

nature and purpose of *calling*, and the idea of *servanthood*;

A. *Gifts*

A proper understanding of lay ministry must begin with an examination of "gifts." Saint Paul refers to this *variety of gifts* in several of his letters (I Cor. 12:4-11, 21; Rom 12:4-8; Eph 4:11-13) and relates the distinctiveness of each to the activity of the Spirit within the life of the church.

B. *Calling*

We may distinguish *general calling*, symbolized by baptism and confirmation, and *specific calling*, known Biblically and historically by many examples. It is fundamental to our understanding of the nature of calling that all persons may experience these calls regardless of race, sex, age, condition, cultural or religious backgrounds, or origin.

C. *Service*

The service and servanthood of the people of God in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, preeminently exemplified and mandated by Jesus Christ, interpreted by the apostles, and reiterated historically in the idea of the priesthood of all believers, is being recovered and reinterpreted by the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the culture of our age, and must be appropriately emphasized anew to meet today's opportunities.

Statement of Christian Conviction

The Thirteenth General Synod calls upon the United Church of Christ to re-discover, examine, validate, promote, encourage, and enable the ministry of the laity within the framework of the mutual ministry of all the people of God (laos).

Empowering the laity raises many fundamental issues related to ministry: Biblical and theological foundations, baptism and confirmation, church structures, the effects of professionalism, validation and accountability.

This call requires that the United Church of Christ and its related institutions set forth at once to:

- A. Seek ways to restore the concept of the laos.
- B. Invest more of the church's resources in ways that equip the laity in the exercising of their gifts.
- C. Promote theological education for lay ministerial development. Support such skill training that equips clergy as enablers and facilitators of the laity. Provide decentralized locations for the education and training of persons engaged in varying forms of Christian ministry.
- D. Identify those forces within the life of the church and society which tend to block or hinder the ministries of the laity and examine ways to overcome them.
- E. Study and evaluate ways in which the laity may be validated and supported in the exercising of their gifts in ministry and means for holding them accountable for fulfilling the ministries to which they are called.

17. REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PRONOUNCEMENT ON INCREASED RACIAL VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACKS IN THE UNITED STATES

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Mark R. Welch, Jr. (CONN), Chairperson of the Committee on Increased Racial Violence Against Blacks in the United States for the report. Mr. Welch moved the adoption of the Pronouncement as revised, noting the change in the title and spoke to the report indicating the changes and additions to the document.

The Moderator recognized Todd E. Maurer (OHIO) who moved to amend the motion by changing the first sentence under the Statement of Christian Conviction on page 5 to begin with the words, "being free persons in the whole family of God, who views all people as equal." Upon being put to a vote the motion was lost.

The Moderator recognized George Matthews (CAC) who moved to amend the motion that the title of the Pronouncement not be changed from the original title of the Proposed Pronouncement. There was discussion and upon being put to a vote the motion was lost. There was continued discussion, and it was

81-GS-43 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts the revised Pronouncement on Increase Racial Violence Against Blacks in the United States.

INCREASED RACIAL VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACKS IN THE UNITED STATES

Summary

The pronouncement seeks to call attention to the national importance and significance of racial attitudes manifested in acts of violence and recommends proposals for action which confront discriminatory practices which for centuries have been based solely on skin color. This pronouncement provides a basis for the United Church of Christ to implement proposals for action which call forth federal participation in the enforcement and application of laws and constitutional guarantees protecting human and civil rights and reaffirms the responsibility of the United Church of Christ.

Background Statement Indicating Significance and Rationale

A. *United Church of Christ Involvement*

The United Church of Christ has historically through its General Synods, conference associations and local congregations addressed the spiritual and social needs of society's disenfranchised and has expressly censured race prejudice. During the first General Synod in 1957, delegates declared "the Church to be established for public worship, for witnessing. . . and for the universal propagation of the gospel, for the promotion of justice."

In 1963 at General Synod IV, delegates endorsed the Church's support and aid for those intimidated "because of their participation in activities on behalf of racial equality."

At General Synod VI in 1967, the Church was encouraged "to stand with the victims of racism and sup-

port (those) made to suffer unjustly for their saving but controversial word or deed."

Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the first United Church of Christ President, Ben Herbster, said, "Our Churches must be engaged in the changing of life — our life — from what it is to what it must be — a people without prejudice, without hatred, without bitterness, but with love, good-will, and sacrifice, set to the task of providing equal opportunity for all people."

The late President Robert V. Moss called members to "purge ourselves of the racial separation that infests us all."

General Synod XII in 1979, responding to increased Ku Klux Klan activity, urged "Local congregations of the United Church of Christ and all persons everywhere to condemn Klan intimidation and terrorism as unconscionable, ungodly, undemocratic, un-American and un-Christian."

The support of the Wilmington Ten is one of the best known of the forthright actions which the United Church of Christ, at all levels and in many places, has carried out since its inception.

Based on this heritage of concern and action by the United Church of Christ in upholding civil and human rights and because of increased acts of racial violence against blacks, this pronouncement is adopted by the Thirteenth General Synod.

B. *National Dimensions*

Our nation is past the days of shackles and slavery and past the tense days of the sixties. However, eruptions will occur in these years as long as people continue to strive for the final affirmations of these earlier gained freedoms. According to the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, "What white Americans have never fully understood is that race prejudice has shaped our history decisively in the past; it now threatens to do so again."

President Jimmy Carter has characterized the churches' role in the elimination of segregation as being "much less" than that of the government and "in many ways the last bastion of racial discrimination is in the churches and there is a growing quiescence in the churches."

The 1980's have begun with our witnessing alarming increases in racial tensions. The economic forecasters are painting a generally bleak picture of the nation's economic growth in the immediate future, thus potentially sending Black unemployment to record highs and further squeezing an already devastated Black economy. There has arisen a dangerous psychological climate and set of attitudes and perceptions that point toward racial violence. The Klan and similar extremist groups are flourishing in an atmosphere of revived anti-Black attitudes. Groups such as the Klan have reached the conclusion that their activities are no longer disreputable and thus have been conducting their activities more openly and flagrantly. This climate allows murderous attacks on Black children to

continue, astonishing everyone with what appears to be a reluctance on the part of governmental officials to bring to justice the perpetrators of these murders. As a result, growing numbers of citizens have come to believe that conspiracies exist and that their lives are endangered.

Among the incidents perpetrated against Blacks are:

1. In the last 18 months, 29 Black children and young adults have disappeared in Atlanta, Georgia, of whom 28 have been found brutally murdered.
2. In April 1980, a group of Klansmen burned a cross at a prominent location in the Black community of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and then drove through the community armed with shotguns with which they shot five elderly Black women.
3. On November 3, 1979, in Greensboro, North Carolina, a motor vehicle caravan of admitted Klansmen and Nazis arrived at an anti-Klan demonstration, and proceeded coldly, methodically, in broad daylight and in full view of television cameras, to remove weapons from the trunks of their vehicles and open fire on the assembling demonstrators. Five anti-Klan demonstrators were brutally slain in the barrage of Klan-Nazi bullets and many more were injured.
4. In September 1980, within thirty-six hours, four Blacks were killed in Buffalo by sniper fire by an assailant who witnesses said was white. The next week, two Black taxi drivers were murdered and their hearts were cut out. Later, animal hearts were left in a locker room used mostly by Black workers at the Bethlehem Steel Company.
5. On December 7, 1980, Sgt. First Class James Tarver of Philadelphia, in an article in the *Bergen Record* said, "the incidents on U.S. Military bases in Germany have deeply divided American troops along racial lines and there has been a sharp rise of extremist and racist activities at the bases in the past 18 months."
6. In June 1980, Vernon Jordan, President of the National Urban League, was critically wounded in a sniper attack in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and threats of violence were directed against other civil rights leaders.
7. In May 1979, in Decatur, Alabama, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was holding a demonstration in support of Tommy Lee Hines, a mentally retarded Black youth convicted of rape, when suddenly robed Klansmen opened fire on the defenseless demonstrators severely wounding several and almost killing Mrs. Lowery, wife of SCLC President, Dr. Joseph Lowery.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, 45% of all victims of police homicides across America are Black. In cities with sizeable Black populations such as Chicago and Philadelphia, more than 70% of police homicides involve Black victims, thus sustaining a very long history of "so-called" justice which in the past has included whippings and lynchings.

In addition to the forementioned incidents of vio-

lence, extremist organizations appear to have stepped up their activities in recruiting new members and in training members in the techniques of violence. There also are numerous reports of increased Ku Klux Klan recruitment in the U.S. Armed Forces, Local Law Enforcement Agencies, and among prison guards.

The areas of recruitment and techniques utilized, according to a recent Anti-Defamation League report are:

1. On board Navy vessels such as the U.S.S. Concord, a supply ship based in Norfolk, Virginia; the Aircraft Carriers, Independence and America; the U.S.S. Canopus, a submarine tender, operating out of Charleston, South Carolina.
2. At military installations such as Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Carson, Colorado; the U.S. Marine Corps base at Camp Pendleton, California; the Yuma Proving Grounds in Arizona; including the appearance of military personnel in military dress as security guards at local Klan rallies, and the use of official equipment for the printing of literature.
3. In penal institutions in Texas, New York and the state of Washington, and within local law enforcement agencies. The Pennsylvania legislature approved several months ago a resolution for investigating Klan infiltration within the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Police Dept.
4. Among high school students through meetings and dissemination of literature in Oklahoma, Louisiana, on university campuses, and even the recruitment of the very young through the publication of comic books touting the hate group ideology.
5. At paramilitary and psychological warfare training camps in Alabama, California, Connecticut, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas.
6. At Klan operated youth camps in San Diego, San Bernadino, and Los Angeles, California; Peoria and Chicago, Illinois; Jeffersonville, Indiana; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Denver, Birmingham, Tusculumbia, Tuscaloosa, and Decatur, Alabama.

The restraint on the part of federal law enforcement agencies in dealing with intergroup violence against minorities is especially note-worthy, given the history of active F.B.I. surveillance against left-wing groups, particularly during the 1970's, yet its historic avoidance of any major efforts of investigation directed at right-wing organizations.

We are of the firm belief that the great majority of Americans are opposed to racial violence. There are citizens who have expressed a willingness to shoulder responsibility for changing this climate by joining in a peer relationship with others to achieve (1) genuine self-awareness, (2) keener insights into the realities of our society, and (3) vastly improved economic opportunities.

C. Biblical, Theological, and Ethical Rationale

Violence is a fundamental theme of the Biblical narrative. At the center of that story stands crucifixion and resurrection. The cross is at once the ultimate expression of the violence that entered all creation

through sin, and the event liberating us from that sin, enabling the faithful to confront and overcome violence.

The Bible places violence in the context of the Genesis account of the Fall (Genesis 3). Adam and Eve's disobedience leads directly to the subtle violence of fear and false accusation. Their tragedy is followed by overt violence as Cain's pride and jealousy led to brother murdering brother. As Christians we acknowledge that these Biblical stories of sin, fear and murder are also our stories so that even today our brother's and sister's blood cries out a judgment against us from the ground.

The history of Israel glimpsed through the perspective of the prophets reveals a continuing preoccupation with the relation of sin, idolatry, and violence. Micah calls his listeners to "do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God," (Micah 6.8). Isaiah speaks to us as he announces the word of judgment to his nation for violence against his people, saying that God "looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry!" (Isaiah 5.7). Deeply aware of the violence surrounding him, Isaiah assumes a spirit-filled ministry "to bring good tidings to the afflicted; to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound," (Isaiah 61.1).

Jesus was no stranger to political violence. His birth became the occasion for unspeakable violence against infant children through Herod's faithless fear and idolatry. (Matthew 2.6-18) The cross itself, a sign of salvation, is also a grim reminder of violence perpetrated by humanity against the incarnation of love and justice. Throughout Scripture, violence is linked to sin and fear, to idolatry and lack of faith. Is not this tragedy our own as well? Does not Rachel still weep for children slaughtered by evil powers?

But while the Biblical narrative traces the story of human sin and violence culminating in the cross, the Bible also proclaims the Good News of resurrection that begins with that same cross. While the cross judges us for our participation in sin and violence, the cross also redeems us, being the occasion for our own death and resurrection that "we too might walk in newness of life," (Romans 6.1-9) — a life that rejects violence. By the blood of Christ those who have been alienated are brought near in one household, Christ "being our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility," (Ephesians 2.13-14). And in the light of the risen Christ we see a vision of "the holy city, new Jerusalem" where God will "wipe away every tear. . .and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away," (Revelation 21.4).

It is the suffering and glorified Christ of the cross, therefore, who becomes the source of power, courage, and hope as we risk ourselves in the "struggle for justice and peace."