratuitous Violence and the Exploitation of Sex."

### **The Use of Gratuitous Violence and The Exploitation of Sex**

#### **BACKGROUND TO THE PRONOUNCEMENT**

##### **1. Summary**

Programs that embody gratuitous violence and that exploit sex to attract audiences dominate prime time television. Growing numbers of people are alarmed over the effect such programs have on the moral values and actions of adults and teenagers and, more especially, on the understanding that children derive from watching the

adult life and behavior that are depicted. Churches must be concerned over all the content of television, since the medium portrays a way of life that is often at total variance with the Judeo-Christian interpretation of existence and its meaning. When excessive violence and sex are at the heart of television's portrayal of life, a serious threat is posed to all persons in our society. Churches are obliged to oppose such programming. At the same time churches must be equally concerned that their mode of opposing immoral television programming does not violate Constitutional provisions for freedom of speech and of the press.

## **II. Rationale**

A Theological Basis for Issuance by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ of a PRONOUNCEMENT on the Use of Gratuitous Violence and Exploitation of Sex in Television Programming by Harvey Cox, Thomas Professor of Divinity, Harvard University Divinity School.

From the wide-spread sectors of our society today, we hear a growing concern about the misuse of mass media and especially of television. Parents, community groups, political leaders, churches, schools and psychologists have begun to draw our attention to the impact, especially on children, of gratuitous violence and exploitation of sex as they appear on television. We recognize that sex and violence are a part of human existence. Their portrayal is often necessary in a dramatic presentation and can provide audience members with valuable insights into human life. Nonetheless, there is such evident concern from such a wide spectrum of the society that it seems necessary for church people to think through what role the churches should play and what position the churches should take in regard to this question.

It is important to notice that the misuse of television poses a somewhat different problem from issues the churches have faced before in this area. Some churches in the past have supported censorship and the refusal of licensing for films and movies that they found unacceptable. Today, however, churches are moving to the recognition that, since in order to view movies one must normally pay an entrance fee and enter into a theatre, the depiction of violence and objectionable sexuality in films falls into the category of freedom of expression and freedom of the individual to choose his or her form of entertainment. With television, however, the question becomes far more complex. The television set is located in the home and children below the age of discretion have access to it. Also, since the airwaves are more directly the responsibility of government regulatory agencies than are private film theaters, the issue is a subtle one. Those who would introduce regulatory legislation into this area have to be careful to hold two important American values in balance: The first is the obligation of the state to protect the weak and the innocent against threats to their health or well-being from those who are more powerful. Some would hold that this requirement applies to the power of television programmers to damage children and young people who are not yet in a position to make choices for themselves. The other value is the constitutional provision of freedom of speech and expression, and the widespread conviction that in most respects the air waves merit the same constitutional protec-