THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
DIVISION OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND EDUCATION
TASK GROUP ON LEARNED MINISTRY

EDUCATED MINISTRY: DIACONAL MINISTRY IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

I. INTRODUCTION

A.) The Task Group's Mandate and Context

In 1984, the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education asked that a committee continue the discussion of Educated Ministry in the United Church of Canada by looking specifically at Diaconal Ministry. The committee was instructed to produce a report which, along with the previous task group's work on Ordained Ministry, and the soon to be produced report on Lay Ministry, could be used to facilitate the Church's ongoing discussion of "learned/educated" ministry in the United Church, and their significance for today.

The Committee on Theological Education for Ministry (CTEM) and the Diaconal Ministry Committee jointly named a committee which had representation from both of their committees, along with an experienced diaconal minister and staff assistance from the Division office.

While aware that our task was to look specifically at the evolution of education for diaconal ministry in the United Church, and its characteristics today, we were aware of many other developments concerning Diaconal Ministry, including the following:

1. The 1983 National Consultation on Diaconal Ministry Educational Preparation.

2. The joint work of the Centre for Christian Studies and Emmanuel College to identify essentials for Diaconal Ministry educational preparation.

3. The continuing evidence of the need for access to Diaconal Ministry educational preparation in cities such as Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Regina.

4. The completion of the Diaconal Ministry History Project and the production of "Called to Serve: A story of Diaconal Ministry in the United Church of Canada."

5. The work of the Diaconal Ministry Committee and CTEM on alternate models and sites for Diaconal Ministry Educational Preparation and on the Manual changes required to facilitate this.

The Task Group was also aware that Diaconal Ministry continues to be a part of the order of ministry which is either invisible or considered secondary by a large part of the Church. Because there

are so few Diaconal Ministers, and because their style of ministry is usually radically different from the ordained, they are perceived as "other," as a curiosity, as second-best. Thus, it is a quite common yet frustrating experience for diaconal ministers to be asked when they are going to "go on and be ordained" or why they are not "real ministers," or to be defined by what they are not, rather than what they are. Diaconal Ministers are constantly in the position of not only having to explain who they are, but also of having to justify their ministry and to prove its benefit to the Church.

Because of this, the Task Group believed that an important part of its work was the lifting up and exploring of the unique history, the Biblical roots, educational preparation, and the understanding of Church and ministry which Diaconal Ministers bring to their life and work. Diaconal Ministry challenges all of us to re-examine our understanding of ministry, and our understanding of what it means to be the church in the world.

To help with its work, the Task Group hired a researcher and writer and identified several areas for research.

1. An historical survey of education for diaconal ministry throughout the centuries.

2. A survey of the attitudes and perceptions of diaconal ministers, both working and retired, and of former diaconal ministers who have since been ordained or who have resigned from the ministry.

A questionnaire was prepared and mailed to one hundred and ninety-seven individuals. The respondents included graduates of the Methodist Deaconess Home and Training School and the Ewart Missionary and Deaconess Training Home, the pre-union educational schools for deaconesses, and up to the 1984 graduates of the Centre for Christian Studies and Emmanuel College, the present educational centres for Diaconal Ministry. The questions (see Appendix A) were designed to gather five types of information:

1. A summary of the previous educational and life experience of Diaconal Ministers before theological education.

2. An assessment by Diaconal Minister of the least and most helpful aspects of their educational preparation.

3. An indication of Diaconal Ministers' own understanding of what is the unique or essential characteristic of their ministry.

4. An outline of the changes, if any, in Diaconal Ministry over the last ten years.

5. A list of the difficulties and problems Diaconal Ministers face in the way their ministry is perceived and responded to in the church.

Though only part of the information gathered will be reprinted here, it all proved extremely valuable for the work of the Task Group. Through reading and thinking about the responses to the questionnaire, the Task Group became aware of both the excitement and the pain of diaconal ministers, of the vision and the questions that this order of ministry brings to the Church, and particularly to its understanding of ministry. The Task Group decided to let Diaconal Ministers' own responses form the basis for the sections of this report on "The Essence of Diaconal Ministry" and "Educational Essentials for Diaconal Ministry." Thus, through the report, Diaconal Ministers will speak for themselves, and their own words will be used whenever possible.

B.) The Church as the People of God

In studying the historical documents of the United Church, particularly those concerning ministry, and in reflecting on its own experience, the Task Group became convinced that the Church is in the midst of a paradigm shift in its self-understanding. Since the fourth century, ecclesiastical self-awareness and practice has been dominated by Paul's model of the Church as the Body of Christ. Concepts of authority, appropriate clergy roles, parameters of lay participation and definitions of the church's purpose have all been shaped and authenticated in terms of this basic model. Pushed to its extreme, it has led to an over emphasis on external authority, on conformity at the expense of uniqueness, and on passivity rather than active participation on the part of laity. It has resulted in the church being equated with "the clergy," and has forced the laity to remain as outsiders, as mere observers, or at best, consumers of ministry.

Though there have been attempts throughout history to challenge this model, the ecclesiastical image of the Body of Christ has, until recently, remained in place, virtually unchanged. But now there is evidence that a radical paradigm shift is occurring and the Christian Church is moving towards an understanding of itself of the "people of God," as a pilgrim group which, in its being and journeying together, lives out the covenant oath of God to the people of Israel: "I shall be your God and you shall be my people."

The shift from the image of the Church as the Body of Christ to the People of God changes many things, including the level and types of participation which are encouraged within the community of faith, the types of structure which are used to facilitate growth of the people, and the understanding of the tasks and purpose of ministry. In the People of God image of the Church, the emphasis is on movement and on variety. The uniqueness and freedom of individuals

are highlighted, and the participation of all the people in the shaping of the journey of faith is essential. Unity emerges from a sharing of vision, and a commitment to live out the Gospel both as a gathered community and as individuals in vocations in the world. Commitment is maintained through learning, worshipping, and witnessing together in an atmosphere of mutual support. All the people are invited to participate in the shaping of the community's life, and to move in and out of leadership roles. The work of the people is hindered, not helped, by hierarchical structures and practices which emphasize "power over" and invite passivity rather than responsible action.

The most radical shifts which such a model of the Church brings about is in the understanding of ministry. First when the church is seen as the "People of God", all people become ministers as they participate in the journey of faith, and begin to help others see the Gospel therefore at work and claim it for their lives. Ministry is no longer confined to a few people who are professionally trained and who do things to and on behalf of others. Instead, it becomes that which the whole community, all the people of God, participate in their time together and their time apart. It becomes the sharing of the Gospel in all the parts of the world as Project: Ministry suggest that God has a ministry in the world, the ministry of Jesus Christ, into the service of which God calls the whole church. Every Christian is called to participate in this ministry. Ministry is expressed in personal being, occupation, involvement in the total community, and service in, through, and to the church.

The times of gathering of the people for worship and education and fellowship become the times when empowerment for ministry in the world must occur. As Project: Ministry again suggests, congregational life becomes "the launching pad from which Christians are sent out to do ministry, rather than congregational life becoming the alpha and omega of our Christian responsibility." Thus, for the people there is a flow or moving together and then walking separately, only to come together again, for more challenge and support. Ministers who are paid are seen to be empowerers, the fellow travellers who help to equip people for their own particular challenges in the world; therefore, this expression of ministry is constantly in dialogue with that of the laity. It both shapes and is shaped by the questions, needs and actions of all of the people. There is no such thing as a solo ministry; everything is both received and shared in the context of the whole people of God. Hierarchical rankings of gifts and efforts to control or ensure conformity have no place and can actually stunt the growth of the community. For it is in journeying together, in equality and mutual respect that people are helped to discover the power and excitement of the Gospel, and are empowered to participate in its unfolding in the world. Such an understanding of the Church facilitates growth, covenant and shared ministry in the world.

C.) The History of Education for Diaconal Ministry

The history of education for diaconal ministry is an exciting and valid one - full of indications of flexibility, practicality and a strong sense of the importance of community. Preparation for this ministry has never focused on questions of role or status, but has instead emphasized specific skills and attitudes and knowledge which would be immediately required to meet the needs of a changing world and the church. Diaconal ministry's raison d'etre has always been to nurture and serve others, and because of this, the educational preparation has changed remarkably in order to relate specifically to the tasks being performed by each generation of diaconal ministers.

Since the earliest days of the Christian Church, diaconal ministry has been a vital part of its life, the word from which the name comes, diakonia, meant originally someone who waited on tables. Acts 6 tells us that "widows were being neglected in the daily distribution," and that "seven men of good repute," among them Stephen, were chosen "to serve tables so that the apostles could spend their time in prayer and preaching." Later, the word was used to describe a variety of acts of kindness and service in the early Christian community. Paul, in Romans 16:1, commended Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, "a helper of many and of myself as well."

These early deaconesses were mature, responsible members of the early Christian Church and were chosen by their peers for this special kind of ministry. Their work included service to the sick, poor, and imprisoned; preparation of women for church membership, assistance in the baptism of women; ushering in that part of the church where women sat; and supervision of the female members of the Christian Church, both public and private. As the early Church became more formally organized, the work of the diaconate became even more vital and was recognized as a clearly defined office. Deaconesses received instruction in the meaning of baptism and in the beliefs of the Church. They were consecrated by the bishop, the chief pastor of each parish. Deaconesses functioned as the vital connecting link between the bishop and the women of the congregation.

By the fourth century, Constantinople had become the centre of diaconal work. It is recorded that John Chrysostom, bishop of that city (then the eastern capital of the Roman Empire) had forty deaconesses in his church. A most famous deaconess of that period was Olympias, a wealthy widow, who was known throughout Constantinople for her bravery and genius.

Sometime around 600 A.D. the early diaconate, with its emphasis on service in the world, began to disappear. It was never formally abolished, but simply fell into disuse during the period when monastic life became popular for women. Some historians suggest

that the monastic life's emphasis on withdrawal of contact with the world made the diaconate seem less relevant as a form of Christian service. Others suggest that women who were interested in service were attracted to cloistered life because of its opportunities for learning and serious scholarship. Whatever the reasons, the diaconate began to disappear. By 700 A.D., it had entirely dropped out of the Western World. In Constantinople, the office still formally existed in 1200 A.D. but it was available nowhere else in the Orient.

As the centuries passed, there were some serious attempts to revive it in Belgium, Holland and France, but information on this stage in the history of the diaconate is scarce. It was not until the 1800's that there is documented evidence that such attempts to reinstate Diaconal Ministry were successful. The revival was a response to two very specific needs: the need for humanitarian service to those many people who suffered the social upheavals to the Industrial Revolution, and the desire of women to have a significant part in the activities of the Church. In 1836 in Kaiserswerth, Germany, a young Lutheran pastor, Theodor Fliedner and his wife, Friederike Munster, bought an old castle and started a training school and educational centre of deaconesses. In May of 1836, Fleidner and a few friends signed the Statutes of the Rhenish-Westphalian and sent out a call for young women who wanted to serve God through a ministry of nursing, teaching and social work. So it was that the deaconess movement was launched. Frauline Gertrude Reichardt became the first superintendent of the training school and the hospital it served and was the first deaconess at Kaiserswerth with the title of "Sister."

The education of such deaconesses was very specific, and was designed to equip them for clearly defined work in hospitals and humanitarian agencies. They received instruction in theology, Bible and religious education, participated in the community life of worship and daily Bible Study, and were trained to be nurses through supervised work in the community's hospital. Women were attracted by the unique combination of practical training and meaningful service. Within three years, an orphanage and a shelter for feeble-minded epileptics was added to Kaiserworth. By the late nineteenth century, Kaiserswerth supported a wide range of social services, including many specialized hospitals and schools. Based on the Roman Catholic model of a nursing sisterhood, education of the deaconesses was under the direction of the Mother House which distributed the amount of stipend and the condition of appointments and which shaped the institutional character of the organization and its concentration on nursing and the care of children.

Later in the 1800's, the diaconate was also revived in Great Britain. In 1861, Elizabeth Catherine F....., who had been trained at Kaiserworth, became the first deaconess in the Anglican Church. In that day, the definition of a deaconess was "a bit of a minister, with a dash of teacher and a dash of social worker."

In 1902, the Wesleyan Church in England formally adopted the Wesleyan Deaconess Order as a part of its own work, and established a training school. The period of study was two years, and during that time the women studied Bible, church history, psychology and doctrine, Greek, homiletics, and social welfare work. At the end of the training, they were recognized as probation deaconesses and were appointed to field work for three months. If their field placements proved successful, they could then become full-fledged deaconesses. This school, with its combination of academics and practical training, continues to be the place where most British Methodist deaconesses have been educated.

In the British diaconate there was no mother house, but an association of independent women, affiliated with one another as a group in any profession would be. The diaconate in England quickly established its own pattern of ministry and it was quite different from the diaconate in Germany. In England, deaconesses worked mainly in congregational settings. They often functioned as assistants to parish ministers, or in teaching and evangelistic roles. In addition, a large percentage of them did inner city work and functioned as Church-based social workers.

The diaconal model of service quickly circulated the entrance requirements for the new Deaconess Order, stating that it was open to "Godly women of mature faith between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-five who had passed High School entrance and who would take the prescribed training in the Deaconess Home." Such women were told that their activities as deaconesses would include meeting the sick, lonely, bereaved and troubled; finding employment for people; looking after travellers; and conducting Sunday schools and clubs for women and children. All members of the order were expected to wear a uniform, and in some cases, lived in a supervised home where they were required to work in the community and do part of the housework in the residence. The literature of this original Presbyterian Deaconess Order describes these women as excellent housekeepers, knowledgeable in music, and able to work as religious teachers and to take Sunday services when necessary.

The educational preparation for work as a deaconess was both rigorous and practical. The Methodist Training School offered two courses; a general two-year course with social service and religious education (the course which was required for entrance into the Deaconess Order) and a missionary course for candidates for the Women's Missionary Society. Students in both programmes took courses at Victoria University, the Canadian School of Missions, the Social Service Department of the University of Toronto, and at the National Training School itself. The categories of studies were: Bible, Philosophy of the Christian Religion, History and Missions, Religious Education, Sociology and Social Service, Homiletics and Evangelism, Expression and Household Science. In addition, candidates for the deaconess order were required to pass a test on a prescribed list of books each year.

The Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training House offered a remarkably similar programme. The full course covered two sessions of six months each, and each session was sub-divided into two terms, several of the courses required additional practical training and this was usually done when the academic term ended in April. Students in the Presbyterian programme could take the General Course, the General Course with a Social Service option, or the General Course with a Household Science option. Course areas indicated study of the English Bible, Christian Doctrine, Church History, Mission, Religious Education, Social Service, Medicine and Surgery, Voice Training, Story Telling, and Public Speaking. Practical training was provided throughout all terms of studying in four areas: Religious Education, Social Service, Church and Parish Work, and Medicine and Surgery. The Calendar states that a university training was the best preparation for participation in the General Course, and in the General Course with Social Service option. These candidates were required to have a minimum of University matriculation or its equivalent, such as a Teacher's Certificate, a Nurse's Diploma or a Business Certificate with a record of three years' High School standing, followed by successful experience. If a candidate lacked an equivalent to University matriculation, she could present a case individually and ask for special consideration of the Studies Committee of the School.

Residential training was a requirement of both the Methodist and Presbyterian education programmes, and has continued to be a part of the educational preparation in the United Church until fairly recently. Through living in community, students had a total experience of living, working, learning and worshipping together; they began to form their identity as deaconesses through being with others who were also struggling with what it meant to be a deaconess in the service of God. Also living in the school's residences were students who were training to be missionaries, and students who were from other countries. Thus, through the residential experience, students in the educational programme for diaconal work were put in touch with the concerns of the Church and the world, and were given an appreciation of the missionary work of the Church.

When Church Union was projected, those responsible for both schools worked hard to establish one strong united educational centre for deaconesses. Studies and negotiations for the amalgamation of the schools began in 1924. Each school submitted to the first General Council "a concise statement as to its history, assets, liabilities, incomes and expenditure for the last three years, persons employed, equipment, present work and requirements." Each school was also asked to make recommendations regarding amalgamation procedures for the coming year, the first year of Unions. It was recommended that for the current year the two training centres be conducted separately and in close cooperation with each other, particularly regarding courses of study. This was approved by the Council.

At the Second General Council, a rather important recommendation from the joint Boards was passed, and the functions of training deaconesses and directing the two deaconess orders were separated. Both schools believed that training and administration were distinct functions and could be given some attention if they were performed by different bodies within the Church. At this time, a request was also made that a committee be appointed to study the whole question of trained workers in the new United Church. Where were such workers most needed and what particular skills would help them most in their work? This was to be the first of many studies which the United Church would conduct on the role of "non-ordained professionals" in the Church.

Concerning the unifying of the Methodist and Presbyterian Training Schools, the following recommendation was passed: "That there be formed and developed at one of the present training centres in Toronto, the United Church Training School, under the control of a Board of Management, this Board to be subject to the supervision of the Board of Education of the United Church, the school being considered one of the educational centres of the Church, for the training of women for such departments of Church as may be approved from time to time by the General Council." Though the wording says that the new school was to be one of the educational centres for deaconesses, the United Church Training School was to remain, for almost fifty years, as the only centre for the preparation of deaconesses. The pre-union policy of each school was continued, this being to secure instruction "through cooperation with the Theological Colleges of the Church, the Social Service Department of the University of Toronto, and the Canadian School of Missions."

The formal union of the schools became effective on October 1, 1926, and the Methodist School at 135 St. Clair Avenue West became the location. The mechanics of the separation of the Order from the School were completed at the same time. Previous to Union, in both Churches, the Deaconess Order and the Training School had been under the same Board and the Principal of the School was ex-officio superintendent of the Order. Now was the time for the supervision of the new Order and of other trained workers to be separated from that of the Training School and to be vested in an Inter-Board Committee on Women Workers of the United Church with a full-time secretary.

The curriculum of the two schools proved relatively easy to amalgamate. The emphasis in the new school continued to be on training women for a variety of functions; pastoral assistants, Christian educators, missionaries, inner city workers, nurses, church secretaries, home visitors, heads of orphanages and other church sponsored social agencies. Academic studies and practical work continued to focus on the very specific skills and attitudes and knowledge which would be required to meet the present and future needs of society and the Church.

In 1930, the united Church Training School completed negotiations with Emmanuel College and signed an affiliation agreement which was to last for many years. The council of Emmanuel College at its 1930 meeting passed the following resolution:

> "That having received the consent of the Senate and the Board of Regents of Victoria University and also the General Council of the United Church, this Council do now declare the United Church Training School affiliated with Emmanuel College, in accordance with terms herewith appended.
>
> 1. That the one-year course for university graduates shall be of a standard similar to that of first year work in theology.
>
> 2. That the two-year course for matriculants be of a standard similar to that of undergraduate courses of a university.
>
> Also, that Emmanuel College continue to give its services to the Training School as in the past."

In addition to High School matriculation, the Training School continued to require for admission to the two-year course, training and experience in a profession such as teaching, nursing or, business. In 1945, fifty percent of the class at the school was university graduates. Today, the figure varies from year to year, but the average over the last several years would be remarkably similar. Emmanuel professors continued to teach classes at the Training School and supervised field work was provided for all students. The 1930 calendar statement emphasizes the importance of providing practical experience for students. "Care is taken in the assignments made and the School is under obligation to ministers who undertake supervision and who report at the end of the session on the student's work. The Church is being asked by the School to make a real contribution to the training of effective leaders."

During the next fifteen years, the academic portion of the programme remained relatively unchanged, but several refinements were made to the supervised field work opportunities.

In 1936, a supervisor of field work was appointed to the staff of the School. In 1940, the Principal assumed the responsibilities of field work supervision, an indication of its growing importance in the programme. In 1946, a double system of supervision was initiated, that is, students were supervised directly by the minister, deaconess, a worker of the congregation or agency where they were placed, and also met for discussion and evaluation sessions with an experienced deaconess or church member who was not directly connected with the placement. That same year, a seminar for reflection on problems in field work became a required part of the curriculum. The next year, the time commitments for field work

was scheduled for four to eight hours per week, and a second semester focusing on field work research was added to the curriculum. Also instituted during this period were the regular meetings of the field work supervisors, organized by the school, during which the process of effective supervision was discussed, evaluated and changed. These meetings, in a much more intentional and developed form, continue to this day at the Centre for Christian Studies. All of this was being done at a time when field work and supervision were receiving much less emphasis at theological college training candidates for ordination.

Throughout the 1950's, the academic portion of the educational programme was evaluated and revised several times. There was great excitement about the role of deaconesses in the Church, and in the 1950's, the Training School had its largest enrolment in its history. For example, in 1952 there were 44 students, with 27 graduates. In 1953, a report on a revised curriculum was approved, with a two-year course, one year for nurses, and provision for missionary field experience for students during the summer. During the 1950's, the admission standards remained the same although there was considerable pressure put on the school to accept junior matriculation as the sole requirements, and to provide a course of study which was shorter. Concern was expressed several times that the present entrance standards were "banning some women who might give important service to the Church" at a time when the whole Church was experiencing a shortage of trained women workers. In 1957, there were twelve graduates from the United Church Training School, with eighty available openings. In response to repeated requests to simplify the programme and lower the entrance requirements, the Church conducted an investigation of the need for women workers and of the kind of educational programme which would best equip such women. The survey took several years to conduct and, at its conclusion, the admission standards and programme of the Training School were upheld.

As a result of its own internal evaluation process, the United Church Training School began to increase the number of theoretical and academic course offerings, beginning in 1950.

By 1960, seventeen courses, over two years, were being offered in theology, biblical studies, and church history, as compared with eleven such courses in 1930. Similarly, in 1960, nine courses were offered that focused on an academic or philosophical approach to religious education, courses such as "Philosophy of Christian Education" and "Developmental Aspects of Christian Nurture." In 1930, only two courses of this nature had been offered.

At the same time that the Training School was adding courses to its curriculum, Emmanuel College in 1954 received approval for the institution of a Bachelor of Religious Education degree which was "to involve a two year post-graduate course of study intended for those who seek to specialize in some form of educational work

within the Church, at home, or overseas." In 1959, an agreement was approved with Emmanuel College whereby the 1959-60 class of UCTS students, if they were college graduates, could enrol in the B.R.E. programme and UCTS diploma programme at the same time. Thus, graduates of a university could, for the first time, simultaneously obtain a diploma from Emmanuel College (and with it the right to be designated a deaconess) as well as a B.R.E. degree from Emmanuel College (and with it the right to do post graduate studies in theology). One of the results of this arrangement was the separation of degree from non-degree students. It was now possible for field work seminars and community events to be the only activities which all students shared in together. With the finalizing of this agreement with Emmanuel, the expectation was clearly stated that the United Church Training School would "become an institution which normally asks for prospective students a standing of college graduation."

The dual arrangement offered many new opportunities in the area of academic course work, and seemed to work fairly well. Although some students spoke of the lack of understanding that candidates for ordination had of diaconal ministry, and of the possibility of conflicting loyalties arising when they were students of two parallel institutions, others spoke of it as a stimulating and enjoyable opportunity taken together with others who were preparing for a different kind of professional work in the Church. Some saw it as an opportunity to educate ordination candidates about the history and activities of Diaconal Ministers. During this period, field work continued to be emphasized as crucial for the successful training of deaconesses. The Studies Committee of the Training School spent a considerable amount of its time discussing various aspects of the field work situation, and establishing standards for supervision. Significantly, the required amount of time for field work was increased in 1957 to 150 hours per term.

During the 1960's, the course offerings and outline for field work remained relatively unchanged, but the constituency which the Training School was to serve was changed. In 1962, a proposal that the work of training men for non-ordained professional work in the Church was approved, and the section in the Manual referring to the mandate of the College was changed to allow the inclusion of men in the programme. Though the number of men interested in this form of service has remained small over the years, the opening of Diaconal Ministry to men was a highly significant event. Males were first called Certified Employed Churchmen. The name was later shortened to Certified Churchmen in 1969.

Also in 1969, the Anglican Women's Training College and Covenant College (The United Church Training School) amalgamated to become what was one of the first ecumenical theological centres in Canada. The name was later changed to the Centre for Christian Studies. When negotiations between the two Colleges had begun in 1967 it was hoped that the current degree work with Emmanuel College would

continue, but at the time of the funding of the Toronto School of Theology, the agreement was terminated and a joint degree and diploma programme was no longer possible.

However, several years later, students at the Centre for Christian Studies who had university degrees were encouraged to register in the Toronto School of Theology as special students and could take individual courses at Emmanuel and the other TST Colleges. Students who did not have a degree could register as special students at the University of Toronto and take individual courses in Religious Studies or other departments, where it was not possible to earn a degree during the two-year programme at the Centre for Christian Studies.

With the amalgamation of the two Training Colleges, plans were begun for a revised curriculum which would incorporate the strengths of both previous programmes, and move towards an "involvement and reflection" model of education. Throughout this period, education for diaconal work continued its long-standing emphasis on practicality and variety. During the first years of working together, there was both challenge and struggle, as both denominations began to see and work out the practicalities during education together. At the same time, the whole Christian Church began to shift towards a new social gospel as dissatisfaction with both the structures and practices of the Church became major.

In the midst of this, in 1972, the National Church initiated a major study on education for diaconal ministry, and began to look at the possibility of partially integrating the educational programme of those heading towards ordination. The committee which was constituted to conduct in the study was asked to consider making MRE course the narrative avenue of entrance into diaconal ministry, and to examine models of partial joint training with ordination candidates at Emmanuel College. It was suggested that there might be a course of Biblical and Theological Education for all members of the Order of Ministry, with time for separation and specialized education. The Committee's work took the major part of a year and included extensive interviews with diaconal ministers, with ordained ministers, and members of the congregations they served.

As a result of the committee's work, several major changes were made to the educational programme for diaconal ministry. The committee recommended that, as far as possible, common educational experiences be provided for both ordained and diaconal candidates. In addition, Emmanuel College's MRE programme was approved as an acceptable alternative avenue of preparation for diaconal ministry, but it must not be considered as normative. Thus, there were now two approved possibilities for education for diaconal ministry, both located on the same street in Toronto. In terms of number of students, CCS has remained as the main centre for education, with relatively few choosing the MRE programme. Those who did choose

Emmanuel sometimes spoke of the isolation of being the only diaconal candidate in most classes, of the lack of opportunity to share concerns with others having the same kind of ministry, as well as of the chances to develop working styles and appreciation of the ordained ministry which would help congregational situations later.

In addition to these recommendations, new educational guidelines for diaconal ministry were approved and written into the United Church manual:

> "The Basic Programme for all candidates (will) make adequate provision for:
>
> a) Biblical Studies
> b) Theology and Ethics
> c) Church History
> d) Pastoral Theology (including Worship, Christian Development, Church Policy and Administration, Supervised Field Education)
>
> In addition to the basic programme of training for diaconal ministry, each candidate shall engage in a MAJOR and a MINOR area of concentration. These two areas of concentration shall be:
>
> a) The Congregation
> The Educational Process
> Group Leadership
> Planning
> Administration
> Community-building
> Visiting
>
> b) The Community
> Social and Power Structures
> Community Agencies
> How to Help People Help Themselves
> Changes ..... Skills
> Visiting."

The programme for diaconal education at the Centre for Christian Studies and at Emmanuel College both focus on training people for a ministry of education, service and pastoral care, but the emphasis and strategies used are very different. After several years of experimentation and struggle, the Centre for Christian Studies instituted a new programme in 1974. The focus was clearly on training in educational skills, although the definition of education was vastly expanded to include consciencentization, social analysis, and strategies for social change, as well as nurturing, counselling, and leadership training techniques. The programme eventually came to include an emphasis on discovering and

eradicating sexism in the Church; and working towards an expanded understanding of male and female roles in society. The Centre for Christian Studies was one of the first educational institutions to offer courses for laity and Order of Ministry on feminist theology and to integrate its insights into the process the contents of its educational programme.

Throughout its history, the Centre had become painfully aware of the devastating effects of sexism. Though diaconal ministry and training had been available to men since 1962, the education and service ministry of the Church attracted few men. It continued to be perceived as "women's work", and was both undervalued and marginalized by the Church. The Centre for Christian Studies was also perceived as a "women's college" and, though its programme was highly innovative and always far more advanced in terms of the field education it provided, it too was often labelled as inferior or "not real theological education." Part of this had to do with the facts that the centre for Christian Studies was not in and of itself a degree granting institution, but another part of it had to do with the Church's sexist attitudes, and its assignment of women to less important and less visible roles.

At this time, the educational stance at the Centre for Christian Studies emphasized the importance of joint education for ministers and laity. Learning experiences were offered in two programmes: the professional study and action programme, designed primarily but not exclusively for those who wish to work professionally in the outreach or educational ministry of the Church, and the continuing study and action programme which provided short courses (one or two weeks, weekends, or a series of evenings) for both volunteers and employed workers in congregations and in the community.

This Professional Study and Action Programme combined three areas: academic studies at colleges within the Toronto School of Theology or at the Department of Religious Studies in the University of Toronto, the core Group, which provided an opportunity to work in a group at integrating biblical, theological and life experiences with practice in an educational ministry and a practical field work experience in a congregational and in a social service ministry. Since the programme's inception in 1974 there have been several adjustments, but the basic three-part format has remained the same. Opportunities for evaluation have always been built into the Centre's educational offerings, and because of this the programme has continued its predecessor's strong tradition of listening to and responding to the changing needs of both the Church and society. The educational process in core facilitates self-discovery within a learning community and encourages the development of skills to work with people whose background and ideas are different. Participants are helped to develop enabling skills which will be useful in helping a community or group discover its gifts and carry out its ministry.

The programme at Emmanuel College also focuses on equipping people for leadership in educational outreach ministries. The programme includes biblical and theological studies as well as courses in Church history, worship, pastoral theology, psychology, Christian education, and involvement in Field Education. The professors felt that one of its greatest strengths is that all of its courses are integrated with those of students for ordination. Through this combining of courses, the opportunity is provided to learn about the other form of ministry and to get practice in teaming and learning together. The goals and objectives of the Master of Religious Education Program include the following: the ability to reflect upon and interpret the meaning of documents and heritage of the Judeao-Christian tradition; the ability to communicate the concerns of the Church, and understand the human situation as set forth in Theology and in other disciplines; the ability to understand the assumptions and practices of education; and the ability to plan and carry out an educational ministry in many settings.

For the Emmanuel programme, the integration of the practical and the academic occurs through the Church and Society course and through supervised Field Education experiences. In order to develop skills, all students are required to teach in a practicum and to take, during their final semester, an Advanced Seminar in Education. Styles of teaching and learning in the two-year educational programme include anecdotal journal writing, colloquia, forums, panel discussions, symposia, workshops, case studies and demonstrations, as well as lectures and seminars. Many elective courses are provided for students who wish to explore specific areas or develop individual talents.

In recent years, the Centre for Christian Studies has had an increasing number of older students and in its programme, men and women who were entering a second or third career. Many have come with a wealth of experience of lay leadership in the Church. Also on the increase is the number of students wishing to work part=time taking from three to five years to complete the programme. Both of these developments have been possible because of the flexibility of the programme and the staff's willingness to adapt to the changing needs of the Church. Also, for many years, there have been requests to the provision of diaconal ministry educational programmes in other parts of the country. People have been attracted to ministry which emerged from and continues to focus on the laity, but have been unable to come to Toronto for the two-year programme. Work has begun on the expansion of access to the diaconal ministry of nurturing and empowering laity for their work in the world.

II. DIACONAL MINISTRY TODAY

A.) The Essence of Diaconal Ministry:

Diaconal ministry continues to reflect a commitment to the laity. Only very recently in its history has diaconal ministry been considered a part of the order of ministry. Before that, deaconesses and Certified Churchmen were considered lay professional Church workers, and had no official status in the courts of the Church. Thus, it is not surprising that the most common response given by a diaconal minister to the question "what is the essence of diaconal ministry?" was that it was a ministry which was closely related to the laity. The purpose was described as supporting and equipping the laity for their ministry in the world. More specifically, this "equipping" of the laity was seen to involve such things as: helping people to identify and develop their gifts and strengths, to examine and develop their theology and faith, to understand the reconciling ministry of Jesus and their own call to it, and to begin to work individually and separately for the Kingdom of God. As one respondent suggested: "the main function is to promote and enable the ministry of the whole people of God."

Within this general focus on the laity, Diaconal Ministers see their ministry as primarily an educational one. "An emphasis on education" was the second most frequent response given to the question of uniqueness. Diaconal ministers seemed to be using the word "education" in one of two ways. Some were clearly referring to the traditional educational programmes of the Church, such as Bible Study, Sunday School, youth work, etc.; and were saying that Diaconal Ministers specialized in and lifted up this educational work as essential to the life of the Church. Others used the word "education" to refer to a general orientation or way of functioning in ministry, a way of organizing and carrying out all the tasks of the Church as educational experiences or processes. This understanding of the uniqueness of Diaconal Ministry was stated most succinctly in the CCS Staff and Student Response to Project: Ministry, "For most ministers, education is one of the many tasks of ministry. For the minister in educational ministry, education is the perspective from which all tasks are approached."

The next most frequently mentioned essential element of diaconal ministry is "service" to the needs of the Christian community and to the world. Respondents spoke of the Biblical understanding of service, of diakonia, and pointed to the example of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Such service, they pointed out, has little to do with servitude, in being forced to submerge or deny the self. As one respondent suggested: "Diaconal Ministry being taking on the role of servant, but a servant who recognizes his/her own worth, a servant who is valuable for him/her self alone." Thus, such a servant ministry if radically different from the derogatory

and patronizing way in which servanthood is thought of today. It reflects a conscious choice to embrace a ministry which is not based on status and which leaves itself open to the pain and need of others. It is a ministry which requires the ability to stand with the suffering and to work with them for healing and dignity and growth. Thus, as one respondent suggested: "It is the embodiment of the Church's pastoring and service and nurturing functions. Diaconal ministry affirms them as really valid functions and not simply something that the Church does when they can afford to have a second person."

Service, as distinct from servitude, involves an ability to face injustice, both inside and outside of the Church, to critique oppressive structures and to work for social change. As several Diaconal Ministers suggested, as well as responding to the suffering of individuals, the diaconate is also active, and develops and implements strategies which bring concerns of the social and political structures which oppress people. Several respondents spoke of their ministry as "prophetic", "justice-oriented" and "focused on social change."

In speaking of what they did, Diaconal Ministers rarely used the words "my ministry." Instead, they spoke of mutual ministry, of shared vocation, of collectivity and accountability, including in this both laity and ordained. They mentioned familiarity with and belief in the value of team ministry and learning in community as one of the most exciting things about Diaconal Ministry. Most saw Diaconal Ministry as both being shaped by having validity only in relation to the ministry of others. This springs partly from their understanding of the Church as the "people of God" in which all must participate in ministry, and partly from their understanding and experience of teaching and learning as inseparable processes. Several respondents echoed the following comment: "Diaconal ministry if basically a shared ministry. It involves living out the reality that all authentic ministry if mutual. It is the work of people together and tends to become open to shared responsibility and trust of other people's ministries." Thus, Diaconal Ministers see themselves as both helping others and being helped themselves to deepen their theology, their responses to God and their appreciation and understanding of themselves and the world. Images of "journeying together" and "co-ministering" were common in the responses.

Such an understanding of shared ministry clearly has implications for the style of ministry used by Diaconal Ministers. Several specifically mentioned aspects of style or process when asked to comment on the essence of Diaconal Ministry. They spoke of the style as nurturing, supportive and enabling, and saw it as growth-oriented, focusing on the developments of people of all ages. They talked of standing with people, of being present, as both a friend and counsellor.

Several respondents mentioned that the importance of the nurturing and supportive role in diaconal ministry clearly has to do with the fact that most diaconal ministers have been women. Nurturing and support are functions which society has traditionally emphasize and rewarded in females, while confrontation and assertiveness have been considered more masculine traits. Thus, diaconal ministry has both confirmed to and questioned society's expectations for women. Diaconal ministers have been placed in the shadow, underrated and marginalized by the Church. In some cases, Diaconal ministers have seen themselves as secondary, as less important to the life of the Church than the ordained. One Diaconal Minister described her training and early years in the ministry as a time of "indoctrination into secondary status." "The notion was that we were at the call of the minister and the people. Many ideas communicated and emphasized our little importance. Christian education was seen then as marginal/trivial to the "real" functions of ministry (liturgy/pastoral care). We were not expected to 'aspire' to other than our defined roles. We were clearly accountable to senior ministers."

Today such perceptions continue, in spite of the fact that the roles of women in the Church have expanded and changed radically, and in spite of the awareness that Diaconal Ministry has expanded its understanding of nurture to include social criticism and advocacy, as well as enablement. Because of hidden nature, its unwillingness, because of a theological understanding of the Church as community, and its emphasis on processes of growth rather than results, Diaconal Ministry has often been overlooked or seen as an extra in the life of the church. But actually, as one respondent suggested, with its emphasis on probing and questioning, and on helping people to make corrections in their lives, such a ministry is central: "Diaconal Ministers are persons who can ask the critical questions as to how growth might happen, how groups and individuals can make decisions, etc., and in general enabling persons to take ownership of their own growth and life in community, and to affect structures accordingly."

Such a ministry is both difficult and challenging, as the following comment asserts: "Diaconal Ministry is educating, enabling people to do their/our ministry. In life it is always easier to do it yourself than teach another to do the task. Difficult though it is, the Christian faith must be claimed/owned individually and corporately. Diaconal ministry has an understanding and a style to enable this. As they misprinted in the newspaper, "Diagonal Minister - ministry with a different slant." Because this kind of emphasis on mutuality of ministry and enabling others rather than on doing is radically different from the way in which people in the Church have both thought of and experienced ministry, diaconal ministers are well aware that their ministry is seen as both strange and threatening by many in the Church. Their style of ministry works to break down the gap between lay and clergy, and challenges the need for hierarchies in the Church. Through their

work, Diaconal Ministers challenge clericalism in all its forms, including the idea that members of the order of ministry are "the Church," and that clergy are somehow "larger than life." This unique form of ministry based on service and enablement calls the Church to look at what it means by "Church" and "Ministry." Why is preaching the word traditionally given more value and prestige than teaching the Word? Why is doing considered more important than enabling? As one respondent stated: "If working together and focusing on education catches on, then a whole lot of the Church's structures will come tumbling down, taking with them the overemphasized power and authority of some... we must not underestimate the threat that Diaconal Ministry poses to the security of the hierarchy in the Church."

While few respondents spoke so bluntly, several spoke about the difficulty of always using a different style of ministry. They spoke of the pain of being described as "not a real minister, or as being somehow less than the real thing." It seemed to result in a constant awareness that they were "in but still out" of ministry in the Church. Thus, they described the problem as one of exclusion.

Several expressed discouragement because of the Church's failure to deal with the fundamental issues raised both by their experience of ministry and by their second-class treatment by others. Many saw their "otherness" and uniqueness as both positive and negative. On the positive side, they saw it as essential for the revisioning of all of ministry. On the negative side, they spoke of the loneliness and disempowerments of always being the exception, the peculiarity, the odd one. A number of respondents spoke of being treated as if they were invisible, and of not being supported by their colleagues, as this comment indicates: "Diaconal ministry can be an incredibly painful ministry. It takes a lot of energy to not only do your job, but also constantly have to explain yourself, to answer questions about why you are not ordained, and why you work the way you do. Most people, because there are so few of us, know nothing about diaconal ministry, and we are always having to start the advocacy and explaining over again."

Closely tied to this feeling of uniqueness, were comments which talked about the challenge of being different, and of the freedom to risk and experiment, which is essential to Diaconal Ministers. Many saw themselves as pioneers, on the forefront of change in the Church. Others linked themselves to the new and daring work done by some of the deaconesses of the past, but all saw it, because of its closeness to the laity, its lack of structured roles and short history, as part of the order of ministry, as essentially open to change, flexible and varied. It was "growth oriented," as one respondent stated, and new forms of ministry were emerging continually. Another respondent expressed the creativity and excitement embodied in such a ministry by comparing it to a Chameleon. "Diaconal Ministry means versatility, being able to adapt to the quick-changing needs of the congregation. In some

ways, we are like chameleons changing emphasis continually to respond to congregational needs. In some places, it might be needs for adult education, sometimes it might be pastoral care, sometimes ministry to/with children and youth. I find the variety to be exciting, challenging and faithful to God's will."

Other comments reflected the difficulty and amount of energy it takes to be involved in being in the forefront of change. It takes vision, patience and creativity, as well as a strong sense of self.

The last comment made about the essence of Diaconal Ministry talked about the kind of flexibility mentioned earlier, but referred to it as an outgrowth of the "bridge" or "in-between" position of such ministers in the Church. Several respondents clearly saw themselves as "on the creative edge of the Church" or as a "bridge between the ordained and the laity." They saw their work as located in a place on the fringe where there was a clear view of what was and was not being responded to through the traditional forms of ministry. They suggested that there is a sense in which diaconal ministry is able to respond to needs which are not being met elsewhere, to identify gaps in services and people who are falling through the cracks. As one respondent suggested: "Diaconal Ministry is infused with both imagination and dedication to the Church so that what is not being done in total ministry is noted and acted upon.....There is always a challenge to do what is not being done, which is needed - for example, education, welfare, counselling, advocacy."

B.) Educational Essentials for Diaconal Ministry

The style and understanding of ministry held by diaconal ministers has clearly been shaped by the education that they received. With the Centre for Christian Studies and its predecessors having provided the educational preparation for all but a few diaconal ministers, it is not surprising that the educational philosophy of the Centre finds embodiment in the ministry of its graduates. In answering the questionnaire, many diaconal ministers, particularly those who had entered ministry in the last two years, used many similar words to describe the values of their educational preparation and to describe the style of their own ministry. This would indicate that their education was extremely significant not only in terms of providing them with specific educational skills but also in shaping their identity as Diaconal Ministers.

Both the Women in Ministry Research Project of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education and the present questionnaire results show that the vast majority of Diaconal Ministers found their educational preparation extremely valuable. For example, the Women in Ministry Report makes the following statement: "Diaconal Ministers appear to have been the most satisfied (with their theological training) which is a reflection largely on the Centre

for Christian Studies in Toronto, the principal training centre for diaconal ministers."

Most Diaconal Ministers were able to isolate the essentials for training by articulating what was most valuable and what was least valuable or lacking, in their educational preparation. While answers varied somewhat according to when diaconal ministers graduated, there were remarkable similarities in their answers across most periods.

Most frequently mentioned as an essential ingredient of diaconal education is field education, or the provision of an opportunity to work within a congregation or an institutional setting while preparing for ministry. For such an experience to be valuable, respondents stated that there must be built in, regular opportunities for reflection and supervision with a supervisor who has been trained in supervision, who has an understanding of the philosophy and history of Diaconal Ministry, and who has an interest in exploring all aspects of ministry as a co-learner with the diaconal student. The actual working situation provided must provide opportunities for goal-setting, planning, designing, implementing and evaluating learning experiences, and must be similar to the actual work that Diaconal Ministers do. Thus, it must emphasize mutuality, teaching, self-discovery and affirmation and be focused on the skills and understanding related to education, service and pastoral care. Several respondents said that provision of a trained supervisor was critical, and that, without this, field work often turned out to be either a waste of time or so full of "growth-denying" characteristics that "it was difficult to see any learning experiences at all."

Diaconal Ministers saw a strong and varied academic component as essential for their education. More specifically, they listed Biblical Studies and courses in theology as most significant, and stated that the emphasis in both of these was to be personal and practical. Through these studies, they wanted to learn how to do Biblical exegesis and how to enable others to let the scriptures speak to their lives, how to understand the theological transition of the Church and to articulate their own understanding of God, self and the world, and how to wrestle with ethical and moral issues in their own lives and in the world. As well as Biblical Studies and Theology, respondents also mentioned a need for courses in worship, education, church history, church polity, psychology and pastoral theology.

In terms of what was missing from their educational preparation, many Diaconal Ministers responded that there was a need for a course which dealt specifically with the history and development of Diaconal Ministry, from its beginnings in the early Church to its present form in the United Church. Reference should also be included to Diaconal Orders in other denominations around the world, and all that is dealt with should be set in the context of

the whole ministry of the Church. Several respondents feel that such theological reflection on the meaning of diakonia and an examination of its unique history in the Christian community would help in the identity for action of Diaconal Ministers, and could not be ignored or minimized.

The remaining comments on the questionnaires which concerned educational essentials all focused on aspects of the style or processes of education rather than on the contents. Diaconal Ministers saw as essential the continuation of an interdependent style of learning, with its emphasis on listening, mutual questioning, consensus, partnership and cooperation. Such a style of education, it was emphasized, broke down the distinctions between teachers and learners and invited all to participate in a mutual time of affirmation, challenge and growth. As one respondent suggested, this style set the "context for all of diaconal ministry, where no one has power over another, and everyone works for the empowerment of all." Others suggested that this style of education was particularly valuable because it prepared Diaconal Ministers for teaching with others in the Church and community.

The next most frequent comment made about Diaconal Ministry education is that it must include time and a process which helps the participants to integrate the academic, spiritual and practical aspects of their programme so that each contributes to and challenges the others. Otherwise, learning becomes compartmentalized, and the kind of personal awareness, and ability to ask questions and make connections which is so important in ministry does not develop. The content and learning activities used in education must be essentially learner-directed. many respondents noted that their education was particularly valuable when they were encouraged and supported to take responsibility for deciding what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn it. Participation in such a programme, they stressed, not only forced them to get in touch with their own strength and weaknesses but also meant that they were actually "learning how to learn." In connection with this, other respondents' qualities such as "non-directive," "flexible," "constantly evolving" and "owned by the learners."

Other respondents mentioned that participatory evaluation processes and skills were an important part of all their educational experiences. Constant evaluation enabled them to identify learnings, plan for future areas of exploration, and adapt styles and programmes to make them more effective. Other aspects of their education which Diaconal Ministers listed as most significant were: the strong emphasis on social and political analysis and action, the use of an action/reflection model, the practical emphasis, and the present of Diaconal Ministers as teachers. Such teachers were seen as role models who both managed and demonstrated the unique and valuable perspective that Diaconal Ministry brings to the

Church.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK GROUP:

After its examination of the historical development of education for Diaconal Ministry, the results of the questionnaire on Diaconal Ministry, and of previous studies and reports on education for this type of ministry, the Task Group makes a number of recommendations:

A.) Length of the Educational Course:

The Task Group recommends that the course of study be three years, with the provision of time for the theological disciplines, field work and integration of the academic, spiritual and practical dimensions of ministry.

B.) Access to Training:

We have come to the conclusion that the educational programme for Diaconal Ministers needs to be more readily available to all regions of Canada, therefore, the Task Group recommends that two additional places for this education be established within the existing theological colleges, one in Eastern Canada and one in Western Canada. Before approving these places, the Division of MPE would assure itself that there is both a willingness and the capability to provide the essentials for Diaconal Ministry educational preparation.

The Task Group further recommends that the Master of Divinity be the degree provided for the educational programme.

C.) Commonality of Diaconal and Ordained Training:

The exercise of ministry in the whole people of God depends on mutuality. In order to encourage the necessary understanding and appreciation and to facilitate experiences in training, it is recommended that candidates for Ordained and Diaconal Ministry take courses together which are essential to both. We further recommend that joint field placements be provided, wherever possible. Course which relate specifically to either diaconal or ordained ministry would be taken separately during the later stages of the programme.

D.) Referrals to C.T.E.M.:

That the following items be referred to the Committee on Theological Education for Ministry:

- the establishment of short course options for commissioning;
- the phasing out of the M.R.E. as the degree granted for educational preparation;
- the possibility of a M.Div. (or B.Th. for those without the necessary prior degree) being granted for the Professional Study and Action programme of the Centre for Christian Studies.

E.) Recording Diaconal History:

Because part of the unique and precious history of Diaconal Ministry has been lost or is scattered across the country, the Task Force recommends that the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education authorize that a complete history of Diaconal Ministry be compiled and that all historical materials relating to it be gathered together and be made available to the Church through the United Church Archives.

F.) Identification of Diaconal Ministers Information:

The Task Force recommends that all records, files and computer listings of Diaconal Ministers be clearly identified as such so that statistics and mail lists of Diaconal Ministers can easily be compiled and policies can quickly be critiqued by tracing their effects on this group.

APPENDIX I

Related Concerns and Observations:

The questionnaire prepared by the Task Force contained a number of questions about how Diaconal Ministers perceived their ministry and about how it was received and responded to by the Church. While such information was outside of the specific mandate of the Task Force, it was felt that such information was crucial to provide the context for the work being done on education. Because of the wealth of information received, and because many of the comments made point to serious theological and practical issues which need to be addressed by the Church, the Task Force decided to include a list of concerns and observations about Diaconal Ministry.

1. Continuing Education:

Education for ministry is a life-long process, and regular involvement in Continuing Education programmes of the Church is essential. The question on Continuing Education goals and needs revealed that Diaconal Ministers can identify several very specific areas that they wish to pursue and that many of these are not being included in the regular offerings of the Continuing Education Centres across the country. Several respondents mentioned specifically the need for courses in programme design, current Christian education theory and practice, intergenerational worship, feminist theology, social analysis skills, and pastoral care of children. Other respondents stated that many of the courses that are provided use an educational style in which the "expert" imparts knowledge to the passive learners and that this mode of education contradicts both the philosophy and goals of Diaconal Ministry. Therefore, the Task Force urges the Continuing Education programmes, through the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education to consult with and develop more programmes which will support the work of Diaconal Ministers.

2. Settlements

Now that Transfer and Settlement is mandatory for Diaconal Ministry candidates, the inability of the structures and policies of the Church to appreciate and facilitate this unique type of ministry has become obvious. In some cases, Settlement Committees remain uninformed of the special training and capabilities of Diaconal Ministers and, therefore, place them in situations which are "bad fits." In other cases, because Diaconal Ministers are often women with family commitments and are not as mobile as the policy of settlement requires that candidates must be, they "fall between the cracks" or are left to find a placement on their own. In many of these cases, as new respondents pointed out, neither the interests of the congregation nor the Diaconal Minister are served. Greater care needs to be taken in the settlements of Diaconal Ministry

candidates. There is evidence to suggest that some first placements are disastrous for both the Diaconal Minister and the congregation. Other respondents felt that the problem had to do with the fact that many of the Churches who could be successfully served by Diaconal Ministers never requested settlements. Thus, for a number of reasons, the Settlement process remains problematic for many Diaconal Ministers.

3. Sacraments

Access to permission to administer the sacraments continues to be an issue for Diaconal Ministers. Though guidelines were approved by General Council in Montreal, they continue to be interpreted in different ways in various conferences across the country. Thus, one Diaconal Minister may be granted permission to administer the sacraments while another in a similar position is denied it. Several respondents felt that the only way out of this unequal position was to have permission available for all Diaconal Ministers in the pastorate. Others believed that the question of who was permitted to preside at communion and baptism was part of a larger issue in the Church. Moving the administration of the sacraments beyond the exclusive realm of the ordained, they noted, often brought about such resistance that questions needed to be asked about the Church's theology of the sacraments. Did the resistance signify that baptism and communion are seen by many people in a magical way, as some kind of powerful blessing which the ordained minister dispenses on God's behalf? Did the sacraments and their "dispensation" have more to do with power and authority than with participation and mutuality? For several respondents, the task was to "reclaim" the sacraments, so that they become actions that the whole community participates in as a sign of its faith and life together. One respondent pointed out that the problem has to do with power. Many ordained ministers see the sacraments as a sign of their power. there is a vicious circle: the ordained tell us we can't administer the sacraments because we are not trained properly, and we are not real ministers. And then it is turned back on us when they say later that we are not really in ministry because we do not administer the sacraments!

4. Staff Associates, Ordained and the Job Situations

Several respondents indicated that they believed that the growing number of staff associates could result in fewer positions being available for Diaconal Ministers. Others expressed the feeling of being "squeezed" in between the ordained and staff associates. "We are being squeezed out because we are not well enough known. The role of diaconal ministry needs to be lifted up before the Church (i.e. educate the Church about it and encourage it) or I believe it will become a dinosaur very quickly. This may happen ..... especially in urban areas where staff associates and ordained clergy are being hired to do jobs where diaconal ministers might better be placed."

With staff associates, the concern was that they could be hired for less money and would not have the extensive involvement with Presbytery and Conference that order of ministry people have. With the ordained, the concern was that they were often perceived as being able to "do everything that a Diaconal Minister can, and more," and were therefore "better value for the money." Both of these concerns and values when considered along with the continuing lack of understanding of Diaconal Ministry which continues to exist on the part of congregations, presbytery pastoral relations people, conference personnel ministers and national committees is a concern. As the following comment suggests, the problem is extremely pervasive: "It is my perception that many lay people have never heard of Diaconal Ministers, and many ordained discredit them without knowing what they offer the Church (other lay and ordained are very supportive, but it is an uphill battle.) I think some work with, for example, the National Pastoral Relations Committee, is needed to raise consciousness. It needs to be done, in all places in the Church, again and again, because of changing personnel and committees."

5. Recruiting and Candidature

Several Diaconal Ministers mentioned that one area where education needs to be done on the theological understanding and unique training of Diaconal Ministers is in all committees related to the candidature process. Respondents told horror stories, for example, of interview committees which asked them whey they did not want to be ordained, implying that ordination was the norm, and somehow they were settling for something less than what was desirable. Others recalled committees which did not take them seriously, and did not ask them questions about their faith because they were "only being commissioned." Others spoke of the difficulty of finding out about Diaconal Ministry so that it could be considered as a possible vocation in the first place. Ordained ministry was often actively promoted, while Diaconal Ministry was barely mentioned. Work needs to be done both on clarifying the process for candidature and on promoting Diaconal Ministry as an exciting and valuable vocation in the Church.