

Diversity is objective of restructuring plan

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Genesee Ecumenical Ministries board of directors has decided to restructure itself to include more congregations and groups than is possible under its current form.

At their Feb. 21 meeting, GEM board members voted to accept the recommendations of a restructuring task force created in September, 1989, to consider options for the organization.

The task force is now charged with drawing together a planning body to rewrite GEM's constitution; developing a model for expanding the organization's membership base; and finding ways to promote greater cooperation among not only the denominations currently represented by GEM, but also smaller congregations, community and ethnic churches, and such church-related service and outreach groups such as the Volunteers of America, Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry and

Church Women United.

The new body is likely to include a constituent assembly with representatives from the member groups, and a board of directors to oversee GEM's day-to-day operations. In addition, the organization may change its name.

The task force is working within a time frame that calls for the new constitution to be written and ready for final implementation by January, 1991. The new organizational structure would take effect the following spring.

According to the Rev. Lawrence Witmer, GEM's executive director, the impetus to change the 20-year-old organization came in part from the Billy Graham Crusade in 1988. The crusade proved that a number of different church groups could work together successfully.

"The crusade brought together people who usually do not cooperate," the Rev. Witmer said. The unity shown during the

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The 1988 Billy Graham Crusade inspired Genesee Ecumenical Ministries to reorganize by proving that different church groups could work well together.

File photo

Conference deals with impact of population on planet

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Does excessive human reproduction pose an alarming threat to the earth's environment, or is "overpopulation" just a siren song affluent nations amplify to drown out Third World criticism of disproportionate consumption and economic injustice?

One would be hard-pressed to find an unbiased answer to that question, but a pair

of experts on hunger tried to do so during a discussion on the ethics of population control and food distribution. The discussion took place at a group session at the two-day Environmental Ethics Conference at Colgate Rochester Divinity School Friday afternoon, March 16.

The conference, sponsored by Colgate and 22 other community, union and business groups, touched on several issues relating to ethical treatment of the environ-

ment and ways of implementing environmental concern through public policy.

The group session on population and food was conducted by Bob Rood, a volunteer worker with Politics of Food, a local anti-hunger educational and service group, and Carol Crossed, district coordinator for Bread for the World — an anti-hunger lobbying group — and a member of the Catholic Family Center's board of directors.

After stating statistics that showed there is more than enough food to sufficiently feed all of the world's current population, Rood and Crossed conducted a point-counterpoint dialogue designed to illustrate the conflicting interpretations of population growth as it affects the environment and the world economy.

Rood — who noted that he did not necessarily agree with the views he espoused during the discussion — outlined the position that people are reproducing at a rate that eventually will leave the earth crowded with billions of people competing for limited resources. United Nations statistics show that more than 5 billion people currently inhabit the earth and that the world's population will grow to 8.4 billion in 2025.

Crossed questioned Rood's position, citing several instances of mass starvation that were caused by mismanagement of land and water rather than by actual famine. She maintained that only 10 percent of the current starvation in the world can be attributed to famine, the remaining percentage being caused by man.

For example, Crossed asserted, the Ethiopian famine of the 1980s was caused by disruptions in the nomadic habits of the Ethiopians as a result of government tax policies that made beef cattle more valuable than other livestock. Ethiopians — who previously had used a barter

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St. Joseph's Hospital plans to cut 58 positions

By Richard A. Kiley
News Editor

ELMIRA — St. Joseph's Hospital announced last week that it is eliminating 58 staff positions as part of a belt-tightening effort. The move is designed to lead to future profitability for the hospital.

The hospital's president, Sister Marie Castagnaro, SSJ, said in a prepared statement that the reduction is "regrettable, but necessary to ensure that we have a solid future at a profitable hospital."

The reductions will also bring staffing levels in line with state and national averages for efficient, high-quality hospitals, she said.

"We have a mission to serve the healthcare needs of our community in the spirit and love of Jesus," Sister Castagnaro's statement said. "In fulfilling our mission, we have also become one of the community's largest businesses. To continue our mission and to continue the economic benefits we provide to the

region, we must make changes to become profitable."

Sister Castagnaro did not say when the staff reduction would take place.

Among positions being trimmed are clerical, housekeeping, food service, maintenance and technical workers, therapy aides and some managers. The hospital said it will assist employees involved in the layoff to find jobs at other health-care facilities.

The 264-bed hospital employs nearly 950 people and has a payroll of about \$21 million, for a total budget of more than \$45 million.

"We have sustained operating losses in the multi-million dollar range for the last four years," Sister Castagnaro said in her statement. She added that "while about 75 percent of hospitals in New York State face

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