

LAY MINISTRY – THE WAY OF THE FUTURE?

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By

Brenda Belle Lumsden

Whitewood, Saskatchewan



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Dedication

For lay pastoral ministers, past, present and future

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss lay pastoral ministry in the United Church of Canada. To assist with the discussion, a questionnaire (Appendix #1,) was prepared and sent out to lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training through the LPM Network, a newsletter which is produced several times a year. The questionnaire dealt with the person's reasons for choosing this stream of ministry and the level of acceptance of this stream throughout the church. Experiences of lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training and comments on the education and supervision programmes for lay pastoral ministers were also explored. There was a question concerning the future viability of this form of ministry in the questionnaire. This thesis is devoted to analyzing and reflecting upon the responses to the questionnaire.

It is hoped that the information offered in this thesis will contribute to better understanding of this stream of ministry in the United Church of Canada and will promote recognition of the continuing significance of lay pastoral ministry in the church of the twenty-first century.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge, with thanks, the contributions of lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training who assisted me by responding to my questionnaire. Ron Coughlin of the Lay Ministry Committee made distribution of the questionnaire possible and shared other information on ministry with me. I am grateful.

The Reverend Jane Doull, my thesis advisor, contributed of her time, her knowledge and written resources. I am most thankful that she chose to share with me.

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Finally, I thank my partner, Belmont, for his love and patience, especially during the past year.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore lay pastoral ministry in the United Church of Canada through responses received from thirty-three lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training who replied to a questionnaire which focussed on particular aspects of their experience as lay pastoral ministers in training. It is my hope that those who are involved in lay pastoral ministry will be reminded why they accepted the call. It is also my hope that others who are members of congregations or resident in communities in which lay pastoral ministers work will have a clearer understanding of how and why lay pastoral ministry is part of the United Church of Canada. Perhaps this study will serve to point out positive aspects of lay pastoral ministry and initiate changes so that lay pastoral ministry is seen in a more favourable light throughout the church.

I have found that the topic of paid, accountable lay ministry is one on which very little has been written, as is shown in the Literature Review. Therefore, it was necessary to use personal experience as a starting point along with the information gathered about the experiences of others in lay pastoral ministry throughout the United Church of Canada.

I grew up in Northern Ontario. The United Church of Canada has always been part of my life. During my early years, we attended Sunday School at 11:00 a.m. and church at

7:00 p.m. Our church was part of a three-point charge known as the suburban charge. It was served, until I reached my teens, by what was then called a lay supply minister.

Association with ordained ministers did not often occur unless one was needed to officiate at a marriage ceremony. The wedding of my older sister in 1958 was such a time. The ordained minister who came from a nearby town was a woman. That, in itself, was exceptional! As far as I can recall, she and the older supply minister, a man, shared the duties.

The first ordained minister to serve our pastoral charge came in the 1960s. He was a very tall young man who invariably wore a clerical collar. We were unused to this as the lay supply minister had worn a business suit. Some of my Roman Catholic relatives referred to him as "Father" because of the collar. For more casual events on the pastoral charge, his attire would be sweater, pants and dark shirt with, of course, the collar. In a community made up largely of miners, he stood out because of his height and manner of dress.

I was part of the junior choir in our church. The old hymnary was in use then and I thought there was only one prayer of confession that one could possibly use. I also remember memorizing the Apostles' Creed.

Ministry did not hold much allure at this stage of my life, especially if a serious demeanor and dark clothes were requirements. Instead, I became a teacher and continued in that profession until 1987. I worked in several communities in Ontario and then in Saskatchewan following our move to this province in 1978.

During my last years of teaching, particularly 1986-87, a career change seemed desirable. My partner had studied for a short time at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon. In 1985, he was appointed as a lay supply on a two-point pastoral charge. For two years, I lived the life of a minister's spouse, assisting where I could. I did the children's story in both churches each Sunday, attended United Church Women's meetings when possible and, on a couple of occasions, filled in when Belmont was ill.

I was approached by some people who wondered if perhaps I wanted to give paid accountable ministry a try. I suppose the idea, once planted, seemed to be more feasible as time went on. I have since discovered that, in the Quaker tradition, one's gifts for ministry must be noticed by others before one is called¹. I guess that was, in a sense, the way it happened for me. I then went through the interview process (Education and Students, Conference Interview Board and psychological testing) on my way to becoming a lay supply minister.

At that time, "supply" was probably an apt description of the type of ministry I thought I was entering. It was necessary financially to work at a full-time job immediately. Also, I had plans to go into a different form of ministry. I fully intended, because I had been a teacher, to go on to study for diaconal ministry. Part of this stemmed from a desire to learn but also there was a sense, particularly when I was with order of ministry persons, of not being quite good enough, a second class citizen. Entering the ranks of ordered ministry

¹ Philip Gulley, Home Town Tales (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publications Inc., 1998), p. 139.

would change that, I thought. I have since changed my mind. It took a long time and sometimes there are occasions when I would like to feel more secure. For the most part though, the ministry of the whole people of God wins out.

Much of the literature I consulted insists that we are all ministers by virtue of the fact that we have all been baptized. “Each baptized Christian and each Christian community are called to a ministry of abundant concern for one another.”² Another person has stated that “baptism is not initiation into a frozen state of life; it implies discipleship and ministry.”³ These are viewpoints with which I can concur.

Early in my ministry, I saw the need for the people of the church to be involved in worship leadership, study and pastoral care. Unfortunately some, then and now, have a mindset which sees the person in paid accountable ministry as the one who should be responsible for all aspects of ministry. Having persons other than the minister lead worship or study groups, even having different people do the scripture readings each Sunday or do some visiting on behalf of the church, sometimes involves struggle on the part of the ministry personnel and can invite criticism. This view results from observation during my years in lay pastoral ministry and from discussion with other lay pastoral ministers. I think this disservice has been done to many congregations. The view that the ordered person is all important has created a dependence on clergy which has resulted in passivity and, in some cases, alienation of the lay persons from their own ministries.⁴

² Virginia Sullivan Finn, Pilgrim in the Parish (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 8.

³ Thomas Franklin O'Meara O.P., Theology of Ministry (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 183.

⁴ F.Ross Kinsler, Ministry By the People: Theological Education by Extension (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983), p. 89.

Somewhat on the plus side of the situation though is the fact that most of the persons in these congregations did not or do not differentiate among the ministry streams. To them, the person who is ministry personnel is “the minister” or “our minister”.

It is my hope then, that within this thesis, I can help people understand the nature of lay pastoral ministry and why lay pastoral ministry can be a valid choice for persons committed to a ministry of all believers.

Literature Review

Will Our Church Disappear?, published in 1994, provides examples of United Church people reflecting on the future viability of the church. The subtitle, Strategies for the Renewal of the United Church of Canada shows that well. One excerpt from the book, taken from the United Church Observer of June, 1994 and written by the Reverend Jim Dowden, Grimsby, Ontario, is particularly helpful. He says, "The 21st century is when we will do a lot of reversals in our thinking and finally discover that lay ministry is about ministry in the world." He goes on, "We will see our paid staff doing administration and leadership development and worship focusing, and lay people will be equipped for ministry in the world, caring, sharing and evangelism."⁵

Tom Harpur in one of his lesser known books titled The God Question cites positive changes since Vatican II, among them being "recovered concern for the Ministry of the Laity".⁶ Other books such as Reweaving Religious Life, the previously mentioned Pilgrim in the Parish, The Lay Centered Church, Ministry of the People, The Calling of the Laity, Theology of Ministry, The Liberation of the Laity, and Ministry by the People, all written in

⁵ Marion Best and Friends, Will Our Church Disappear? (Winfield, B.C.: Wood Lake Books, 1994), p. 112.

⁶ Tom Harpur, The God Question (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press Ltd., 1993), p.14.

the 1980s, have a similar viewpoint. Vatican II ushered in many changes, not only in the Roman Catholic Church, but in Protestant denominations as well. One of the major changes was in the role of the laity. Lay persons became more active within the church but mainly on a voluntary basis. This is still the dominant position in most denominations. In an article titled "The Lay Ministry Revolution"⁷, the authors speak about broadening the understanding of ministry and persons accepting their call to do ministry while doing work other than in the church.

In the Roman Catholic Church though there are lay pastors who, because of the shortage of priests, are working as ministry personnel. They, like lay pastoral ministers in the United Church of Canada, do all of the day-to-day duties such as leading of worship and pastoral care. However, there must be a bishop or priest available for the administration of the sacraments. I have worked with a very dedicated lay woman who holds a Master of Divinity degree who cannot be ordained because she is female. Males who are graduates with this same degree but are married also cannot be ordained.

Mary Jo Leddy in Reweaving Religious Life quotes the theologian Karl Rahner who argued against a theology that would separate God from the world. He said that religion should not be confined to certain special times such as Sundays or certain people such as

⁷ Eddy Hall and Gary Morsch, The Presbyterian Record Volume CXXII, No. 8 (Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada, September, 1999), pp.22-24.

priests or religious. Rahner saw God as the centre of all life.⁸ Therefore, religious life is to be lived in the midst of the world.

Two books, Phyllis Airhart's Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism and the Methodist Tradition in Canada and The Layman in Christian History by Stephen Charles Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber gave me some insights into how lay persons functioned in ministry in the Methodist tradition.

The authors of the latter book claim the Methodist movement as the most important movement in 18th century England. Lay people held an important place in Methodism. "Wesley was the creator of one of the greatest organizations for the employment of lay forces of the church that ever existed."⁹

Both books state that leadership at class meetings was of the utmost importance. Airhart sees it as one of the first tests of the call to ministry and a vital part of theological education.¹⁰ Through the class meeting system, lay persons assumed responsibility for recruitment of members and pastoral oversight of other persons in the Methodist Movement.¹¹ Records of Proceedings of General Council of the United Church of Canada, spanning a twenty-year period from 1977 to 1997, a "Time Line of Ministries in the United

⁸ Mary Jo Leddy, Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-third Publications, 1990), p. 16.

⁹ Stephen Charles Neill and Hans-Ruedi Weber (eds.), The Layman in Christian History (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963), p. 206.

¹⁰ Phyllis Airhart, Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism and the Methodist Tradition in Canada (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992), p. 30.

¹¹ Stephen Charles Neill, p. 219.

Church from 1960 to 1994”, Minutes of a Division of Ministry Personnel and Education Study Group held in November, 1997, January to February, 1998 and June, 1998, along with the Lay Pastoral Ministry Handbook showed me some changes, some progress and initiated some questions regarding lay ministry. The name change that eliminates the word “supply”, I think, is a step forward. My questions had to do mainly with the attitude toward lay ministry and education of persons in this stream.

The first definition of “Lay Supply” appeared in The Manual of The United Church of Canada in 1946. However, records show that lay preachers were ministering in Methodist circuits in Newfoundland as early as 1829.¹²

It took quite some time for lay ministry to be recognized as a valid form of ministry. In fact, in the 1960s, a special training programme leading to ordination was offered. It was thought that, in this way, the need for lay supply would be eliminated. It took until 1991 to have “supply” removed from the name. However, I’m not sure it is not still part of some people’s idea of lay ministry. They see it as not “real” ministry or as a stop-gap solution.

A paper from the World Council of Churches on “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry”, published in 1982, speaks of the calling of the whole people of God. It cautions too that ordained persons must not become “autocrats or impersonal functionaries”¹³ but still sees

¹² Lay Ministry Committee, Lay Pastoral Ministry Handbook (Etobicoke: The United Church of Canada, (1992), p. 1.

¹³ Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Faith and Order. Paper #111. (Geneva. World Council of Churches, 1982), p. 23.

leadership in the sacraments as being held by the ordained. This does not seem to me to coincide with ministry of all God's people. Of course, the paper, since it is from the World Council of Churches, involves many denominations whose point of view is one which recognizes only ordained persons as acceptable to officiate at sacraments.

Possibly, the most difficult reading for me was from the Handbook of Qualitative Research. The section on "Personal Experience Methods" was of the greatest interest to me. The methods for the study of personal experience are, its author says, simultaneously focussed in four directions: inward, outward, backward and forward. Inward means a person's feelings and hopes are taken into account. Outward deals with the reality, what is actually taking place. Backward indicates the past and forward the present and future.¹⁴

Gathered by the River, Reflections and Essays of Women Doing Ministry and Disturbed by God, subtitled A Journey of Spiritual Discovery were both helpful books. In the former, two essays were particularly interesting to me. Patricia Bays' "Images of Power" and "Living and Changing on Carry the Kettle Reserve" by Bernice Saulteaux stand out. In the first, both positive and negative images of power are explored. I was made aware of how easily one can exploit power and how necessary it is to empower, not have power over others. Bernice Saulteaux talks about her call to ministry and how difficult it sometimes is to accept that call.

¹⁴ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. Handbook of Qualitative Research. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 417.

In Disturbed by God, I identified with some of the author's struggle around call and theological education. Most importantly, I was assured in both books that in all aspects of life we are not alone; God is with us.

Finding Your Way, a magazine published by Donna Sinclair, is a guide to the United Church of Canada. It is very helpful in succinctly naming what is important in the church such as worship, stewardship and community. However, in the section on ministry, there is no mention of staff associates or lay pastoral ministers. Since it is a magazine for newcomers, by neglecting to name these two types of ministry an incomplete picture is presented.

In contrast to Finding Your Way is Learning Together – A Covenanting Resource, published in 1998. This resource which is to be used for educational supervision includes all streams of ministry except diaconal and staff associate because the system of educational supervision employs a different method in these two forms of ministry.

Invaluable to me was Julia Sinclair's thesis From the Clericalism of Ordination Towards a Theology and Practice of Mutuality in Ministry. St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon houses this work which was completed in 1991. Reading what Julia had written helped crystallize some vague ideas about ministry which I held. It also gave me confidence to explore some of those ideas and the bibliography suggested other resources to me.

Julia does an excellent job of explaining how ordination became of such importance that the clergy became the church. I agree that as long “as the laity believes they go to church whereas the clergy are the church”¹⁵ the church will flounder. This was brought home to me in a humorous way in a cartoon. In this cartoon, the minister is standing behind the pulpit. In the balloons above the heads of the parishioners who sit facing him are these pleas: “Counsel me!”, “Feed me!”, “Rebuke me!”, “Humor me!”, “Love me!”, “Visit me!”, “Encourage me!”, “Discipline me!”, “Comfort me!”.¹⁶

It is impossible for the minister to be everything to everyone but this becomes the perception when he/she is regarded as the church. We can no longer pay only lip service to a theology of the whole people of God. When lay ministry is no longer seen primarily as “a way of aiding or strengthening the ordained ministry of the church”¹⁷, we will be better empowered to do the work of God in the world.

I recently received a booklet from The Division of Ministry Personnel and Education called *Report on Ministry in the 21st Century*. It is designed for study and feedback. The recommendations will be put forward at General Council, 2000. This document contains recommendations around education which, if implemented, go a long way toward creating a better understanding of lay pastoral ministry.

¹⁵ Anne Rowthorn, *The Liberation of the Laity* (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow Co. Inc., 1986), p. 1.

¹⁶ Erik Johnson, *The Best Cartoons from Leadership Journal, Volume 2* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), p. 40.

¹⁷ Francis O. Ayres, *The Ministry of the Laity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 18.

This study was designed to help fill the gaps that exist in the understandings around lay pastoral ministry in the United Church of Canada. Although there have been people involved in lay ministry for many years, it has been only recently recognized as a stream of ministry. Possibly the discernment process has aided in this recognition because it is included as one of the possible forms of ministry to which one might be called. Still, there exist parts of the country in which lay ministry is seen as inferior. I hope that this thesis will have a small part in changing this perception.

Methodology

Writing on the topic of lay pastoral ministry in the United Church of Canada was first suggested to me by Fran Hare some years ago. At that time and up until recently, it was my plan to do an integrative study.

Then, because I had last attended a training event in 1990, I decided that I needed more input from others across the country. I recalled that one of the best aspects of the training events was the opportunity to discuss issues of lay pastoral ministry at length with one's peers. The best way then to reach a large number of people, since attendance at the event was not open to me, seemed to be by way of a questionnaire.¹⁸ I called Ron Coughlin of the Lay Ministry Committee and he very generously agreed to send out a questionnaire to lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training along with this group's newsletter. He also offered to send minutes of a Ministry Study Group of which he is a member.

Excluding myself, 130 questionnaires were sent through the Lay Ministry Network to lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training. 25.38% of the total group responded. Of lay pastoral ministers, 19 out of 87 or 21.83% returned their

¹⁸ For the complete text of the Questionnaire, see Appendix I.

questionnaires: 32.32% or 14 out of 43 lay pastoral ministers in training filled in the questionnaire. The responses seem indicative of an interest in lay pastoral ministry within the United Church of Canada.

Of the thirty-three replies from ten conferences within the United Church of Canada, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland-Labrador had the largest representation, eight and six respectively.

The questionnaire asks why the person is in lay pastoral ministry rather than in one of the other streams. There is a question about acceptance by colleagues in the United Church of Canada and also by ministry personnel from other denominations, by presbytery or district, conference and congregations.

Anecdotes about life as a lay pastoral minister were requested and opinions solicited about the study programme, supervision, ongoing learning and any other comments, both positive and negative, that persons wished to make about lay pastoral ministry. Each reply to the questionnaire has been read by my supervisor and myself.

I read quite extensively from books and papers suggested by my supervisor, the Reverend Jane Doull. I also selected books that I thought would be pertinent, along with perusing Records of Proceedings, minutes of meetings of the Ministry Study Group and some books

listed in the bibliography of Julia Sinclair's thesis. As I read I took notes, discussed some issues with my supervisor and my spouse who holds a Master of Theological Studies degree from St. Andrew's College and who has served as a lay minister.

The thesis is patterned on the questionnaire. Each of the discussions will be an expansion on what I ascertained from the replies in combination with my own experience as a lay pastoral minister and information gleaned from reading and conversation with others on the topic of lay pastoral ministry.

Discussion 1: Why Lay Pastoral Ministry?

A concordance to the Bible translates Verse 18 of the twenty-ninth chapter of the Book of Proverbs as “no vision the people perish”.¹⁹ This theme of the need for vision is a suitable one for this discussion of lay pastoral ministry. For too long, a large number of Christians have seen the church as residing in the ministry of the ordained. Ministry, in this context, is seen as something “done to” people rather than as something in which they participate, living out their ministry in their daily lives.

When one attends a meeting of Conference or even of General Council, the clergy cannot usually be distinguished from the laity by manner of dress; yet the perception in many instances is that there is a barrier which exists between order of ministry persons and laity. One person has termed it the “barrier of holiness”²⁰ and it extends to expectations about behaviour of the ordered person and often his or her family members. The clerical collar and the title “Reverend” are also divisive. So it comes down to the question of how we can best meet the needs of the church today and in the future without the barriers which now exist.

¹⁹ Alexander Cruden, Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testament, Revised Edition (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1979) p. 723.

²⁰ Gary K. Grottenberg, Response to “Lay Ministry Questionnaire”.

There is a need for some persons to use their gifts as leaders in the church in response to God's call. Since this call is extended to all persons, there is no need to be ordained to serve this function.

There are many reasons listed in the replies to the questionnaire sent out in the fall of 1998 as to why the respondents chose the lay pastoral ministry stream. Of the thirty-three replies, no one listed just one reason. However, one of the primary reasons given was age. Ten of the thirty-three saw age as a factor in their decision. Of these, two remarked that they felt called but had they chosen the route of ordination, they would be at retirement age by the time they began working on a pastoral charge. Four had a sense of the immediacy of their call.

It is recognized that many people who attend theological schools full-time now are second and third career people, but for eight of the persons who replied, along with age, there were financial considerations which presented an obstacle to full-time residential study. Finances can play a large role in shaping a person's career choice. For example, after doing lay ministry on a pastoral charge for two years, my husband was employed only part-time while we were both studying. Our children were quite young then. It was not possible for both of us to take on too much either financially or with regard to our family life. As a result, I have been taking Masters level courses for over ten years.

Some areas of the country seem to lend themselves to lay pastoral ministry more than others. According to the 1999 Year Book and Directory, twenty-six out of eighty-seven ministry personnel are involved in lay pastoral ministry in Newfoundland-Labrador. Of these, twelve out of forty-four are in the East District and fourteen out of forty-three are in the West District.²¹ These statistics by percentage are 29.88% of the total and 27.27% in the East District and 32.55% for the West District. This is quite a significant number.

It is my understanding that Newfoundland has a somewhat distinct society and culture and many of the villages are quite isolated. It would take a person who is extremely adaptable or one who is knowledgeable about the environment to minister effectively under these circumstances. Ministry by persons who have an understanding of the people and who appreciate the lifestyle is usually longer term.

Rural depopulation is an important factor in Conferences such as Saskatchewan. In many of the small towns and villages, certain age groups are not present or they are very much in the minority. There is much grief around this situation. A person sent to one of these places must understand the grief and be able to deal with his or her own grief in being part of a lifestyle which may be totally foreign. If a person from the area with an understanding of the dynamics which exist can be found to do ministry on one of these pastoral charges, it is of benefit to all concerned.

²¹ Public Relations and Information Unit, Division of Communication, Yearbook and Directory, 1999 (Etobicoke: United Church of Canada, 1999) pp. 137-141.

This is not to say that there have not been people who have adapted very well and served the church wonderfully. Unfortunately, there have been some who felt the culture shock so deeply that they were unable to do the necessary work to the detriment of themselves and the church.

For three of the persons who replied to the questionnaire, theology played a large part in their choosing lay pastoral ministry. One of these had difficulty with the concept of ordination. A second person had declined ordination in another denomination for unidentified personal reasons; the third expressed the thought that ordination could lead to clericalism on the part of the ordained person. These persons saw lay pastoral ministry as an avenue for them to share their gifts.

For two persons, the needs of the pastoral charge were immediate. The congregation could not wait for a person to complete studies and be ordained or commissioned. These persons saw lay pastoral ministry as an opportunity to “serve from within”.

“On-the-job” learning was an aspect that appealed to five. This can be very valuable as one can learn much through not only reading and discussion with other ministry personnel but through involvement in study groups and even in pastoral visitation.

In a journal which is used in sermon preparation, a person who was identified only as “a very gifted Christian educator”²² stated that he or she is more effective when they know little about a subject. This is not to imply that a lack of knowledge is good. The statement means

²² Lection Aid Volume 7, Number 3 (Boulder, Co.: Lection Aid Inc., 1999), p. 36.

that persons who are learning together may have a better understanding of each other's learning needs and be able to teach each other. In addition, the statement means that one person does not overwhelm others by providing excessive or overly-advanced information.

When a lay pastoral minister is involved with a study group, the barrier of the title "Reverend" does not exist nor does the idea that the minister is far above the people by virtue of the fact that he or she has been ordained. Although it is not totally reasonable, there are persons who are frightened about being involved with others who seem more spiritually acceptable than they feel themselves to be.

It should be emphasized that Jesus was not a priest and did not come from a priestly family, therefore, spirituality and the ability to reflect theologically are not the province of only the ordained.²³

The idea of call is not a foreign one for lay pastoral ministers. I received permission through the questionnaire from Gary Grottenberg, a lay pastoral minister in training, to share his story about call. He explained that he was very grateful for the opportunity to serve but said that it has meant sacrifice on the part of each member of his family. Moving from Calgary to Kamloops meant that his spouse had to give up her career, her friends and her church family. Their seven-year-old son had to give up the only home he had ever known.

²³ Thomas Franklin O'Meara, O.P., p. 41.

As Gary was contemplating this and trying to decide whether to go through with the move, he confessed that he had moments of profound doubt. At one point, he found himself in conversation with his son.

Gary said, "I don't know why God wants me to go to Kamloops. I wonder why God wants me to go there!"

"Daddy," his son replied, "That's a silly question. You should just do what you're told!"²⁴ Gary deems that the best advice he ever received. The call of God took precedence over everything else.

Some people have a belief that lay pastoral ministry is less expensive for both the church and the persons involved than are either ordained or diaconal ministry. Perhaps this represents the way of thinking in a statement such as the following one from the 1982 General Council Record of Proceedings: "All pastoral charges that are able to pay more than the scale of salary set for lay supplies by the Division of Mission in Canada should have an ordained minister."²⁵

Initially, of course, the expense involved in training a lay pastoral minister is less for both the church and the person. The cost of three or four years of theological school is vastly different from the expense of attending three two-week residential events, even if the training

²⁴ Gary K. Grottenberg, Response to "Lay Ministry Questionnaire".

²⁵ The United Church of Canada Record of Proceedings (Toronto. Issued by the 29th General Council, Montreal 1982), p. 153.

periods are in Montreal. However, included in training a lay pastoral minister is the cost to the pastoral charge of the educational supervision during the three years, a two or three day orientation event each fall and the expense of bringing in lay preachers or other folk if the lay pastoral minister in training is away for more than the Sundays involved in the residential event. The Manual of the United Church of Canada specifies that all ministry personnel, including lay pastoral ministers in training and lay pastoral ministers are allowed three weeks of study leave each year.²⁶ Therefore, a lay pastoral minister in training could possibly be absent from the pastoral charge for up to five and one-half weeks per year resulting in extra expense to the pastoral charge.

It must be remembered too that a person who goes through the lay pastoral ministry programme for the three years is in Category B on the pay scale while a newly ordained or commissioned person, unless he or she has had previous credited experience in the church, begins at Category A. Also, there is only a thousand dollars or less difference between salaries of lay pastoral ministers and ordained or diaconal persons in each category.

The following is the salary schedule for the year 2000 in the categories A to F:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Ordained/Diaconal	24,621	25,860	27,085	28,319	29,549	30,789
Lay Pastoral Minister	23,828	25,025	26,202	27,400	28,602	29,790 ²⁷

²⁶ The United Church of Canada, The Manual 1998 (Etobicoke United Church Publishing House, 1998) Section 039a, p. 78.

²⁷ Salary and Allowance Schedule 2000, issued by The Division of Mission in Canada.

In conversation with a retired order of ministry person in which salaries were discussed, the point was made that, in the metropolitan area of central Canada, salaries paid to ordered persons are much higher, so to persons living in this area, the view that a lay pastoral minister costs much less is valid. This, however, is not the case in much of the country.

Unfortunately, the assumption about salaries is being made even by persons one would not expect to do so. In the June 6-8, 1998 meeting of the Ministry Study Group, this statement was made: "Financial constraints are forcing congregations to employ lay pastoral ministers since they cannot afford experienced ministers and settled ministers often stay only a short time."²⁸ One wonders why the settled persons' ministries are not longer. Perhaps this question deserves more research.

The church sees as a justice issue the payment of a salary on which it is possible to live. This is a commendable viewpoint but is only to be expected of a church based on the social gospel. The church would lack credibility if any other route were taken with regard to salaries of ministry personnel.

One woman named Susan, in her reply to the questionnaire, gave me permission to use the following story:

Susan's story begins before she was appointed. She had received the blessing of Presbytery Education and Students Committee, been to Conference Interview Board and had attended her first residential event. Unfortunately, the anticipated vacancy did not

²⁸ Ministry Study Group Minutes, June 6-8, 1998, (Etobicoke: Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, 1998), p.8.

materialize and she was left without appointment. She carried on with her job in order to support her children.

One day, she received a call from a person inviting her to interview for a position on a four-point pastoral charge. Susan agreed even though she would receive only a \$100 honorarium for an eighteen-hour round trip. She was told that someone would billet her on Saturday night and she would be expected to visit each of the four churches on Sunday accompanied by someone from the pastoral charge. I found from reading the replies to the questionnaire that family needs sometimes play a part in a persons' choice of location in which to minister. This was certainly the case with Susan. Her fourteen-year-old son went with her. He was not impressed with the community.

Susan stated that things quickly went from bad to worse. At the end of the board meeting during which she was interviewed, someone remarked about how nice it would be to have a minister do each of the four services the next day. When Susan inquired as to who that would be, they indicated that they expected her to do this duty. The first service was at 9:00 a.m. and the last at 3:00 p.m.

Fortunately, she had a sample sermon with her but all of the other preparations, prayers, choice of hymns and children's story took several hours of her time. The only bright light during this period was the fact that the person with whom she and her son stayed was very hospitable.

On Sunday, Susan and her son travelled to all four churches. The local person who was to accompany them never did appear. She recalls that, as the day went on, the congregations became smaller and her son was looking more and more depressed. After this extremely full day, she had to drive the nine hours so she could be at work on Monday. Also, no one had suggested that they stay another night.

The clincher is that Susan did not get the job. The person who had initially contacted her said that they had liked what she had done but they could not afford to pay her according to the salary scale. Susan explained that these people thought because she was just entering training, she would come much cheaper.

There is a happy ending to the story for Susan and her family. A few months later, she was appointed to a single point pastoral charge in a community of ten thousand people.

Susan's story is both a justice and pastoral relations issue. Two questions come to mind:

1. Would an ordained or diaconal minister have been exposed to this kind of treatment?
2. Where was the Pastoral Relations Committee of Presbytery?

This incident demonstrates a lack of understanding of lay pastoral ministry and the appointment system which is in place for persons who are not eligible for call.

In this discussion that resulted from answers to the question in the survey which asked why the respondents chose this stream of ministry rather than another, it was found that each person had more than one reason. The choice of lay pastoral ministry resulted from consideration of age, financial situation, needs of the pastoral charge, family needs and personal theology in various combinations. Ministry of any kind involves great commitment on the part of the ministry personnel, therefore, support and some level of acceptance is needed for persons to be able to continue. My next discussion asks if persons who feel called to the lay pastoral ministry stream are truly accepted by colleagues, congregations, the presbytery and the conference with which they are involved.

Discussion 2: Acceptance or Not of Lay Pastoral Ministry

Many professional people, particularly ministry personnel in rural Canada, endure a “fish bowl” existence. It seems that to many people, ministers exist on a different level than other human beings. They are not seen as being ordinary people with the same needs and desires as the rest of the community in which they live and work.

All aspects of ministry persons’ lives are often considered open to the public. People feel free to discuss, speculate and sometimes disapprove of the actions of the person employed as ministry personnel, his or her children and spouse. This reality is portrayed in a cartoon in which the minister is ensconced in an easy chair with a favourite book while a life-size cut out in an attitude of prayer sits behind the blinds of a large window.²⁹ Anyone seeing this silhouette from the outside would assume that the minister was very pious. There are certainly many misconceptions out there!

Of the thirty-three replies to the question about acceptance by congregations of lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training in the role of ministry personnel, thirty-one indicated that acceptance was either very good (four on the scale) or excellent (five

²⁹ Joseph Farais, The Best Cartoons from Leadership Journal, Volume 2 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), p. 35.

on the scale)³⁰. Of the other two, one had difficulty because a retired, ordained minister lived on the pastoral charge and interfered with the pastoral relationship. The other respondent saw the acceptance by the congregation at three and a half on a scale of one to five with one being poor and five being excellent. This person did not specify the reason.

I think the responses portray quite an accurate picture. It is my feeling that congregational members are not so much concerned with degrees or titles. They want a person who is a good pastor, someone who is present for them in the joys and trials of life. An experience of my own illustrates this. Our second ordained person in my home congregation appeared when I was in my mid-teens. He had a doctorate but had difficulty conversing with people because he was very shy. Also, his preaching style left something to be desired. Almost every sentence seemed to end on a high note as if it were a question. I understand that later in his career, he became involved in work more beneficial to the church and himself. He became a church historian. This shows that having an ordained person is not always an advantage.

Even persons who are accustomed to having order of ministry persons as ministry personnel can be very accepting of lay people in ministry. One man related that he had served a particular family so often, especially by officiating at funeral services, that he was invited to the family picnic. When a member of the family referred to him as not being a “real minister” because of his lay status, he was able to accept it with good humour because a level of love and trust had been established.

³⁰ Appendix I, Question F, p.67.

Another person said that people also seem to think, with regard to spiritual matters, that it is advantageous to be of the laity, but in a leadership position. There is no “holiness barrier” but a sense of “walking with” the people. Also, people are more inclined to look at the lay person and say “if she can do it, I can too”. Often, persons in lay pastoral ministry are either part of the community or from one quite similar, therefore, people identify with them more easily. Acceptance of lay persons as leaders can only bode well for the church as it gets more people interested in biblical studies, justice issues and even church administration. Fortunately, there is quite an array of options for people who want to delve into spiritual matters; the range extends from local study groups to university degree courses. Congregations are, for the most part, very accepting of lay ministry.

The replies to the questionnaire indicated that acceptance of lay pastoral ministry is not as prevalent among United Church of Canada colleagues, particularly those who are ordained. In each of the ten Conferences from which I received replies, there was at least one person who had observed ordained clergy who were resentful. There was a feeling that lay pastoral ministers had come in by the “back door” because they had not sacrificed either time or money to attend seminary. One person even went so far as to say that many ordained people suffer from clericalism which, to him, is a sin equivalent to racism or sexism.

In Julia Sinclair’s thesis titled From the Clericalism of Ordination Towards a Theology and Practice of Mutually Shared Ministry, we find a definition of the word “clericalism”.

She says that the “clergy line” which sets up a division between people into clergy and laity and those ideas and practices which inform, support and perpetuate that line is clericalism. There are many examples of clericalism to be found in the United Church of Canada and in other denominations.³¹

Although the person in the book Disturbed by God is not part of the United Church, her experience, when she expressed an interest in studying theology, illustrates well how some people set up a hierarchy with ordination at the top. The author was accepted into a Master of Theological Studies program to prepare for the goal of becoming a parish Christian educator. She was doing well and was enthusiastic about her work. However, others questioned why she was not in the Master of Divinity program to prepare for ordination. She admits that she sensed no call in that direction.³² I suppose one could argue that it was a case of others recognizing her gifts and helping her along because eventually she did become ordained in the Anglican Church. I admire her tremendously because she accomplished a great deal under very difficult circumstances. Still, I wonder if she could not have served very well as a Christian educator without being ordained.

Lack of understanding of the role of lay pastoral ministers extends to other denominations too. I have had the experience of being called “Reverend” by persons who are Roman Catholic, Anglican or Lutheran. They seem to feel it is disrespectful to send

³¹ Julia E. Sinclair, From the Clericalism of Ordination Towards a Theology and Practice of Mutually Shared Ministry (Saskatoon: St. Andrew’s College, 1991), p. 11.

³² June Maffin, Disturbed by God (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1996), p. 49.

anything through the mail without the title. It is not quite as difficult in face-to-face conversation, but still I sense that they're not quite sure of my status.

Other people have indicated that they too have found that many people from other churches don't seem to have an understanding of the concept of lay pastoral ministry. Perhaps they see lay ministry as volunteer ministry and are disconcerted by the fact that the United Church of Canada actually deems lay people as suitable for leadership in the church.

This certainly seems to be the attitude in secular society, particularly at Revenue Canada. I had a question relating to housing this past spring and found it necessary to call the National Office of the United Church of Canada in Etobicoke. Since I had worked in two separate charges in 1998, I had two income tax forms. On one, the treasurer had listed the fair rental value of the manse. On the other, only the \$6.72 I received per month as top-up was included. I needed to know which was the correct way. I spoke to someone in accounting who gave me the pertinent information. Before I hung up, however, she cautioned me that I should write a note to send along with my other documentation. This letter was necessary to indicate that I was entitled to clergy housing. Because I do not have the title "Reverend", she said that Revenue Canada might disallow my claim as I would not be recognized as a minister. I did as she said and it served me well.

To my mind, this is a form of labeling at its worst. Tom Harpur says that labeling can and does, at times, perform a helpful social function but it can be a potentially lethal habit

because it strips persons of individuality and limits vision.³³ To be ministry personnel of any kind should not mean being stripped of one's individuality.

Credibility is very important to people who are in lay ministry. Among congregational members, the rights to do the sacraments are the sign that one has been accepted and recognized as being able to offer a credible ministry.

The following story indicates how sacraments hold a special place in our church. The writer was working in a team situation with a recently ordained man. They had agreed that, given the differences that existed in their situation (male/female; ordained/lay pastoral minister in training; full-time/part-time), responsibilities would be shared as equally as possible.

After the completion of her first year in the training programme, the pastoral charge applied on her behalf for a license to administer the sacraments. They thought it would be pretty straight forward given the high number of lay pastoral ministers and lay pastoral ministers in training in the presbytery. However, the request was denied on the basis that her team mate was ordained.

She had some difficulty with the response for what she described as educational reasons but was completely unprepared for the reaction of the people on the pastoral charge. They were, she says, utterly dumfounded. They couldn't understand how some committee could

³³ Tom Harpur, p. 76.

sit in judgment of their ministry needs and how this committee could deny what seemed to them the basic right of every minister. To them, she wasn't a student; she was their minister and their minister needed to be able to share with them in these special celebrations in their lives.

After some documentation of her previous training and experience, and a number of passionate letters written by members of the various boards, the decision was reversed and she went on to serve them as the minister they saw her to be.

Many awkward situations which could have been avoided have resulted from the ruling that lay pastoral ministers can only do sacraments on their own pastoral charge. I would argue that the sacrament of communion should belong to the individual churches and persons who are respected in the church community should be allowed to officiate at a celebration of communion in the absence of the minister whether that person is ordained or lay. Why is an ordained person who does not belong to a particular pastoral charge considered more suitable to administer the sacraments?

The recently produced study on Ministry in the 21st Century seems to be in agreement. The persons who completed this study recommended "that the act of ordination provide the authority to preside at the sacraments and the responsibility of granting permission to lay persons to preside at the sacraments be given to the Session (or its equivalent) in Pastoral Charge"³⁴

³⁴ The Ministry Study Group, Ministry in the 21st Century (Etobicoke: The United Church of Canada, 1999), p.6.

The following somewhat humorous anecdote which was part of one reply to my questionnaire also points up the importance of the sacrament of baptism, especially in relation to the practice of ministry. It shows, too, one fast-thinking lay pastoral minister! The person involved said that one of her greatest fears was to have a baptism scheduled and have no water available. It was her habit to ask others to check carefully as she had little time to do it herself between services.

On this particular day, there were two babies and an adult to be baptized. The presiding minister couldn't see any water anywhere. She wondered what to do. She made the split second decision to baptize with "blessed air". All went well. To her surprise, no one commented afterwards. Not one person had noticed. Some were sure they had seen the adult wipe drops of water off her forehead.

The writer confessed that she found out later that the water had been there all the time. Since her vision is not good and the water was in a pitcher the same colour as the rug, she did not see it. This incident could, of course, have occurred when an ordained person was present. The point is that one needs maturity to handle something of this nature. Lay pastoral ministers have had life experience which I think helps them to make appropriate decisions in different circumstances.

There is hope for lay pastoral ministers and other appointed persons, at least in the Saskatchewan Conference. At a meeting of the Saskatchewan Conference Executive on

February 12th and 13th, 1999, a change was made regarding the rights to administer the sacraments. If a person can meet three criteria, that person is allowed to take leadership in the sacraments of baptism and communion. The Saskatchewan Conference Executive put forward these three conditions: First, the person must be a confirmed member of the United Church of Canada. Secondly, he or she must have been appointed by the correct process, and lastly, the person must have knowledge of the sacraments as practised in the United Church of Canada.

While I would prefer that the determination as to who administers the sacraments be up to the Session, I believe that until a decision is made, we must adhere strictly to these criteria. We have in our church people who have been brought up in other denominations with different understanding of the sacraments. Most have been respectful of United Church theology and practice but some have forced their personal beliefs on the congregations they are serving. I know this has happened, especially with regard to infant baptism. It is certainly abusive to do something like this so rules must be put in place for the benefit of all.

Acceptance of lay pastoral ministry is not at the same level in all Conferences. We shall see later on in this thesis that some steps have been taken in the church, through the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, which will enhance the profile of lay pastoral ministry and will make it a more credible option for more individuals to pursue and more congregations to consider.

Discussion 3: Education and Preparation for Lay Pastoral Ministry

The United Church of Canada has always claimed that it is necessary to have an educated clergy. Possibly, that is the main reason they tried to eliminate lay supply by offering a special programme toward ordination in the 1960s. There is some concern and I think that it is justified that “some lay ministers have only minimal education and preparation for their position”.³⁵

I do not intend to denigrate experience as being a great teacher, nor do I not believe that lay ministers are faithful and faith-filled people. However, it seems to me that if one does not have a good grasp of United Church theology and a desire to study and grow, one is cheating not only oneself but the congregations they serve and, ultimately, God. It is necessary to realize that with the proper theological grounding, one is more likely to feel confident and be better able to communicate theology to others. God wants each of us to have abundant life. To me that means that one has joy in serving, has an understanding of God’s grace and is able to regard all of creation as a wonderful gift from God. A theological grounding would assist the lay pastoral minister to articulate these understandings.

³⁵ Ministry Study Group Minutes, November 1-3, 1997 (Etobicoke: Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, 1997), p. 2.

Prior to 1982, there was a requirement that lay supply ministers complete annually the study of one book in each of the following fields: Exposition, Christian Faith and Practice, Church History, Preaching and Pastoral Work and Public Worship. The textbooks were to be recommended by the theological college in the area.³⁶ This was deleted to the detriment, I think, of the lay pastoral ministry programme. Perhaps there could have been some change in the requirements but it should not have been dropped altogether.

For seven people who replied to the questionnaire, entry into the lay pastoral ministry in training programme must have been preceded by a call. Thirteen people stated that the programme needs more structure in such areas as setting out learning goals, theology and clarity and consistency of educational guidelines throughout the United Church of Canada. The Division of Ministry Personnel and Education is now publishing a Covenanted Resource for educational supervision called Learning Together. This is to be used by interns, lay pastoral ministers in training, lay supervision teams, supervisors and persons in the In Community Program for Ordination. In light of the concerns expressed by the thirteen respondents to the questionnaire, this is a great step forward.

From the minutes of the Ministry Study Group comes this statement: "It was agreed that the current educational programme for lay pastoral ministers in training was limited and did not adequately address some of the basic needs of preparation for solo pastoral charge

³⁶ The United Church of Canada Record of Proceedings (Toronto: Issued by General Council of the United Church of Canada, 1982), p. 153.

ministry.”³⁷ June Maffin has alternatives which could improve the content of the educational programme.

Maffin says that Biblical studies open up the Bible; ministry courses enlarge one’s understanding of ministry; history and theology studies broaden a person’s overview of the church.³⁸ In the case of a person from the United Church of Canada, a course in polity would be necessary because it would introduce that person to an understanding of how the United Church of Canada functions. All of these are needed by lay pastoral ministers in order to provide spiritual food for oneself and the many who hunger.

We cannot pretend that there is not some hostility directed towards persons in lay pastoral ministry by others, especially some who are ordained. I think the persons in diaconal ministry have their own struggles with credibility, so are less likely to be resentful of people in lay ministry. Much of the negativity could be allayed, I think, if lay pastoral ministers took seriously the need for lifelong learning. Each lay pastoral minister has three weeks per year which may be devoted to study. It is necessary to take advantage of this opportunity.

As part of the structured program, it should be mandatory that lay pastoral ministers in training take courses in Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, theology, worship and preaching, pastoral care and polity. It is realized that these are covered in the two-week residential events, but there needs to be more in-depth, challenging work done.

³⁷ Minutes, June 6–8, 1998, p. 2.

³⁸ June Maffin, p. 48.

There are opportunities in many places. In Saskatchewan, CAPPE/SIPCA³⁹ offers pastoral care training in a course designed for the people of this province. St. Andrew's College has begun providing distance education courses in rural areas. This is new and may take a while to gain acceptance. However, I understand that the course in Hebrew Scriptures offered in the area in which I live was much appreciated. The wonderful thing is that the distance education courses are equal in content and level of difficulty to the ones at the college.

Also, a great improvement has been made so that persons who pass a skill assessment are now eligible to take the theological courses from St. Andrew's College. Previously, a person had to have a minimum of one year of university. Persons may also upgrade and receive academic credit for a course taken elsewhere. For example, the Lay Preacher's Course taken at Prairie Christian Training Centre is eligible.

The fact that lay pastoral ministers are seen to be desirous of learning and growing in the faith will add much to their credibility. The recommendation by the Ministry Study Group that community-based educational programmes be available in all Conferences is certainly a welcome one.⁴⁰

Both educational and pastoral charge supervision is necessary to ensure that the needs of the person in training as well as those of the pastoral charge and the church are met. It is

³⁹ CAPPE – Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education. SIPCA – Saskatchewan Interfaith Pastoral Care Association.

⁴⁰ The Ministry Study Group, p. 49.

good to know that in the area of educational supervision, it is now mandatory that the supervisors have training. The problem exists, however, that there may not be enough people to go around. Encouragement and perhaps financial assistance must be provided so that people will take the Ministry of Supervision course.

As of July 1, 1999, it has been mandated that persons entering the lay pastoral ministry in training programme have the support of a lay supervision team and consultant.⁴¹ The pastoral charge supervisor is to be a support to the person in training and is to interpret the role of the lay pastoral minister in training to the pastoral charge.

In March 1999, a decision was made in Saskatchewan Conference that, for those persons recognized as lay pastoral ministers, there would be no need for pastoral charge supervision by an outside party.⁴² There has been some confusion, however, around the completion of the Pastoral Charge Supervision form MPE 441PS.⁴³ At present, the form is not appropriate for any appointment as the focus is more on the person appointed than on the pastoral charge he/she serves.

Some of the rules of the church put stumbling blocks which seem to make little sense and cause great inconvenience. When a distinction is made as to which committee one can be involved in according to whether or not one is order of ministry or lay ministry personnel,

⁴¹ Lay Ministry Committee, Lay Ministry Handbook (Etobicoke: Division of Ministry Personnel and Education), 1998.

⁴² Saskatchewan Conference Division of Ministry Personnel and Education for the Conference Pastoral Relations/Settlement and Education and Students Committee, March, 1999, p. 2.

⁴³ Appendix II, p. 70.

problems can ensue. This past year, a ruling had to be made by the Executive Secretary of Saskatchewan Conference to allow two lay pastoral ministers to remain on the Pastoral Relations/Settlement Committee because the Manual says that one representative from each Presbytery must be order of ministry.⁴⁴ Should interest and abilities not count? I appreciate the term “ministry personnel” because it does not distinguish between ordered and lay persons.

The annual appointment system is something of a trial to many people. There has been some recognition of this so that congregations may request appointments for up to three years. Still, there is some anxiety with this process as the appointment must be reviewed each year. It is quite strange too that the person in ministry is expected to stay on one pastoral charge for at least three years but the annual review over and above the one done by the Ministry and Personnel Committee tends to call this expectation into question, particularly on the part of congregational members.

In Saskatchewan, a motion is made each year by the Pastoral Relations/Settlement Committee which indicates this group’s unwillingness to remove a lay pastoral minister from a pastoral relationship in favour of a person in ordered ministry. However, there have been occasions when this has occurred in other conferences.

⁴⁴ The United Church of Canada, Manual (Etobicoke: United Church Publishing House, 1998), Section 244 (c) vi.

The rules and regulations already mentioned, which are attached to lay pastoral ministry, make it seem inferior to ordered ministry when in fact it should be seen as a different but equal stream. Undoubtedly, there needs to be some changes.

I cannot help wondering what it would be like if we did not have such a system. What if we had people who made agreements to remain with pastoral charges for as long as was mutually beneficial to both? The only ministry personnel who would have a time limit would be persons who wished to serve as intentional interim ministers to do a specific task.

In her book Gathered by the River, in an article titled “Images of Power”, the author, Patricia Bays, has included a poem by Chuck Lathrop. It is called “In Search of a Roundtable”. It speaks to me of what it could be like if we saw all ministers as people who are doing the work of ministry and if we could regard ministry as power shared.⁴⁵

The poem begins:

Concerning the why and who and what and where of ministry,
One image keeps resurfacing
A table that is round

It continues:

And ALL are invited
to wholeness and to food.

⁴⁵ Gertrude Lebens (ed.), Gathered by the River (Dundas: Artemis Enterprises, 1994), p. 11.

Later in the poem, he describes the meaning of roundtabling:

Roundtabling means

Being with, a part of together, and one.

It means room for the Spirit and gifts and disturbing profound peace for all.⁴⁶

We need to allow the Holy Spirit to work within each of our lives. This, to my mind, would result in true ministry.

⁴⁶ Gertrude Lebars, (ed.), p. 12.

Discussion 4: Future of Lay Pastoral Ministry

In 1964, there was a push for lay supplies to be ordained.⁴⁷ This movement was the result of the belief that lay supply ministry existed because there was a shortage of ordained persons. It seems no other factors were taken into account. Years later, supply ministry was still in place and in 1978, the General Council Division of Ministry Personnel and Education received and adopted a report on its “Task Force on Lay Supply Training.” This indicated the continued need for and presence of lay ministry in the United Church of Canada.

In 1984, the Lay Supply Ministry Committee became the Lay Ministry Committee, thus including staff associates and lay preachers. 1991 heralded a name change from Supply to Pastoral.⁴⁸

What does all of this mean for the future of lay pastoral ministry in 21st century? If the majority of those who are now involved in lay pastoral ministry have anything to do with it, this stream will continue. Most who responded to my questionnaire stated that they thought that lay pastoral ministry has a viable future.

⁴⁷ Cora Krommenboek, Ministry Research Project, Timeline-Ministries in the United Church of Canada (Etobicoke: Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, 1996), p. 1.

⁴⁸ Lay Pastoral Ministry Handbook, p. 1.

In some replies though, a yearning for ordination was evident. The suggestion was, by three people, that a lay pastoral minister be ordained after a certain number of years of successful work on a pastoral charge. One person also mentioned that there would be a need for educational upgrades. He did not specify what the courses should be or how many would be considered adequate.

Some years ago, I advocated something similar. I thought that, after completing the three year Lay Pastoral Minister in Training programme and having served successfully on a pastoral charge for a period of five years, one should be ordained. I guess that in the back of my mind was the thought that lay pastoral ministry was somehow “second best”. It would be much easier if one could say that one would be ordained at a particular time. Also, many people have little understanding as to why one would pursue a lay degree like Master of Theological Studies as it makes no difference to one’s salary or one’s status in ministry.

My opinion has changed. To me, it is more important that I work with an awareness of the guidance of the Spirit working in me and within those with whom I am engaged. My goal is to empower others to see themselves as spiritual beings, as the church. When people finally come to the realization that committed people, not the building, are most important and are actually the church, the goal of empowerment will be realized. Admittedly, it is a difficult and slow process and I may not see results in my lifetime; still it is worth pursuing.

Six of the replies I received indicated skepticism about the continuation of lay pastoral ministry. Two of the six persons see programmes such as In Community Program for Ordination as attempts to force out the lay ministry stream. Another sees lay pastoral ministry as not being accepted by the conference of which she is a part. In Montreal and Ottawa Conference, there are only three lay pastoral ministers.

Another person from Manitoba mentioned that some colleagues in lay pastoral ministry are gravitating toward In Community Program for Ordination because they fear lay pastoral ministry will not be viable.

Nine of the twenty-seven persons in lay pastoral ministry who do see a future for the stream tend to think it will continue in mainly rural areas which have aging populations and not a lot of money. Other persons involved in other streams of ministry seem to agree. One retired ordained person with whom I spoke recently said that he thought the church needed to discover a new way to do ministry in largely rural areas where there is a lack of financial resources. The persons engaged in ministry in these areas would most likely be residents within the districts they serve or in ones that are similar.

Some who replied to the questionnaire stated that lay ministry would take place in locations where ordained persons would not go. This is possibly an inappropriate generalization. The fact is that some people in the ordained stream are limited as to where

they can locate because of a partner's career or family needs. Perhaps it is not so much that they will not go to certain areas, but that they cannot.

One person used the term "grass roots" in reference to lay pastoral ministry. "Grass roots" ministry is the type of ministry which is grounded in the local context. Another person termed it "you in the pew" ministry and a third said that lay pastoral ministers, in some cases, had investment in the community in which they were ministering. These persons see these as reasons for the continuation of lay pastoral ministry.

The view of lay pastoral ministry as only for rural locations makes lay pastoral ministers seem second-class citizens, not prestigious or learned enough to function in more urban settings. This assumption also seems to put down rural people as being less educated, less informed than their urban brothers and sisters. It seems ludicrous that this should be the case. In this technological age where communication can happen in minutes, if not seconds, even in rural areas people who desire it can be informed.

There are also other considerations. I am mindful of a remark I made quite a few years ago to a friend. I said that I would be frightened to preach in a city church where members of the congregation might be professors, doctors, lawyers or engineers. Her wise reply was that just because someone may have an academic background, it does not always follow that he or she is educated spiritually. Many people, she said, are still in kindergarten when it comes to matters of faith.

It makes more sense that lay pastoral ministry take place in locations, rural or urban, where the person has an understanding of the community and its needs and perhaps even an investment in the community. This applies also to any form of ministry which is seen as a vocation rather than a job.

Where a person functions best will depend often on his or her skills. Rural ministry means that the person is more pastor than administrator. City ministries are more formal. There is more administration and programming because there are usually larger numbers of people with whom to work. Recently, I heard an ordained person speaking on the radio. He verified this difference between the two ministries. He had been in rural ministry and then moved to a city. He said he was doing much more counselling in the urban area than in the rural, explaining that people would come in off the street because often they had no one to turn to in times of difficulty. In the majority of cases in the rural areas, family members would take on the role of counsellor. Also, people who like to study may choose a rural ministry because there can be more unstructured times; there may not be as much administration.

There is an unfortunate reality that exists in some rural communities. Certain people who, because they are single or of a different sexual orientation, are loath to go to rural communities. Often they are suspect before anyone even meets them or gets to know them.

When lifestyle is no longer a concern, when gifts and skills in ministry take precedence, then we will have the ministry we should have and it will not matter whether it is lay or ordered.

On the whole, lay pastoral ministry is seen as viable, especially in places like Newfoundland-Labrador and Saskatchewan. These are largely rural provinces. However, since in our day it is comparatively easy to be in communication with persons who are at a great distance, the practice of ministry should not be seen as disadvantaged. Also, the people of these provinces should not be viewed as “less than” those who live elsewhere. The most hopeful comment came from a woman in Alberta-Northwest Conference. She says that God has a way of calling people in a capacity of their own gifts and experience.

There was a place in the questionnaire in which persons could rate what they perceive as the level of acceptance of lay pastoral ministry by the presbytery and the conference in which they serve. Of the thirty-three replies, ten saw the presbytery level of acceptance as excellent, eighteen termed it very good, while two thought acceptance was average and three saw it as below average. The conference level of acceptance showed similar results with eight persons thinking it was excellent; seventeen saw it as very good. Five thought the conference acceptance of lay pastoral ministry was average and two perceived it as being below average. One person did not rate the conference as to its acceptance of lay pastoral ministry. One wonders if there is a lack of understanding of lay pastoral ministry in those

places where it does not seem to be as readily accepted by the presbytery and the conference. Perhaps this situation requires more investigation.

Now that interns and lay pastoral ministers in training are having orientation events together and lay pastoral ministers in training will now have lay supervision teams and consultants, lay pastoral ministry will gain some credibility. They are seen as being on a more equal footing.

One person, as a lay pastoral minister in training, had requested that she have a lay learning committee modelled on the one set out by St. Andrew's College for internship year. This woman found it a positive experience. In combination with educational supervision, she was given an opportunity for tremendous growth because the committee members could give her very specific feedback and also challenge her to do things that would meet the congregation's needs.

Once the educational supervision and the pastoral charge supervision are ended, the lay pastoral minister often feels bereft. There is a need for on-going support. Perhaps a mentoring system would fill the void. If there are regularly scheduled meetings and a flexible agenda decided upon by the persons involved, great learning and a system of mutual support would result. This might also be a good idea for persons who are newly ordained or commissioned, particularly if they are in an environment which is new to them.

There is a newsletter for lay pastoral ministers that helps connect people across the country. It also provides samples of liturgies, some thought-provoking commentaries on books and situations in the church and the world, and other newsworthy events. It is a very worthwhile endeavour because it allows one to communicate with one's peers and can aid in an understanding of lay pastoral ministry if persons other than those in lay ministry have access to it.

Hodgson, in Revisioning the Church states that "what authorizes ministry is possession of skill and commitment".⁴⁹ He says too, that it is the duty of the minister to take on a leadership role and in so doing, empower the people. In short, ministry means service in areas such as worship leadership, study and pastoral care.

The other literature I read was certainly in agreement with Hodgson's premise. Some authors, however, wanted to have a ministry of the laity that was mainly volunteer. As ministers, these people were to bring their Christian faith into their places of work. "The layman brings to effect on workdays what the church teaches on Sundays".⁵⁰ The recent Presbyterian Record holds a similar view. Jim Dowden, a minister in Grimsby, Ontario, writing in the United Church Observer of June 1994, seems to see lay people as providing valuable service in ministry but sets up a division between ordered and lay leadership in worship and administration. In congregations where lay people are empowered, they too could take on some of the chores of administration, leadership development and worship.

⁴⁹ Peter C. Hodgson, Revisioning the Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 99.

⁵⁰ Stephen Charles Neill and Hans Ruedi-Weber, pp. 188, 189.

Our faith must be lived out in all parts of life. However, the books and articles I read did not enlighten me as to how to do paid, accountable lay pastoral ministry in the United Church of Canada. Of course, much of the writing was from a Roman Catholic context. When mention was made of lay professional ministry, it was still as a helper to the priest. Recently, as stated in an earlier part of this study, lay pastors in Roman Catholic churches have begun working on a solo basis in some parishes. This is quite a change from earlier times, but there are still restrictions that do not exist in lay pastoral ministry in the United Church of Canada. Still, it would seem that there needs to be much more education in both the church and the communities about lay pastoral ministry.

Lay pastoral ministers, too, must be very careful that they are not seen as clericalized laity as more divisions would be set up. It is necessary that the public see that lay people can be as knowledgeable about scripture and the workings of the church as clergy.

I have recently read the recommendations of the Ministry Study Group that there should be an Order of Lay Ministry in the United Church of Canada. At first, it struck me as being a wonderful idea as it would perhaps remove a barrier which exists between ordained and lay persons in ministry. However, after having reflected for a while, I am not sure that this action would be wise. Would we not be creating a clericalized laity thus separating lay pastoral ministers from the lay persons in the congregation?

Paul, in the Book of Acts, exhorts the Athenians to search for God. That is the mandate of each of us. A quote from Acts 17:28, “For in God, we live and move and have our being.” tells us that we are God’s creation. Being made in God’s image, we have a responsibility to ourselves and others to respond to God’s call to the best of our ability.

“Only a shared sense of vision brings real clarity and a sustained sense of direction.”⁵¹ In 1991, when I was recognized as a lay pastoral minister by Saskatchewan Conference, each person was given a few moments to answer a question pertaining to our vision for the church in the future. That question becomes even more immediate as we enter a new century. At that time, my vision was for a United Church of Canada perhaps smaller in numbers but populated by persons who are passionate about and committed to the ministry of the whole people of God. These persons would ask themselves what God required of them and would take seriously the answer found in Micah which states that one must “do justice, love, kindness and walk humbly with God”.⁵² My vision has not changed all that much in the intervening years.

One of the respondents to my questionnaire stated that lay pastoral ministry is ministry with the people and among the people. There is no “power over”. She believes that, as the church moves into the twenty-first century, it is the kind of ministry that will help the church

⁵¹ Mary Jo Leddy, p. 86.

⁵² Holy Bible New Revised Standard Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Corporation, 1990), p. 1052.

grow and remain strong. She did not specify what the word “grow” means to her in relation to the church. To me, “grow” does not necessarily mean an increase in numbers of persons attending church. “Grow” means, instead, a larger number of persons who are committed to the church. This kind of growth is, as Mary Jo Leddy has written, “love lived in hope”.⁵³

⁵³ Mary Jo Leddy, p. 126.

Conclusion

I have been gratified by the response to my questionnaire. The answers I received verified some conclusions I had already reached and also opened up some new areas for thought and discussion.

In this thesis, four different areas were explored. The first discussion focussed on reasons why persons might choose lay pastoral ministry rather than another form of ministry. From the replies to my questionnaire, it seems that many persons feel called to exercise their gifts as ministry personnel after having pursued other careers. Perhaps this is the result of experience that has led them to consider spiritual health as necessary as emotional and physical well-being in order to have a full life. Lay pastoral ministry may be the venue by which they share this discovery.

Persons could become involved in lay pastoral ministry because of more mundane circumstances such as age, financial constraints or family responsibilities which do not lend themselves to full-time study at a theological college or becoming involved in a programme such as In Community Program for Ordination. In this way, too, the United Church of Canada is provided with a committed group of people certainly willing and able to do the tasks of ministry in a shorter period of time.

Theology also plays a part in the choice of lay pastoral ministry for some people. For those who believe in the priesthood of all believers, lay ministry is the ideal choice because there is mutuality in ministry. The term “mutuality in ministry” means that people learn and grow together. One person is not set apart from the congregation or seen as the only person who is in ministry in that pastoral charge. All persons are engaged in ministry, perhaps with different roles, but all are working toward the goal of building up the body of Christ. This is by no means a new concept. Scripture provides examples.

In the Book of Acts, specifically in Acts 2:42-47, people are described as being together, sharing their goods, breaking bread, learning and praying together. In Acts 4:32-35, the believers are described as being of “one heart and soul”,⁵⁴ meaning that they share the same value system. The twelfth chapter of I Corinthians names the different spiritual gifts that people may possess. The emphasis is on our interdependence within the body of Christ. Each gift is of value, but all gifts come from the Holy Spirit.

In Philippians 2:1-5, people are exhorted to be of the “same mind”.⁵⁵ Persons who are followers of Jesus rely on his guidance in their lives and emulate in their conduct the example he provided.

Persons who value mutuality in ministry would accept as one of the prime tenets of their faith the command that Jesus gave in John 15:12. It is in this passage that Jesus uses the image of friendship and commands people to love one another as he has loved us.

⁵⁴ Holy Bible, p. 1234.

⁵⁵ Holy Bible, p. 1525.

There are other examples in the Bible which, along with the ones mentioned, make us aware that one person cannot be the church in the world. We must work together, exercising our God-given gifts and skills to fulfill our mandate as Christians.

In the second discussion, the acceptance of lay pastoral ministers by colleagues, congregations, presbytery or district and conference was explored. It seems that the congregations are most accepting. There seems to be some resentment on the part of ordered ministers, especially ordained. Also, some presbyteries and conferences do not view lay pastoral ministry in as favourable a light as ordered ministry. Some resentment on the part of some ordained ministers and feelings of inferiority on the part of some lay pastoral ministers could be alleviated by educating more people about lay pastoral ministry as it is practised in the United Church of Canada. When more people understand that lay ministry is not “lesser than” but simply different, we will be well on the way to solving the problems of resentment by some ordered persons and the sense of being “second best” that plagues some lay ministry personnel because they are seen as coming into ministry by the “back door”. This expression can be very hurtful because it implies that they are not as well educated and have circumvented the system to achieve the status of ministry personnel.

As mentioned in the Literature Review, lay ministry was seldom seen as a solo endeavour as it is now viewed in the United Church of Canada. Instead, lay ministry is considered part of the volunteer system within the church. Volunteerism is of great value in many organizations including the church. However, lay pastoral ministry involves much more than the use of extra time away from one’s occupation to do the tasks of ministry. It is a

profession in which one devotes much time to fulfilling the duties of a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care. Therefore, persons both inside and outside of the church must be challenged to learn about lay pastoral ministry.

The discernment process which recognizes lay pastoral ministry as a distinct form of ministry is an excellent first step. Also, any books, articles or magazines on the topic of ministry in the United Church must make mention of and give explanations about lay pastoral ministry. Donna Sinclair's Finding Your Way has already been named as one magazine in which it would be important to have a profile on lay pastoral ministry. As the magazine is designed for newcomers to the United Church, it would be an excellent forum showing these persons right at the beginning of their learning experience that this form of ministry is accepted and valued in the United Church.

Ralph Milton's updating of This United Church of Ours could do a great service toward lay pastoral ministry and the United Church by including information about this stream. Since there has not been much written about lay ministry in the United Church of Canada, it is my hope that this study will spur others on to learning about and conveying information about this form of ministry.

Education and preparation for lay pastoral ministry was the third area of discussion in this thesis. Three procedures that go a long way towards making lay pastoral ministry more credible are the discernment process, holding orientation events with interns for ordination and making the system of educational supervision comparable to that of interns. The recommendation that education for lay ministers be "comparable competency to Order of

Ministry depending on function”⁵⁶ seems to indicate that the programme of education will become more challenging and that is good for both lay pastoral ministry and the church.

Methods of becoming better educated are more available now than they were when I began working in this stream in 1987. There are now distance education courses, televised programmes, week-long residential courses at places like St. Stephen’s College or Prairie Christian Training Centre and short courses at theological schools such as St. Andrew’s and the other centres across the country, along with correspondence courses. Three weeks per year are allotted to all ministry personnel for study. They must be used by the lay pastoral minister along with the two-week residential event. “ The United Church needs to have stronger guidelines and an accountability process to ensure continuing growth and learning of ministry personnel in our church.”⁵⁷ says the Study Group. Also, the lay pastoral minister can learn in concert with the congregation in study and discussion groups.

The fourth and last discussion in this thesis dealt with the future of lay pastoral ministry in the United Church of Canada. Lay pastoral ministry does have a future especially if the church continues to make efforts toward recognizing it as a distinct stream. If when conferences recognize lay pastoral ministers at the Service of Praise and this recognition takes the same form across the country, it would be most helpful.

Probably lay pastoral ministers will be most evident in rural areas. Since our church is largely rural, this should not be seen as relegating these persons to ministries that are less

⁵⁶ The Ministry Study Group, p. 39.

⁵⁷ The Ministry Study Group, p. 49.

important but as an attempt on the part of the church to provide the best possible ministry personnel, those who are knowledgeable about rural ministry and want to serve in the area. Persons in ministry need to be compassionate. One is more able to be this way when one has an understanding of the people to whom one relates.

In 1991, when the word “supply” was removed as an identifier of lay ministers and the word “pastoral” substituted, the whole emphasis of this ministry changed. The person involved as lay ministry personnel was no longer one who filled in but a pastor who worked empathetically with the people of the pastoral charge. Now, if the appointment system can be changed to reflect this reality, all will be well. Since lay pastoral ministers also feel called, is this system a possibility?

There are several areas of discussion not covered in this paper. The first is the question of the ratio of men to women in lay pastoral ministry. Are there more women than men in these positions? If so, what are the implications?

The second question involves the longevity of lay pastoral ministries. Do people usually remain in this stream until retirement or is it used as a stepping stone to ordered ministry? If the latter is the case, is it because there is stress involved in the lack of security of lay pastoral ministries and in being seen as “second class”?

Thirdly, there is some question about the role of Joint Needs Assessment and Joint Search Committees in promoting lay pastoral ministry. Is lay pastoral ministry seen as a viable option in all parts of the country? Up to 1998, when my questionnaire was produced, it seems this was not the case. Is it better now that we are in a new century?

There have been and will be in the next while many changes in the church and the way it functions. If we go to another model such as the Federation Style Model, a Three Court Model or a revised Four Court Model, how will lay pastoral ministry be affected?⁵⁸ The study on Ministry in the 21st Century will also have implications for all forms of ministry.

In February of 2000, the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education discussed this study and revised it for consideration at the meeting of General Council in Toronto in August, 2000. Commissioners to General Council had access to this report. Others, if the meeting of Saskatchewan Conference is any example, had a chance to view it for only a limited time period when the conference met. Therefore, announcement of General Council's decisions will be eagerly awaited following the meeting. Of course, rulings cannot be implemented until the new Manual is produced, probably in 2001. The expectation is that changes will be quite extensive.

For almost two years now, since I first sent in my proposal, pastoral ministry has been the focus of my study. I have done quite extensive reading and spent much time in discussion on this topic. Early on in my ministry, or even within the period prior to the fall of 1998, if I

⁵⁸ Working Group on the Changing Church, The Changing Church (Etobicoke: The United Church of Canada, 1999), pp. 6-10.

had had the chance to be ordained, I would have accepted ordination as a wonderful gift. The title "Reverend" and the security of call for an unlimited period held great appeal.

Partly because of the preparation for and actual writing of this thesis, my thinking has changed. I do not see ordination as necessary for me. Admittedly, this decision stems partially from a fear of appearing hypocritical in promoting lay pastoral ministry but really wanting ordination for myself. However, I have searched my heart and discovered that overriding any fear I may have is my sense of commitment to this form of ministry.

I see lay pastoral ministry as being equal to ordained and diaconal ministry in that through this form of ministry, more immediate needs are met. It is necessary to serve the congregation and the United Church of Canada conveying God's love and care. It is not important that one be part of ordered ministry to do this.

Of course, one must be prepared to meet the demands with which all ministers must contend. Besides being responsible to the congregation(s), all ministry personnel are under the discipline of the presbytery and have some duties to perform with relation to the presbytery and possibly the conference. The demands of ministry are many and following a time schedule is not always possible.

However, each of us must follow what we consider to be God's will. For me, my vocation is to be a lay pastoral minister in the United Church of Canada.

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Appendix I

Lay Ministry Questionnaire

Please Check one:

- A. Lay Pastoral Minister _____ Lay Pastoral Minister in Training _____
- B. Year entering the programme _____ Year recognized _____
- C. Number of points on Pastoral Charge _____
- D. Conference
- E. Please indicate why you chose the lay ministry stream rather than ordained, diaconal or staff associate. (If necessary for any of the questions, please use the back of this sheet or additional paper.)
- F. On a scale of 1-5 (one being poor, five being excellent) indicate your acceptance as a lay pastoral minister by:
- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. congregation(s) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. colleagues in United Church of Canada (all 4 ministry groups) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. colleagues in other denominations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Presbytery | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Conference | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- G. What is your greatest joy about being a Lay Pastoral Minister in UCC?

- H. What distresses you about being a Lay Pastoral Minister in UCC?
- I. What do you see as the future of lay pastoral ministry?
- J. Please tell an outstanding anecdote or anecdotes about your life as a lay pastoral Minister. It may reflect or enlarge upon some of your previous answers. Humorous stories are welcome!

(signature if you will allow your story to be used)

(signature if you will allow your name to be used)

- K. study programme of lay pastoral ministry
 - a. supervision
 - b. ongoing learning

If you wish to include your name, address and telephone number, please do so in this space.

Appendix II

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

REPORT OF THE PASTORAL CHARGE SUPERVISOR

Pastoral Charge Supervisor completes Sections A and B, signs Section B
 Ministry Personnel and Ministry & Personnel Committee Sign Section C
 Authorized Presbytery Officer signs Section D

Section A. PARTIES TO THE APPOINTMENT/SUPERVISION

MINISTRY PERSONNEL APPOINTEE: _____

Candidate	Ordained Supply	Lay Pastoral Minister in Training
Staff Associate	Diaconal Supply	

The Ministry Personnel appointee is subject to Section 341 of The Manual supervision if in one of the above categories (and even if not on one of these categories, any Ministry Personnel may be subject to supervision at the discretion of Presbytery).

The Pastoral Charge is subject to Section 341 supervision if it has no regularly settled member of the Order of Ministry, or appointed member of the Order of Ministry or Lay Pastoral Minister.

The Presbytery/District is required to appoint a Pastoral Charge Supervisor where there is no regularly settled member of the Order of Ministry, or appointed Order of Ministry member or Lay Pastoral Minister.

PASTORAL CHARGE OF APPOINTMENT: _____

PRESBYTERY/DISTRICT APPOINTING: _____

Section B. REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE APPOINTEE

1998 Manual Section 341 requires a Supervisor to "give sympathetic support....and general supervision of the work of the Pastoral Charge", specifically ensuring the appropriateness of "the conduct of worship, pastoral care, preparation for Baptism, confirmation or reception and for Holy Communion, organization of Christian Education, the United Church Women and other lay activities, and such other duties as shall be for the welfare of the Pastoral Charge".

Using the requirements named above, comment on this ministry. Additional sheets may be added.

(continued on next page)

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
REPORT OF THE PASTORAL CHARGE SUPERVISOR

(Date)

(Signature of Pastoral
Charge Supervisor)

Section C: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND M&P
COMMITTEE

I acknowledge receipt and review of a copy of this report:

Date

Signature of Ministry Personnel

Date

Signature of Ministry & Personnel Committee Chair

Section D: RECEIPT BY PRESBYTERY/DISTRICT

I Acknowledge receipt of this completed form and confirm that Presbytery/District has considered it.

Date

Signature of Authorized Person from Presbytery/District