

TO THE 37TH GENERAL COUNCIL
TORONTO, ONTARIO

For Action X
Resolution Nos.

Title: **Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century**
Origin: **Division of Ministry Personnel and Education**

SUMMARY

What shape of ministry will best serve the United Church in the year 2020? That is the question which has guided this report on ministry and ministry personnel. It is the question you are invited to ponder as you prepare for the 37th General Council.

This report calls on the church to embrace a new understanding of ministry that will serve its mission in changing times. It recommends two categories of ministry personnel; one for designated lay ministry, and one for ordered ministry. The category of designated lay ministry would include all lay people who meet certain criteria and who serve in congregational ministries, Outreach Ministries, chaplaincies or other Presbytery/District-recognized ministries. These people would become known as Designated Lay Ministers. The category of ordered ministry replaces the term 'order of ministry' that is now used in the church. As is now the case, the new term will include Diaconal Ministers and Ordained Ministers.

This proposal is rooted in the conviction that ministry is the work of all God's people; that, through baptism, all are called to be ministers in the service of Jesus Christ. It seeks simplicity, clarity, variety and wholeness in the ways that we categorize ministry roles. It offers a way of naming and supporting ministry that is faithful to the daring gospel of Jesus.

- We challenge the church to deepen its commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God. We propose that the church show signs of this commitment by developing programs to intentionally discern ministries of the lay persons, and by providing new roles in sacramental leadership for lay persons.
- We propose a movement away from ministry defined by status and orders, to ministry that is flexible and non-hierarchical, just and justice-seeking—no less committed to lifelong service, but no longer set apart.
- We acknowledge that all ministry is rooted in the community and requires the consent of the community, and so we address ways to ensure accountability to the appropriate church body, which may be the Congregation, Presbytery/District, or Conference.
- We affirm the importance of education and continuing education, and seek to ensure that all ministry personnel, whether lay or ordered, are properly trained and supported for their roles.
- We acknowledge that continuing education is also essential to the church as a whole. To be alive, to thrive and *be* part of the living body of Christ in the world, the church must continue to reflect on its mission and ministry, and so we call on the church to engage in further study and action to incarnate a vision of ministry characterized by *unity, responsiveness, accountability, and preparedness.*

The Division is appreciative of all individuals and groups who reviewed and commented on the preliminary draft of this report, issued in September 1999, which led the Ministry Study Group to make many changes in the version presented to the Division's Annual General Meeting in February 2000. This report includes changes and resolutions approved by the Division at that time.

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart. And try to love the questions themselves. Do not seek the answers that cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. Robert A. Raines, *Living the Questions* (World Books, 1976), p. 11.

Let us proceed with openness to the question, remembering that the Spirit is the basis of our courage, confidence and hope.

Item 1 MANDATE

This report originates with the following action of the 35th General Council (1994). This General Council had received many Petitions related to lay ministry and decided that, for too long, the church had been responding to issues of orders of ministry in a piecemeal way.

BE IT RESOLVED that the 35th General Council request the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education [DMPE] to study the implications of various categories of designated ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada including:

- a) relationships among the various categories of ministry personnel;
- b) their preparation and recognition;
- c) who they represent within the courts of the church;
- d) future ministry needs;
- e) the question of how we order ourselves given the similarities and differences between the categories of ministry personnel.

AND THAT the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education report to the 37th General Council.¹

Item 2 MEMBERSHIP AND METHOD

The Ministry Study Group included 11 people from diverse ministry backgrounds.

2.1 Ministry Study Group membership

Jeraldine (Jeri) Bjornson - a Lay Pastoral Minister from Fort Frances, Ontario, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Chair of the study group.

Caryn Douglas - a Diaconal Minister, Principal of the Centre for Christian Studies, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, Winnipeg.

David Galston - an Ordained Minister, Principal and Chaplain at Iona College, Windsor, London Conference.

Won Heo - an Ordained Minister of Alberta and North West Conference, currently overseas personnel with the Division of World Outreach in Japan.

Betty-Jean (B.J.) Klassen - a lay person, living in Toronto and currently chair of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education.

Susan MacAlpine-Gillis - an Ordained Minister, Dartmouth, Maritime Conference.

Doris Major - a Staff Associate in Dufferin-Peel Presbytery, Toronto Conference.

Sheila Snelling - a lay person living in Montreal.

Keith Stam - a lay person from Fenelon Falls, Ontario, currently working in the church as United Church Gift Planner for the Bay of Quinte and Manitou Conference areas.

¹ *Record of Proceedings, 35th General Council (1994), p. 140.*

Staff Resource:

Steven Chambers, General Secretary, Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, an Ordained Minister.

Ron Coughlin, Secretary for Education and Ministry Vocations, Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, an Ordained Minister.

2.2 Phases of the work

Table 1. Timeline Summary for developing this report

Date	Action
1994	General Council requests DMPE to study the various categories of designated ministry personnel.
February 1995	DMPE Annual Meeting decides to engage a researcher "to produce an historical statement outlining the steps in the development, including rationale, of different expressions of ministry presently designated in The United Church of Canada."
February 1996	The researcher, Cora Krommenhoek, reported to the annual meeting of DMPE. Her report provided a helpful review of previous ministry studies and charted the major decisions of the General Council on the ordering of ministry. The Division formed a task group to follow up on the report. The group consisted of one Ordained Minister, one Diaconal Minister, one Lay Pastoral Minister, and one Staff Associate, along with staff support.
September 1996	The task group recommended that a Ministry Study Group be formed, and suggested the membership, terms of reference, timeline, and budget. The Division Executive adopted this recommendation.
Winter 1997	DMPE appointed the members of the Ministry Study Group.
March 1997	The Ministry Study Group had its first meeting. It got off to a shaky start, as not all members were able to attend. Three members later decided that they could not continue with the project.
Fall 1997	Membership in the group was revised and the group began to meet regularly.
1998-1999	The study group met three times per year for about four days each time, and also held many Conference calls. Members of the study group conducted several focus groups with people across the church. The goal was to find out what was working well and what was not working well in the current ordering of ministry. (See the summary in section 1.3 of this report.)
September 1999	The study group released a preliminary draft of its <i>Report on Ministry in the 21st Century</i> . The report was available in print form and on the United Church website (www.uccan.org).
January 2000	The study group met to review the feedback and substantially revise its report.

February 2000	DMPE reviewed the report at its annual meeting. Portions of the report were approved. Report was edited to a final version.
August 2000	DMPE presents the approved report to the 37 th General Council.

The group decided early that its work would have these phases:

- Review United Church documents and studies about ministry to identify their core theological convictions, guiding policy norms, and the questions or needs that arise from this material. (See Appendix A.)
 - Invite focus groups to identify issues and concerns about how the United Church understands and orders ministry and to identify suggestions for the future shape of ministry. Ask each focus group the same four questions. (See the questions and responses summarized in section 4.1 of this report.)
- Note:** The Ministry Study Group also met with other groups within the General Council, including: the Ethnic Ministries Council; the Working Group on the Changing Church; the Congregational Mission Team of the Division of Mission in Canada; and the Education for Church Leadership – Coordinating Committee.
- Review ministry studies from other denominations and their implications for the United Church. (See Appendix B.)
 - Identify common concerns and trends from all the data, and chart possible future directions.
 - Test these future directions against the core theological convictions identified in phase 1 and in light of our ecumenical relationships.
 - Draft a preliminary report for discussion and feedback.
 - Prepare a report for the DMPE meeting in February 2000.

The group's aim was to seek broad input for the preliminary report, and to invite feedback to guide us in the preparation of the final report. Although the process was neither scientific nor exhaustive, it was undertaken with the intent to consider the variety of views within the church.

2.3 Working Principles

The Ministry Study Group developed the following working principles:

- Ministry exists to serve God's mission in the world.
- Every generation reinterprets the gospel and leadership for its own needs. Ministries emerge to address the diversity of the world.
- Baptism initiates us into the ministry of the whole people of God; and the church seeks to enhance and support this ministry.
- The accountability of the laity is to the Congregation. The accountability of designated ministry is to the Presbytery/District.
- Discernment and education for ministry, and the development of a ministry identity, are lifelong tasks.
- Ministry requires particular skills, abilities, and understanding that can only be gained through education, but there are many different ways to acquire that education. All people should have access to the education they need for the ministry to which they are called. Those performing equivalent ministry functions must have equivalent education.

- From within the ministry of the whole people of God, some are called to a ministry that is accountable to the church in a specific way.
- Ordination and commissioning signify a lifelong covenant with the church.
- The sacraments of baptism and communion are entrusted to the whole people of God. Those performing the sacramental rites do so as representatives of the church, and so they must be accountable to the appropriate body of the church.

2.4 An evolving document

From the accumulated data and these guiding principles—and in light of the history and mission of the church—the Ministry Study Group and the Division arrived at the resolutions that appear at the end of this report.

The study group received feedback from groups who gathered in Conference or General Council committees, theological schools, Presbyteries, Congregations, and specially-called consultations to discuss the preliminary report and prepare a response. Also, over 120 individuals sent their personal wishes, concerns, and grammatical advice. At the Annual Meeting of the Division, a specially appointed Sessional Committee spent many more hours reviewing and revising the report before it was presented to the whole meeting. Throughout the entire process, the study group and members of the Division were moved and encouraged by the depth of care and interest shown in this work.

Mainly, the responses expressed support and enthusiasm for the ideas and content. Many also complained that the initial report was not readily available, and the study and response time was too short. This was a frustration for the study group as well, which had the sincere hope to hear from a variety of voices.

Most individuals who responded were in the Order of Ministry, although some professionals in church-related ministries also participated. Some shared their fears, confusion or questions about the report, which challenged the study group to focus and clarify its thinking and presentation. In some cases, the feedback cast a new light that helped the group see its task more clearly.

In considering the feedback and in reviewing issues further, the Division offers a new way to name and define ministry. It is recognized that these recommendations may not fully implement the vision that is proposed, but they aim to move the church in a direction which the Division believes is faithful to the church's past and responsive for the future.

The preliminary report recommended the establishment of two orders of ministry: one lay and one ordained. However, this received a very mixed reaction. The study group recognized, on reflection, that the language and the underlying concepts did not achieve the goals that were intended. Instead, this report recommends two categories of ministry personnel; one for designated lay ministry, and one for ordered ministry.

The category of designated lay ministry would include all lay people who meet certain criteria and who serve in congregational ministries, Outreach Ministries, chaplaincies or other Presbytery/District-recognized ministries. These people would become known as Designated Lay Ministers within the United Church.

The category of ordered ministry replaces the term "Order of Ministry" that is currently used in the church. As is now the case, it includes Diaconal Ministers and Ordained Ministers. The previous report (the September 1999 'Draft') recommended that all members of the Order of Ministry be ordained to the ministry of Jesus Christ and then commissioned to a particular role, function or expression of ministry as a part of the covenant. This report recommends the continuation of the current practices of ordination to ordained ministry and commissioning to diaconal ministry for the present time. However, the Division calls

on the church to engage in deliberate thought and consultation to find a new common rite to designate all forms of ordered ministry.

Various other recommendations from the preliminary reports—on sacraments, transfer and settlement, educational standards for various expressions of ministry, increased access to education, and criteria for membership in a Presbytery/District—are included here with modifications.

2.5 Terminology

One of the difficulties for the Ministry Study Group, as for previous groups, was the confusion of the current language. As a starting point, the group turned to *The Manual*,² but found it necessary in some cases to adapt or build on the terminology.

Following are definitions of some key terms. For a more complete list of terms used in this report, see Appendix C.

Kinds of ministry

ministry of the laity and lay ministry – the ministry to which all Christians are called by virtue of their baptism and confirmation; this ministry may occur within or outside of the church.

designated lay ministry – the ministry of lay people which is recognized by and accountable to the church through a Presbytery/District; this ministry involves employment and remuneration by the church or another agency.

ordered ministry – the ministry of those who have made a lifelong commitment to work within the church universal, and whose vocation is recognized by a Conference. This category includes Ordained Ministers and Diaconal Ministers. (In *The Manual*, this is referred to as the *Order of Ministry*—a term that could continue to mean the same thing in common usage.)

*Kinds of ministry personnel**

Diaconal Minister – a person who has been commissioned by a Conference to a lifelong ministry of education, service and pastoral care.

Lay Pastoral Minister – a lay person who has completed the required educational program defined by DMPE, and has been appointed to a Pastoral Charge with the responsibilities for word, sacrament (when licensed), and pastoral care.

Ordained Minister – a person who has been ordained by a Conference to a lifelong ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care.

Staff Associate Minister – a lay person who has completed the required interviews by a Presbytery/District and Conference, and who has been appointed to a Pastoral Charge or outreach ministry with the responsibilities for education, outreach and/or pastoral care. Staff Associate Ministers usually work in teams.

**Ministry personnel also include Student Supply, Candidate Supply, and people from other denominations under appointment as Ordained Supply or Diaconal Supply.*

A note regarding the style of writing: When this report refers to ministry, whether it be ordained ministry, diaconal ministry, lay pastoral ministry or staff associate ministry, it uses lower case letters, since the descriptors are adjectives to define ministry. However, when the report refers to a category of

² *The Manual (1998)*, Section 001, Definitions.

minister within the United Church, such as Diaconal Minister or Lay Pastoral Minister, it uses a capital. The term Staff Associate is used in *The Manual* as a title for a category of ministry; hence to acknowledge that these people are also ministry personnel, we have called them Staff Associate Ministers.

Item 3 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

*We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.³*

3.1 Characteristics of Ministry

When the church gathers as the visible body of Christ, there are characteristic marks that define its ministry. All members participate in this ministry through baptism into the ministry of Jesus Christ:

- by telling the story (**kerygma**): proclaiming, hearing and receiving the good news about God's domain within the gathered community and in the world community
- by teaching the story (**didache**): knowing the story and understanding the depth of its message for the world, the gathered community and oneself
- by celebrating the story (**leitourgia**): expressing in acts of worship the hope of the gospel and the response of the community in dialogue with the peoples of the world
- by doing the story (**diakonia**): critiquing the social, political, and economic powers, and acting for justice in the name of God's reign
- by being the story (**koinonia**): living intentionally centred in the gospel; *being* the story through movements that try to build human community amid brokenness and alienation.⁴

3.2 Mission of the Church Universal

The church seeks to express the living presence of God. The Christian story describes how God reaches out to the world through creation, compassion, mercy, justice and love. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the work of the Spirit are lasting testaments to the breadth and depth of God's presence in the world. The mission of the church is to build and sustain a world in which the captives are released, the blind see, the oppressed are freed, and the Jubilee of God is proclaimed (Luke 4:18-19).

In its mission, the church is called to embody the spirit of God in the world. This call is central to our understanding of what it means to be Christian. It enables those of diverse lands to be a people "... called by God to live in loving and just relationship with God, all peoples, living creatures, and the earth.... Throughout the Bible we are reminded that we belong to God and that our meaning and fulfillment rests in seeking and affirming God's will in all that we do and are."⁵

³ *A New Creed* (23rd General Council, 1968, revised 1994).

⁴ *The Report of Project: Ministry* (28th General Council, 1980) pp17-18.

⁵ *Theology of Call* (General Council Executive, March 1994) pp26-27.

3.3 Mission of the United Church

The United Church of Canada links its mission to the greater Christian community and the world. The role of the United Church historically has been to emphasize the priority of justice in building community and seeking reconciliation. The church has understood this to be a fundamental part of all its ministry.

The United Church affirms that all its members are called to ministries within the body of Christ. These ministries, whether lay or ordered, vary according to the gifts and talents of the individual. Nevertheless, all are needed to aid the well being of the whole church.

Some forms of ministry, and the individuals called to them, are tested within the church's structures to ensure their quality and appropriateness in light of the mission of the whole body. The requirement that some ministries be tested does not deny the ministry of the whole people of God, nor mean that Presbytery/District-accountable ministries are better or of a higher form than other ministries. The aim is only to ensure some standards and accountability.

Collectively, all persons share in the learning and growth that comes with being a follower of Jesus. It is the wisdom of the church to uphold in its mission that all gifts are activated by the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11) with the goal of "being not merely a united, but a uniting Church."⁶

In a rapidly changing world, the church needs to be intentional about ensuring that its ministry is formed in response to its mission, and that its structure supports that mission. As the Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century (1968) stated: "All structures of the Church in mission must remain flexible...Any structure that has ceased to serve God must be changed."⁷

Item 4 CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR MINISTRY

It is a cliché, but nevertheless true, that the world has changed dramatically in the 75 years since church union. Over the years, the United Church has adapted its theology to the changing times. Theological adaptability, however, has not always been matched by changes in the structures and customs of the church. The church, like many institutions, has been reluctant to compromise on the way things have always been done. But with the internal and external pressures facing the church today—including litigation, declining membership, and shifting understandings of mission, moral accountability and justice—change is inevitable.

It is difficult to break through to new things. The biblical story reveals that it is out of chaos that God created. As our church community reconsiders how to structure and engage in ministry, we can anticipate some chaos. This is a frightening thought, but the biblical story reminds us that through it all God is present.

Some changes in recent years have brought new life and new hope to the church. It is important to recognize that the Spirit has been moving in the church, and many people are responding to challenges with courage, conviction and innovation.

This section looks at current perceptions about ministry; describes the church in the context of contemporary society; and explores how changes in the church and society might influence the shape of ministry in the 21st century.

4.1 Current Perceptions about Ministry

Members of the Ministry Study Group hosted focus groups across the country to give the people of the

⁶ Declaration of Faith found in *The Manual* (1998) p.6 (from the Sixth General Council, 1936, *Record of Proceedings* p.168, reaffirmed in 1950 on the 25th anniversary of church union).

⁷ Report of the Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century (23rd General Council, 1968) p.4

United Church an opportunity to voice their support and concerns about ministry today. Some focus groups consisted only of Diaconal Ministers, Staff Associate Ministers, or Lay Pastoral Ministers. Some groups included a large number of Ordained Ministers and laity. Some groups were clearly a mixture of ministry personnel. Others were drawn from Conference Divisions of Ministry Personnel and Education, a Conference Executive, and the standing committees of the General Council Division of Ministry Personnel and Education.

Each group was asked the same four questions:

- What do you affirm about the United Church's current polity [its rules of governance] and practice regarding recruiting, training and designating ministry personnel?
- What are the points of tension you perceive in our current policy and practice?
- In what ways might the church address these tensions and what would be the implications of your suggestions?
- What other advice could you offer the Ministry Study Group?

Not surprisingly, the group received wide-ranging responses to these questions. What one person considered positive and liberating, another saw as threatening. The group's role was to listen to all viewpoints and then, in the report, to propose a direction that would help the whole church move into the future to serve God in a changing world.

The following tables summarize the comments from the focus groups. The comments are grouped into categories. No comment is verbatim.

Table 2. Affirmations Expressed by Focus Groups

What do you affirm about the United Church's current polity and practice regarding recruiting, training and designating ministry personnel?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The current discernment process ◆ The variety of educational approaches for ministry formation ◆ The First Nations and community-based educational models ◆ The eight-month Internship Program ◆ The Ministry of Supervision course as a requirement for supervisors ◆ The openness for ministry from the margins, as in the case of diaconal ministry ◆ The role of lay people in discerning, naming and supporting the call to ministry ◆ Honouring the gifts of lay people for ministry ◆ Care in our use of language for ministry ◆ Opportunities for different kinds of ministry through the four streams (Staff Associate Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers, Diaconal Ministers, and Ordained Ministers) ◆ The guidelines and standards regarding our sexual abuse policy.

Table 3. Issues and Concerns Expressed by Focus Groups

What are the points of tension you perceive in our current policies and practices for recruiting, training and designating ministry personnel?

Categorizing and Valuing Ministry

- ◆ The current four categories of ministry (Staff Associate, Lay Pastoral Minister, Ordained Minister, Diaconal Minister) are confusing and seem like separations rather than clear distinctions.
- ◆ How do we value the diversity of call within the church; how do we value the four categories of ministry?
- ◆ There is confusion about the differences, role and function of diaconal and ordained ministry; often the confusion is expressed as not understanding diaconal ministry.
- ◆ Some Diaconal Ministers want to be able to be ordained; other Diaconal Ministers identify themselves as being outside of the structure of the church, and wish they could minister from the margins without any designation.
- ◆ There is a fundamental lack of respect for forms of ministry that are different from the traditional ordained ministry; those not ordained are not as appreciated and may be squeezed out.
- ◆ There are tensions between Ordained Ministers and Lay Pastoral Ministers; Lay Pastoral Ministers get the same privileges and money without the same education. Why then should one seek ordination?
- ◆ Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associate Ministers are conscious that ordered ministers have more power.
- ◆ The church seems to value sacramental ministry more than other traditional types of ministry (diaconal, presbyterial) and the way we value the form of ministry reflects how we value the people doing ministry.
- ◆ What is ordination for anyway? Is it a "fencing" in of the sacraments that is offensive in this day and age?
- ◆ We need to ask questions about why we ordain and commission people.
- ◆ We need ways for the different streams of ministers to talk to each other and learn from each other. They should complete their training and education together.

Training and Accountability

- ◆ The church needs to be able to say no to some people who are not really suited to ministry.
- ◆ The processes for determining suitability for paid-accountable ministry personnel are too confusing and burdensome; Congregations and individuals are looking for ways to avoid them.
- ◆ There is a need for flexibility in our personnel policies so that the needs of Congregations are recognized and they can work within the policies and guidelines.
- ◆ The Congregation doesn't seem to care about labels, or educated ministry, since they are hiring people outside of the policies without much regard for traditional theological education.
- ◆ There is a need to maintain high standards for an educated ministry; no "watering down." There should be equal standards of education for equal employment.
- ◆ An educated ordered ministry is being undercut by the varieties of lay people being hired who do not have a theological education.
- ◆ The idea of the ministry of the whole people is only given lip service; we really need to focus on training opportunities for the laity.
- ◆ The current academic model doesn't necessarily create good ministers and leaders; there is a need for training in empathy, judgement, and dealing with change.
- ◆ The reality of ministry is not communicated through theological education; many settlement Pastoral Charges provide the real education on the job.
- ◆ There is a need to provide training for varieties of ministry because many forms of ministry are valid and necessary.
- ◆ There are concerns about the high numbers of ministry personnel experiencing burnout and stress. Assistance and screening process are needed to help ensure that candidates know themselves well and have healthy self-care practices.
- ◆ For some, a call to ministry is not the same as a call to paid accountable ministry.

Compensation and Employment Issues

- ◆ There seems to be frustration over salary levels not being tied to educational achievement.
- ◆ Some raised the question of wage parity.
- ◆ Ministry is seen increasingly as a career rather than a vocation. This puts more focus on employment issues, such as salary, benefits and working conditions.
- ◆ There are questions around retirement and the pension plan. When retired ministers continue to work, "older" candidates have to wait longer for employment opportunities, which means they have less time to build up their pension fund.

Variety and Change in Ministry

- ◆ Ministry of the laity is key and there needs to be more opportunity for lay leadership development.
- ◆ There is an increasing variety of ministries and people who want to be accountable to the church (parish nurses, youth workers, pastoral counselors).
- ◆ The church needs to recognize and adapt to the reality of part-time ministry and new types of ministry.
- ◆ The number of part-time ministry positions is increasing. What are the implications for employment practices, expectations and security?
- ◆ It is difficult to keep ministers in rural communities; how can the wider church help out?

4.1.1 *Valuing Diverse Ministries*

Many people throughout the church told the Study Group that the current way of ordering ministry personnel is not serving the United Church well. Some Diaconal Ministers observed that their contributions are not always valued and they are frequently asked "why they don't become real ministers through ordination." Although many Diaconal Ministers are providing good ministry to Pastoral Charges as the only paid minister, they feel they are undervalued because they have not completed what some people view as the "normal program" that prepares leaders for that ministry and leads to ordination. However, they point out that people seldom question when Ordained Ministers serve in educational and Outreach Ministries, without, in their view, training appropriate to those ministries. This creates a tension within the order of ministry of the church.

Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associate Ministers reported similar reactions to their ministry. Officially, the church has stated that lay people who come with enough competence and skill—through life, work and church experience—may be considered for forms of lay ministry. However, many lay ministers feel that the church does not affirm and appreciate their gifts. This led the study group to ask: How can we promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the various educational options for ministry? How do we acknowledge that people can acquire the skills and theological grounding for ministry in many different ways? How can we provide adequate opportunities for people to serve in the ministry functions to which they, and the community, believe they are called?

Ordained Ministers in the focus groups reported that they were feeling discouraged and undervalued as they attempted to be faithful to their calling. Many felt the church could do more to provide vocational support to help Ordained Ministers explore the future of their ministry. They noted that the General Council had committees dealing with lay ministry and diaconal ministry, but saw no comparable attention being paid to ordained ministry. They also expressed a concern about lay people performing the same ministry functions as Ordained Ministers, but without the comparable educational preparation.

One way to view the tension among categories of ministry is as a consequence of our patriarchal past—rooted in a culture that placed a high value on order, tradition and rank, and that systematically divided its members on the basis of social status and gender. The patriarchal legacy of the church is clericalism, which, according to some, gives power, authority and prestige to those who are ordained. Ordained Ministers are seen as the norm and Diaconal Ministers and professional Lay Ministers are seen as interlopers in the real ministry. For those who hold this understanding, clericalism operates with a strength all its own. The automatic power given over to the office of ordination and to those who hold it makes it difficult to change perceptions about ministry and to alter the power dynamics associated with it. Patriarchy is considered to be evident in the desire to "regularize" and "normalize" ministry. What is normal is defined by what is dominant, which means that the current allocation of power is maintained. Such a system is built on an understanding that power is a limited commodity and must be hoarded by those who have it.

This analysis of the relationship between patriarchy and ordination emits powerful feelings—both from those who feel vocationally oppressed in the church and those whose ministry it confronts. The meetings of the study group, the reactions to the draft report and the annual meeting of the Division in February 2000 all reverberated with sounds of this continuing conflict in the church. The day must come when categories of ministry are not in such debilitating tension, where all people are equally valued in their particular ministries. The Division is clear that this day is not yet here: hence the call for further study and action to incarnate such vision of ministry. If the tension revolves around power, we all need to revisit the economy of power that Jesus proclaims, characterized by abundance, not scarcity. *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* (John 10:10)

4.1.2 *Accountability to the Presbytery/District*

Accountability was another theme that emerged in the focus groups. There was an unsettling sense that many people have left pastoral ministry for other employment opportunities that may or may not be considered as ministry by the Presbytery/District. Some of these ministry personnel have made

themselves available for special services of baptism, marriage or funerals without being connected to a local Congregation. This lack of accountability strains the minister's relationship with the Presbytery/District, which has oversight for all ministry personnel on its rolls.

4.1.3 *Stress and Declining Morale*

Many social issues facing the church contribute to the level of anxiety and stress felt by ministry personnel. These issues include the legacy of church-run residential schools within First Nations communities, sexual misconduct within the church, and an increase in litigation at the Presbytery/District or Conference level. These issues are not easily solved within the church and are beyond the scope of this report, but they need to be acknowledged as a part of our current context.

These and other issues are affecting the willingness of people to respond to a call to ministry, or are affecting the degree of satisfaction ministry personnel experience. While structures alone cannot solve these concerns, our current models for ordering ministry seem to be increasing the levels of stress, rather than relieving it, by isolating ministry personnel and putting an unrealistic burden of authority on some ministry roles.

4.2 The Church in Society

The United Church of Canada was historically the Canadian Church. It understood itself to have—and was seen to have—a sense of institution, stability, grandeur, and stature within the local community and on the national scene. It contained the moral authority and conscience of a liberal tradition (valuing the individual within community) and was concerned about the rights of the minority. It was known to stand for justice and fairness. However, the church of today does not hold the prestige or position it once had.

4.2.1 *Measures of Decline*

If one looks only at statistics, the picture is grim for the United Church. Compared with 30 years ago, the church is attracting few new members. In 1961 the vast majority of United Church members were 29 years old or younger, with the largest single group being 20 to 29; in 1999 the vast majority of United Church people were over 50. In every year from 1960 to 1965 the church was able to create new ministries, new full time jobs, and new Congregations. In every year since 1990 the church has been losing ministries, jobs, and Congregations. The church's own statistics project that by 2010, another 712 full-time ministry positions (more than one-fifth of current positions) will be lost or become part-time.

In 1962 the average age of the congregational minister was 32. In 1996 the average age for Ordained Ministers was 51; for Diaconal Ministers, 49; for Staff Associates, 48; and for Lay Pastoral Ministers, 55. The largest age group for Lay Pastoral Ministers is 58–62⁸; for Ordained Ministers, 53–57; for Staff Associates, 48–52; and for Diaconal Ministers, 53–57. In each category, the smallest age group is 35 and under.⁹

These statistics do not say that the quality of ministry in the church is poor. It is unfair to suppose a direct relation between quality and age. But the numbers do reveal plainly that the United Church is not attracting young people as it once may have done and the Division is committed to taking this seriously.

If trends from the last decades continue, membership in the church will continue to shrink even though the overall population in Canada is increasing. Perhaps more significant for the future, participation is decreasing, especially among people born between 1946 and 1966—the very age group from which the

⁸ Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training must be 40 years of age to be eligible to be considered for a ministry position. See *The Manual (1998)*, Section 343(a)ii.

⁹ *Ministry Needs In the New Millennium*, Report to the Division of Ministry, Personnel and Education Annual Meeting, February 1997, prepared by Ted Reeve, Robin Anderson, Doug Flanders, Roger Hutchinson, The Centre for the Study of Religion in Canada.

church should now be looking for leaders.¹⁰

The ethnic makeup of our ministry personnel does not reflect the makeup of our society or even the makeup of our Congregations. We have not been successful in recruiting new leaders from the ethnic groups that comprise Canada today; neither have we been able to recruit from the protestant French Canadian community. Many of our current leaders have been recruited from other countries. We need to be more proactive in our invitations to Canadians to consider a vocation within the church.

It is not a question of the church reaching a leadership crisis in 10 or 20 years. The church is in crisis now. In relation to ministry, the church is pressured to stop thinking about the next decade and to start thinking about the immediate future. We must see this as an opportunity to respond boldly and choose life.

4.2.2 Pastoral Charge Distribution

A further reality is that the distribution of Pastoral Charges does not match the general population distribution in Canada. Eighty percent of the Canadian population is urban, but 56 percent of United Church Congregations are located in communities of less than 2,000 people, and another 20 percent are located in communities of less than 30,000. As a result, two-thirds of the United Church's ministry personnel serve one-third of its membership.¹¹ Rural depopulation and the exodus of young people to urban areas is resulting in the decline of many rural Pastoral Charges. Larger rural parishes of clustered or amalgamated Pastoral Charges will likely develop, resulting in different expectations for ministry personnel who will not be able to live among, or even near, the Congregations they serve.

Many urban Congregations are also experiencing decline, which will increase the possibility of multi-point city charges or the number of part-time positions. In many communities, ecumenical relationships will form as necessity clears the path that good intentions could not find.

4.2.3 Contemporary culture and the search for spirituality

The church is in a world characterized by rapid change, where technology is out of date even before it is marketed; a world that places some individuals ahead of the community; a world that places the rights of business and the economy ahead of human welfare. There is pressure from the new culture to conform. The church must find a way to resist this new culture when it erodes its gospel convictions. However, the church must be enough in step with the new culture to enable it to operate and be relevant. We need a vision of ministry and expressions of ministry that will serve God's people in this new world. Our ministry must be prophetic, responsive, relevant, accountable, well prepared, and compassionate.

In spite of—or perhaps because of—the pace of contemporary life, it appears that people are hungry for spirituality. They are dissatisfied with a culture of consumerism that leaves them empty. However, this search for a new spirituality is shaped by an individualistic and consumer-oriented society that favours quick and colourful expressions of faith. The church has an opportunity to offer an alternative that is grounded in rich theological reflection and that celebrates God's call to each individual and to the community of faith.

4.3 Responding to Change

The United Church has faced uncertainty, risk and change before. Consider the act of union itself, where the ministry traditions and values of three different denominations came together; or the decision in 1936 to ordain a woman (Lydia Gruchy) into ministry; or the more recent decision to not exclude people from ministry based on their sexual orientation. These difficult decisions showed that the church is able to examine its needs in light of its mission, and to name bold directions for the future.

¹⁰ *Ibid* p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid* p. 2.

As the United Church membership shifts, and possibly, declines, Congregations will continue to be faced with decisions about their future. Some will simply choose death; some will choose death for the church as they now know it so that something new might emerge in its place; and some will make changes that enable them to flourish.

Pastoral charges that develop new goals and strategies will evolve in diverse ways. The forms that emerge may include:

- small, intimate, house churches
- large Congregations that provide a central focus for widespread communities, perhaps through their style of music or worship
- mission-oriented Congregations with a very specific focus, attracting people who share a commitment to the ministry
- culturally-specific Congregations, drawing from a variety of denominations.

Changes in the structure, size and function of Congregations will influence their theological understanding of ministry and the kinds of ministry needed.

4.3.1 *Implications for Ministry*

The changes in size and strength of the United Church will likely bring about several new conditions for ministry, including:

- fewer full-time paid ministry positions; more part-time paid ministry positions
- the growth of *tent-making ministry* (in the tradition of the apostle Paul), where ministry personnel supplement their income with other paid employment. This may have severe consequences for areas where employment opportunities are fewer, thus reducing the likelihood of a person's willingness to relocate there.
- a "surplus" of trained ministers
- more responsibility undertaken by the laity for worship and pastoral care
- Congregations redirecting their energies into new forms of outreach and mission as the lay people become the ministers
- Congregations strengthened by ecumenical participation, drawing communities together and sharing resources for ministry
- more isolation for ministry personnel, who will be fewer in number and separated by greater distances.

There is a growing consensus about the kind of educated leadership that the church needs for the future. The characteristics of this ministry include:¹²

- grounding in the Christian faith
- knowledge of the tradition and an ability to interpret it in new contexts
- ability to teach and proclaim the gospel with all ages
- ability to lead in the midst of chaos and ambiguity

¹² Drawn from the work of Education for Church Leadership and from feedback gathered by the Ministry Study Group.

- ability to facilitate and empower the ministries of others
- skills to engage in personal and social transformation
- ability to do critical analysis and to act out of this analysis
- capacity to foster a deep connection with God, in others and in oneself.

What is emerging is a new kind of ministry. These would not have been the defining characteristics of ministry 75 or even 25 years ago.

4.3.2 Possible Side Effects

Change can be positive, but the perception that change equals failure can be a heavy burden for Congregations and their ministry personnel. Personal job satisfaction among ministry personnel will be affected if there is a general environment of resentment and accusation over fading or failed community projects. Ordered ministry personnel may see Staff Associate Ministers and Lay Pastoral Ministers as “queue jumpers” and “end runners” who are “stealing” jobs. In one of the focus groups, a Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training expressed the feeling that she had been treated as a second-class minister and left on the margins of the church to fill the gaps only after the “first class” ministers have all been served.

During this time of change, it will be important to keep foremost in our minds the conviction that we share a common purpose as a community of faith.

4.4 A Hopeful Vision

The Ministry Study Group is hopeful for the future and envisions that the United Church will continue to make a valuable contribution in the world. The United Church has a history of adapting to the changing times while maintaining the core values of faith. It also has an outstanding core of leaders, both among the laity and among its ministry personnel. There are many examples of strong and productive work relationships among people from different ministry categories. The church has a diverse network of theological schools and educational centres providing excellent education and innovative programs. Many Congregations are thriving, growing and responding to the spiritual hunger in our society. Many have developed small group ministries to nurture the laity and enable ministry to occur within the society and the world. The United Church has a lot of strength that can be tapped to help us move into the future.

The excitement with which the new hymn book, *Voices United*, has been embraced illustrates the openness in many people to explore new images for God, for humanity, and for ministry. In many Congregations, worship has provided opportunities for lay people of all ages to offer significant leadership, including sacramental leadership.

This report offers a new way to order ministry in a society of cultural diversity, changing social patterns, mobility, and thirst for spirituality. It will not meet all the challenges facing the church, but we believe it will be more faithful to our call to mission, our historical tradition and our current understanding of ministry.

Item 5 A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF ORDERED MINISTRY

The United Church has produced several studies on ministry and order over its history. However, few of the studies have included a biblical and historical review of the Christian tradition of identifying and designating leadership. The Ministry Study Group believes it is a key contribution of this report to provide that perspective.

This section focuses primarily on the role of ordered ministry. For a review of the ministry of the laity, see Item 6.

5.1 Biblical Witness

The Christian New Testament presents ministry in all its diverse expressions, from itinerant preachers¹³ to charismatic community leaders.¹⁴ But this does not mean that designated leadership emerged haphazardly. Early in the growth of the church, the need developed for consistency and clarity about who had the authority to speak and act on behalf of the whole community. In response, the early church borrowed both from the models of the Jewish synagogue and from the Greco-Roman style of leadership.

The first Gentile congregations were established by Jewish missionaries, and so were based on the synagogue model. There are several longstanding precedents for the elder or priest position in Judaism, and some Jewish movements had figures strongly resembling bishops.¹⁵ Similarly, the general practice of the early church was to set up a council of elders to oversee the basic matters of church life, particularly baptism and Christian instruction. Since one of the immediate challenges of the early church was to define its doctrine in the midst of several popular religious movements,¹⁶ the position of the elder as the instructor of the true tradition gained early and widespread recognition.

The Bible, in its latest writings, expresses two forms of ministry that came to dominate the Christian sense of ordered leadership. Those two forms arise from the positions designated as elder (or presbyter) and deacon (or minister). A third form of leadership that may have originated in the body of the presbyters is the bishop (or overseer). The word "presbyter" is commonly understood to be synonymous with bishop.¹⁷ It may be the case that the office of bishop initially developed as a senior elder or first elder among elders. In the Bible, whatever else a Christian elder is to do, I Timothy 3:1-7 makes it clear that good household management—a supremely significant aspect of admired Roman politicians—is to be practised.

Despite I Timothy's admonition to bishops/presbyters, the Bible in fact has little to say about them. While their presence is acknowledged, their function receives only slight attention. In Acts they certainly form a decision-making council with some authority (21:17-26). In the address of Paul to the Ephesians, they are described as shepherds (Acts 20:28). And in Romans 12:3-7, Paul's mention of ministering and teaching possibly refers to the functions performed by elders.

The word deacon is often used to designate the ministry of the "Hellenists" or those not of a Jewish background. Interestingly, the word "deacon" derives from the Greek word for "waiter"; in secular Greek it refers to the personal waiter of a household master. In Acts 6:2 the verb *diakonein* really expresses the action of serving tables as would have been done in the style of a common Greek social club (suggesting early Christians gathered in this style). Acts hints that early Jewish Christians were prepared to leave this custom to the Greeks. But a servant can be something other than a table waiter. In the parables of Jesus, the word "deacon" (minister) can specify a king's personal bodyguard.¹⁸ In Mark, the word

¹³ Paul's concern about bickering (*eris*) in the church, for example, in I Corinthians 1:11-12 shows that there were several itinerant preachers active in regions where he had worked. Cephas and Apollos are named.

¹⁴ Paul's concerns for Corinth reveal the recognition and diversity of ministry roles exercised by community members (I Cor. 12:4-6). The word used for "services" at verse 5 (*diakonion*) can be translated as ministries.

¹⁵ One such example is the movement spawned by Judah, the earliest known messianic figure active during the decade of 70 B.C.E., whose followers later organized themselves around a chosen "overseer." See Michael O. Wise, *The First Messiah: Investigating the saviour before Jesus* (San Francisco, Harper, 1999) pp. 245-246. However, even more significant is the practice in rabbinic Judaism of identifying several key synagogue positions as overseers or elders.

¹⁶ Such movements questioned the humanity and real suffering of Jesus (docetism) or held that Jesus' true followers had secret teachings that would bring people to salvation (gnosticism). Early examples of these movements may be the object of criticism in I John and the Pastoral Epistles.

¹⁷ Titus 1:5-9 is cited as proof of this where the two terms are used interchangeably.

¹⁸ See Matthew 22:13. The word translated as servant is the word for deacon (*diakonos*)

describes in a fundamental way the servant role of Jesus.¹⁹ In the tradition associated with Paul, the word is frequently used to describe the multitude of Christian services. The Bible offers examples of both men and women deacons.²⁰ As with the position of the bishop/presbyter, the later biblical tradition of I Timothy 3:8-13 demands equally from them a show of good order and decorum.

5.1.2 Implications

It is sobering to realize that ordered ministry developed in early Christianity with little correlation to the historical Jesus; and indeed the one model that may best describe Jesus (wandering charismatic teacher) never survived in the government of the church. As the Christian church moved into the Gentile world, its models of leadership²¹ took their form mainly from familiar social norms and styles of management.

The leadership of the church served both a representative and authoritative role. Both the presbyter/bishop and the diaconal leader were to act in an admirable way as representatives of the whole community. In addition, they were to oversee the teaching of the community, ensuring a certain consistency of practice. This does not mean that such leaders were universally of one form or opinion. However it does suggest that designated forms of leadership, to the degree they exist in the Bible, gained their authority from the position and esteem an individual already held within a community. In other words, the whole community (*laos*) legitimized the purpose and form of ministry.²²

5.2 Early and Medieval Traditions

From the second century to the fifth century, several significant events shaped and increasingly defined the sense of an ordered ministry apart from the laity. These events included the circulation of authoritative documents and especially the consensus of important ecumenical councils.²³

These early church documents describe the specific offices of bishops, deacons, and deaconesses as designated leaders of the community, and one of them devotes a whole chapter to the instruction of bishops alone.²⁴ The offices of the deacon and the bishop are expressly male; they are exhorted to be of one mind together as "father and son."²⁵ But if this relationship needed to be written down and thoroughly explained, it is because such unity did not automatically exist. These early writings imply that the deacon may have held some responsibilities and authority outside the scope of the bishop's immediate concern or even oversight.²⁶

These documents also describe the women's office of the deaconess, giving it less attention than the deacon but showing that it had its own role and definition in official church life. The importance and necessity of the deaconess is clearly upheld. One of the main roles was to support women who were

¹⁹ Mark 10:45

²⁰ Women in leadership are particularly evident in Luke/Acts, where women finance the mission of Jesus (8:1-3) and are consistently counted among the disciples. Also, Acts relays the story of a wealthy woman named Lydia who was the leader of a house church (16:11-15; 40). It is only in the mid-to-late second century that a separate Deacon and Deaconess office is established.

²¹ For example, although the word "priest" also occurs in the history of Israel, the social behavior associated with the priesthood is more like that of a priest of Roman cultic practices. Sexual purity, the control of emotions, and good management were all ideal qualities of the Roman nobility from which the priests were chosen.

²² This opinion is especially known through the writings of Edward Schillebeeckx.

²³ Some of those documents included the *Didache* and the letters of I Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch (second century). A detailed text on church order called the *Didascalia Apostolorum* circulated in the third century along with the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus. An anonymous compilation of these various documents called the *Apostolic Constitutions* circulated in the fourth century.

²⁴ Connolly, R. Hugh, translated with introduction, *Didascalia Apostolorum* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969) Chapter VII

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.* Chapter IX exhorts co-operation between bishop and deacon, but also recommends that "what things he can, let the Deacon order."

married to "Gentile" (here meaning pagan) men. It would have been quite scandalous for a male deacon to visit a female Christian living in a pagan household, but a deaconess could fulfill this role. The deaconess was generally not allowed to baptise, but she would anoint other women before baptism (for one was naked when anointed); afterward, she would give instruction to the newly baptised on the Christian lifestyle and practices. Finally, a deaconess was somewhat similar to a modern nurse. She would visit the sick, feed, clothe, and bath them, and comfort the dying. Both the deaconess and the deacon were chosen by the bishop and recognized by the laying on of hands.

To this point little mention has been made of the presbyters, which reflects the fact that initially only the bishop and diaconal ministers were given specific leadership roles. At least through the second century, the bishops and diaconal ministers may have been drawn from the elected presbyters, who remained as a council of elders. Both the writings of I Clement and Ignatius of Antioch hold the idea that bishops are to function as representatives of the body of presbyters. They imply that the presbyters hold the apostolic status of the community whereas the bishops perform the necessary representative functions.²⁷

By the third century, as Hippolytus records, the deacon was "not ordained to the priesthood [meaning to the service of the body of presbyters] but to the service of the bishop and to carry out the bishop's commands."²⁸ And in the fourth century, the *Apostolic Constitutions* added that bishops were to be honoured as "spiritual parents" and counted before others, including presbyters, as ones who hold "the power of life and death."²⁹ A crucial transition occurred between the second and fourth centuries when diaconal ministry became a separate order in the service of the bishop and apart from the presbyters. The sense of the "laying on of hands" then took on the now more familiar meaning of "ordination."³⁰ The act had changed from one that recognized an elected community representative to one that conferred a status and ability on an individual separated from the laity.

Meanwhile, as the church expanded in numbers, the ratio of one church to one bishop became impossible. Earlier the bishop had consecrated the eucharist in the presence of the presbyters, and often with their participation. By the fourth century it became common for bishops to appoint presbyters as priests to congregations under the bishop's jurisdiction, giving the presbyter a privilege similar to the bishop, but without the power to ordain.

The practice of ordaining presbyters to single congregations brought with it a particular controversy. During the Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon (461), it was deemed necessary to pass Canon 6, which prohibited the ordination of presbyters who did not hold a legitimate pastoral relationship to a community of faith (whether that meant a regular congregation or a monastic community). This specifically curtailed the bishop's ability to ordain large numbers of independent presbyters under his jurisdiction.

After the time of Constantine, bishops were also the new state administrators who acted as judges and tax collectors—and what better solution to the unexpected shortage of personnel than to ordain deacons (or for that matter anyone who could read) to the priesthood? Yet Canon 6 forbade this practice and ordination remained tied to public worship. Outside of a legitimate community, ordination was considered

²⁷ Nathan Mitchell, *Mission and Ministry: history and theology in the Sacrament of Order* (Wilmington, Glazier, 1982) pp.178-186.

²⁸ Burton Easton, translated with introduction, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1962). See also Ray Petry, (ed.) *A History of Christianity: Readings in the History of the Early and Medieval Church* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1962) Vol. I p. 29.

²⁹ A. Roberts & J. Donaldson (eds.) *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, translations of the writings of the Fathers down to AD 325* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1950) Vol. VII, p. 412.

³⁰ The verb "to ordain" derives from the Latin noun *ordo* (array or command) and has been used in the Western tradition to translate the Greek word *cheirotonein* (to elect by show of hands or to lay hands on). Later it took on a more technical meaning which implied a change in the nature of the person ordered, and which was explicitly related to the celebration of the sacraments.

invalid. This understanding of ordered ministry remained with the church until the High Middle Ages.³¹

Despite the authority of the Council of Chalcedon, the church completely reversed its understanding of ordered ministry in the middle ages. As Europe developed a feudal culture, the bishop, more than ever, became a definite political force. Rather than requiring a few civil servants, the bishop now needed specialists: lawyers, bankers, librarians, teachers, land surveyors, and many others. The Third Lateran Council (1179) made room for this by decreeing that individuals could be ordained if they could be guaranteed a proper living.³² The Fourth Lateran Council decisively set the ordained apart from the gathered community.³³ By doing so, the Council affirmed that the priest, rather than the community, is the true bearer of apostolic authority. This meant that the bishop could ordain trained persons to serve the office of the bishop, whatever their background and sometimes even religion, in return for a regular payment of money or privileges of similar value. As William Bausch observes, there is an inevitable shift to the "acquisition of power for the person, *regardless* of community and place."³⁴ This does not deny the faithful service of many poor community priests who often suffered from both illiteracy and derision; however, it does suggest that a caste system had developed in the priesthood, which could be used to achieve high social positions.

The deacon had distinctive roles in the early church (reading the gospel, assisting in the sacraments, visiting, and administrating); but by the middle ages the position was merely a stage before priesthood. The priest now held every power over the deacon, and one was a deacon only for as long as it took to learn competently the functions of a priest. The deaconess simply disappeared. In the early church the deaconess was recognized in the same way as the deacon—by the laying on of hands—and was considered indispensable to church life. But by the middle ages, she no longer existed!

Like many early women's movements, the history of the deaconess movement is poorly recorded and its disappearance is not easy to trace. The details are not the subject here, but it is worth noting that, whereas the early church felt the deaconess to be essential and even reduced the age requirement at the Council of Chalcedon from 50 to 40 (thus enabling more women to be deaconesses), the middle ages had no use for the office at all. In the early church the deaconess was to be present whenever a Christian woman met with a bishop, priest, or deacon; but by the middle ages, women rarely received any formal instruction. It is possible that this is linked to the decline of adult baptism, since the deaconess had been expressly needed for the baptism of women. But the office did not fall without a fight. The deaconess served communion to women as the deacon originally did to the faithful in public worship. The deaconess also understood herself to hold a sacred office; this is evident particularly in the East, where the deaconess wore a stole. At the Council of Epaon (517) these acts were considered inappropriate for women; then at Orleans (533) the deaconess office was abolished. In the Western tradition, the only remaining evidence of the ancient order of the deaconess may be the Carthusian nuns (an order founded in 1084), who continue to receive a stole and maniple (a liturgical strip of material fastened around the left wrist) at their profession.

³¹ This raises the debate regarding the absolute sense of ordination as distinguished from the functional sense. The absolute sense refers to the belief that ordination changes the individual in such a way that the ordination cannot be removed, and only ordained people can consecrate the sacraments. The functional sense is the belief that ordination ceases to have meaning outside of the legitimacy of the community, and that the sacramental function ends when a person leaves the ministry.

³² There was some precedence for this from Pope Innocent I in the fifth century. But in that earlier case it meant that a person could be sponsored by a bishop and then sent by that same bishop to a community other than the individual's home. In effect, it freed a bishop to move clergy around.

³³ The Fourth Lateran Council established the concept of transubstantiation. This is the belief that in the eucharist the bread and the wine are changed to the body and the blood of Christ, and that the elements only look like bread and wine. One result of this doctrine was that only priests deemed apostolic could truly celebrate the eucharist.

³⁴ William Bausch, *Ministry in Crisis: changing perspectives on ordination and the priesthood of all believers* (Minneapolis, Augsburg, 1987) p.46.

5.2.1 Implications

The middle ages are much more complex than what is represented here. These remarks merely highlight questions that are important to the understanding of order in ministry today. They do not deny the struggle of the church, even in the middle ages, to be faithful.

Three points from this section are significant to the current report. First, the gradual substitution in the middle ages of an absolute understanding of ordered ministry for a functional one contradicted the Council of Chalcedon. Second, the separation and subordination of deacons to the presbyters differed from the early church practice of treating diaconal ministry with distinctive integrity. Third, up to and possibly beyond the fourth century, bishops practised the common rite of the laying on of hands for deacons and deaconesses.

5.3 Ordered Ministry and the Reformation

The Reformation was one of the most dynamic times of Western history, and generalizations are impossible. Yet ironically, this earth-shaking event changed virtually nothing. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches feared social chaos and sought allies in order to avert it. In Protestant areas, in place of a powerful bishop, a powerful town council or a powerful local family was recognized as the source of social order. And where a bishop may have been appointing clergy, now there was a councillor, a landlord or a wealthy merchant who would do it. Both Luther and Calvin in their distinctive ways relied on the civil order, much as the Pope relied on the Holy Roman Emperor or a sympathetic King, to deal with popular unrest and to guard the church's authority. Luther is famous for saying that "if a peasant is in open rebellion, then the peasant is outside the law of God."³⁵ Luther recognized that apostolic authority rested in the whole community (*laos*) out of which the designated leaders first originate, and he upheld the priesthood of all believers; nevertheless he supported the divine right of kings in place of the Episcopal hierarchy. In effect, his notion of the priesthood of all believers enabled him to support the power of the secular princes. A critical thinker might ask which was really worse: a corrupt church hierarchy or a corrupt secular one?

Both Luther and Calvin had to find the means to sustain a newly reformed church. For both, the only real option was to turn from ecclesiastical to secular power. Luther relied heavily on the dominant German princes, while Calvin worked in Geneva to strengthen an already strong town council.

The reformed church did have a significant impact on the defining social forces of modern capitalism and stalwart individualism.³⁶ But Calvin's life is quite removed from the social world his theology helped to spawn. Unlike his popular portrait, he was not a systematic thinker who had a definite plan for the church and its organization. In fact, he was convinced that the Bible contained no evidence of a distinctive order of ministry. He claimed that in the Bible there is no recognizable difference among bishops, presbyters, and deacons. He believed that the ancient church was fluid by nature—with much diversity and movement—and maintained that, although there were important functions, no offices were necessary for governing the church. Furthermore, he felt that there were four functions, not three, required to meet the needs of the community: teaching, the word and sacrament, pastoral care and good administration.³⁷

In emphasizing four functions, Calvin recast the traditional Christian orders to be the presbyter, the teacher, the elder, and the deacon. The presbyter preached the word and offered the sacrament; the teacher (often extremely well educated) was responsible for catechumen and preserving orthodoxy; the elder was responsible for administration; and the deacon was revived as a ministry of pastoral care

³⁵ "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants," in *Luther Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967) Vol. 46, pp.49-55.

³⁶ The famous thesis on this question is Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons (NY, Routledge, 1958).

³⁷ The exposition of the four orders can be found in J.K.S. Reid (ed), *Calvin's Theological Treatises* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1954).

independent of the presbyter. Apart from the presbyters, Calvin held that all of these orders could be lay orders. Each served a function for the good of the community. Upon leaving a designated leadership role, an individual simply returned to the community. Calvin also felt that communion was the central act of the church, to be celebrated every Sunday.

A few more notes can be sounded in relation to the Reformation. First, since the Protestant reformers generally rejected the Roman understanding of the mass, they also rejected the designation of priest. The Protestant minister or pastor was equivalent to the older presbyter, but the sense of these words included pastoral care with several other functions. Second, in the reformed tradition, as distinct from the Lutheran tradition, the eucharist was seen as a sign and seal of the promises of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the reformed tradition did not emphasize the significance of the eucharist alone, but rather saw it as a way to understand the meaning of the cross, ensuring that the cross remain the focus of the Christian identity. This also meant that the sense of designated leadership in the reformed tradition lost much of its sacred status, and in place of this gained much as an educated, virtually civic, position.

5.3.1 Implications

The Reformation leaders relied on political authority to secure the changes brought about by reform. Though this reliance can be criticized, it enabled a consistent environment where changes could take root.³⁸

The changes most significant to the reformed tradition included the re-establishment of diaconal ministry, with integrity apart from the presbyter (pastor or minister). New knowledge available after the Renaissance also helped support the view that the Bible does not distinguish among bishops, presbyters, and deacons; this encouraged the reformed church to adopt a more fluid understanding of church leadership. Finally, by denying that the presbyter's status was drawn strictly from the eucharist, a broader understanding of service returned to Christian ministry—which included the early church's sense of the whole people of God (*laos*).

5.4 The United Church of Canada

Historically, the United Church was mainly an integration of Presbyterian and Methodist structures, with a strong Congregational flavour. The Evangelical United Brethren also contributed to the growing church in 1968.

The United Church holds several Protestant convictions, even if these have not always been practised. The church gives the oversight of worship and the sacraments to the Session (the body of Elders) or to a similar body that fairly represents the Congregation. It is committed to the priesthood of all believers, which may be better stated as the ministry of the whole people of God. It is wary of the abuse of authority, guarding against this possibility (admittedly not always successfully) through a series of council structures and jurisdictions.

At the time of union in 1925, the United Church officially recognized only one Order of Ministry, which was designated by ordination. However, trained lay people were recognized through the deaconess movement and through several forms of lay ministry (for example, lay preachers from the Methodist tradition). The ordination of women was one of the church's first controversies. Those opposed to ordaining women tended to support the establishment of the deaconess as an Order of Ministry.³⁹ When women were allowed to enter ordained ministry, the serious question of the diaconate as an Order of Ministry was lost for several decades. It is interesting to note that through the period of 1928–1940, the new United Church debated and finally agreed that ordination is not only to one specific denomination,

³⁸ Reform movements that could not secure political co-operation, such as the radical or Anabaptist reformers, were especially persecuted by the new Protestants who held political favour.

³⁹ For a discussion of the implications of this, see Mary Anne MacFarlane, *A Tale of Handmaidens: Deaconesses in The United Church of Canada 1925–1964*, p. 27.

but also to the Church Universal, the "holy catholic church."⁴⁰

Before the 1960s, much of the church's discussion about ministry centred on the qualifications for ordination and the conditions for licensing lay people for preaching or sacraments. It was only during the 1960s that several longstanding questions finally brought about a crisis of theology and practice. The church needed to answer questions about the status of ministry performed by the laity, and it also needed to confirm its commitment to the deaconess order. Inevitably, the pressures of these questions led to reviews of the very idea of ministry, as well as the definition and purpose of ordination. United Church studies on the topic included: *Commission on Ordination* (1962)⁴¹; *Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century* (1968); *Task Force on Ministry* (1977); *Project: Ministry* (1980); *Project: Ministry Revisited* (1988); and *Report of the Consultation on Ministry Vocations* (1991).

Throughout this period of discussion, reports, and decisions, the United Church—along with many partners in the World Council of Churches—has emphasized the ministry of the whole people of God as the foundation of all other forms of ministry. The 24th General Council's decision (1968) to allow lay participation in the laying on of hands at ordination (and later commissioning) showed the conviction that designated leadership arises from the community. Theoretically, this emphasis has been part of the United Church since its beginning, given that the congregational Session (which is arguably similar to the biblical church elders) has always been understood as a body of spiritual oversight. But since the 1960s, and particularly since such studies as the World Council's *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) document, a well-articulated theology has developed to affirm that leadership in ministry emerges from, and is legitimized by, the body of Christ as a whole.

Through continual study and the influence of the ecumenical environment, the United Church came to important decisions about its Order of Ministry, among them the recognition of diaconal ministry as parallel to ordained ministry (1980). This occurred after the church voted in 1977 against ordaining Commissioned Ministers and against concluding that the proper recognition of ordered ministry is ordination. That decision also helped to promote an unofficial category of designated lay ministry that now consists of Lay Pastoral Ministers, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training, and Staff Associate Ministers. Table 4 shows the current numbers of ministry personnel serving in each category.

Table 4. Numbers of Ministry Personnel as of July 1, 1999

	In Pastoral Charges	In other appointments or special ministries
Ordained	1,888	103
Diaconal	108	15
Lay Pastoral	168	
Staff Associate	153	39*
Other Denominations	45	

Source: *Yearbook and Directory, Volume 2* (United Church of Canada, 1999, Toronto), p. 136.

*General Council database.

⁴⁰ Howard Mills, *Ordination in The United Church of Canada* (United Church, DMPE, 1983).

⁴¹ This Commission, as Mills pointed out gave significant attention to lay forms of ministry. During its time, the category of Certified Churchmen came into existence.

5.4.1 Lay Pastoral Ministry

Lay preachers from the Methodist tradition are recorded as early as the mid 1800s. At the time, lay preachers were ministering on Methodist circuits in Newfoundland. However, the first reference to a "Lay Supply" category of ministry appears in the 1946 edition of *The Manual*. The Lay Supply category was originally seen as a way for Pastoral Charges that had not been able to call or settle an Ordained Minister to have leadership until an Ordained Minister was available. Until 1968, the definition of a Lay Supply in *The Manual* was "a layman employed *temporarily* to conduct public worship and to exercise pastoral care on a Pastoral Charge" (italics added).⁴²

In 1978, the General Council Division of Ministry Personnel and Education began an educational program for Lay Supply Ministers that would lead to the category of Trained Lay Supply. This program involved three years of supervision and attendance at a two-week summer school in each of the three years. For a short time, the United Church also ran a program that enabled Lay Supplies to work toward ordination while under appointment.

In 1991, the designation of Lay Supply was changed to Lay Pastoral Minister. At that time, the understanding of the appointment changed from one of temporary service to one of ongoing pastoral ministry. A Lay Pastoral Minister is now appointed for a specified term with an annual review, and can request a change in pastoral relationship and move to a new ministry position.

Following Petitions to General Council, Lay Pastoral Ministers were deemed to be part of the Order of Ministry for the specific purposes of being elected to General Council and of being kept on the roll of the Presbytery/District when they retired or left active service due to disability. In other respects, they continued to be a separate category of ministry.

5.4.2 Staff Associate Ministry

For a variety of reasons (available personnel, inability to access educational programs, finances, mistrust of hierarchy and Deaconesses), congregations in the 1970s began to hire lay people to work alongside Ordained Ministers in the areas of Christian education, youth ministry, pastoral visiting, and outreach. With an increase in the number of these employees and uneven practices related to hiring, salaries, and benefits, there grew a demand for some order and consistency, which led the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education to hold a consultation on Staff Associate Ministry. This consultation in 1984 led to the current policies, salary scales, set benefits, and hiring/screening practices for Staff Associates. The category of Staff Associate appeared in *The Manual* for the first time after the 31st General Council in 1986. There are now regular gatherings of Staff Associates across the church.

Staff Associate Ministers work in the areas of education, pastoral care, and outreach ministry. They are not granted licences to celebrate the sacraments. Their appointment is for a specified period; the length of time is at the discretion of the Presbytery/District.

5.4.3 Diaconal Ministry

In 1836, a deaconess training school was founded at Kaiserwerth, Germany, that revived this ancient order. By the 1860s, the deaconess movement had quickly spread across Europe and into Britain. Orders of laywomen, dedicated to social work in the name of the gospel, were established in the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, and in the 1890s both denominations began Canadian orders.

In 1926, following church union, the newly amalgamated Deaconess Order in the United Church had 116 members. Before the Second World War, deaconesses worked mainly in social work and health care, with ministry to the urban poor, immigrants, First Nations people, and overseas missions, plus some education work in Congregations. After the war, congregational ministries for deaconesses increased

⁴² *The Manual*, United Church of Canada. See editions from 1946 to 1968, Section 1 Definitions.

rapidly in the areas of Christian education and outreach. The order was strictly for single women until the 1960s, when men were admitted and women who married were allowed to stay in the order.

As early as 1926, the suggestion was made to create an ordained diaconate, "recognized as an order of the ministry" with authority to preach and baptise. The idea was tested but rejected by the Presbyteries and by the Council in 1928.⁴³ A similar proposal was rejected again in 1948. In 1958, General Council declared that the term "order" in relation to Deaconesses had only an associational and not an ecclesial meaning—in other words, although they had the appearance of an order, they were not officially recognized as one by the church.⁴⁴ But in 1964, Deaconesses and Certified Churchmen became members of Presbytery. This marked a significant shift from a status isolated from the mainstream structures of the church to one integrated with and increasingly accountable to those structures. The question of ordination was raised once again as part of the Plan of Union in 1974, and in the ministry studies of 1977 and 1980, but was once again rejected.

In 1980, Deaconesses and Certified Churchmen became known as Diaconal Ministers, and diaconal ministry became part of the Order of Ministry as one of two equal, but different, streams. In the Order of Ministry as it now exists, Diaconal Ministers are commissioned to education, service, and pastoral care; Ordained Ministers are ordained to word, sacrament, and pastoral care. In 1982, General Council approved a policy on the licensing of Diaconal Ministers for sacraments, which enabled a Diaconal Minister to be licenced for the duration of a pastoral relationship. However, the policy has been interpreted differently across the church: in some places licensing is readily agreed to by Presbyteries and Conferences, and in other places it is seen as an extraordinary event that only occurs when the situation is extreme.

In the United Church's history, both Diaconal Ministers and others have often defined diaconal ministry in the negative; that is, as *not* ordained ministry or *not* sacramental ministry. However, the current expression of Diaconal Ministry upholds it positively as an equal and distinctive form of ordered ministry. Diaconal ministers are often engaged in pastoral ministry as the only paid minister in a charge, in work that includes the sacramental responsibilities of baptism and communion, as well as regular preaching. (See Appendix D, "Statement of Belief adopted by *Diakonia*.")

People raise questions about the appropriateness of excluding sacramental privileges from a ministry of education, service, and pastoral care. Particularly in relation to a ministry that seeks deliberately to be on and reach out to the margins of church and society, why should the sacramental presence of Christ be excluded? The consequence of this exclusion—perhaps reinforced by the history of diaconal ministry as predominantly ministry by women—leads some church members to regard Diaconal Ministry as a second class form of service not quite as legitimate as ordained ministry. It is time to move beyond this criticism and to promote ordained and diaconal ministry as distinctive but truly parallel forms of ordered ministry.

5.4.4 Ordained Ministry

In the United Church, ordained ministry has primarily focused on the functions of word, sacrament and pastoral care. Although the 1968 *Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century* raised the possibility of eliminating the ordination and commissioning of people to particular functions, this was not adopted.

In the early decades of the United Church, ordination meant the acceptance of a primary vocation that excluded all others. It was the lifelong, permanent, and singular focus of one's life. It was ordination to the "holy catholic church." Although the church grappled with concerns such as the admission of ordained ministers from other denominations and the suitability of women for ordination, the practice of ordination was always accepted as self-evident. The responsibilities for conducting Sunday services,

⁴³ *Report of the Committee on the Ordination of Women* (United Church, Third General Council, Record of Proceedings, 1928) p. 366.

⁴⁴ Mills, *Ordination in the United Church of Canada*, p. 4.

administering the sacraments, and providing pastoral care and oversight for a Pastoral Charge were what defined ordained ministry.

However, this understanding has been under increasing stress in the past 25 years, fueled by the fundamental tension between these viewpoints:

- ordination to sacraments *versus* provision for sacramental licence to non-ordained persons
- a ministry set apart *versus* the firmly held conviction that no one ministry is special
- a primary vocation *versus* part-time ministries.

Despite this tension, some see the understanding of what it means to be ordained as perhaps one of the greatest unchallenged assumptions in the church today. The traditional work of ordained ministers is seen to be the normal expression of ministry. Ministries that are not congregational-based and sacramental are generally called "special." On the other hand, the Division wishes to clearly affirm ordained ministry as a vocation to which many have been, and continue to be, called. It is out of that vocation that the United Church has known many dedicated leaders who have lived out a vision of enabling and empowering the ministry of all.

The church has rarely defined ordination by what it uniquely *is*. Often in the past, as with diaconal ministry, it has been defined by what it is not: not better than other forms of ministry; not a marker of greater spirituality; not a replacement for the ministry of the laity. The need to define ordination has come up only when some other part of the church's ministry desired recognition, authority or a change in status. For example, in 1958 the General Council appointed a Commission on the Status of Members of the Deaconess Order, Women Missionaries and Lay Supplies, but by the time the report came to the 1962 General Council, it was from the Commission on Ordination.⁴⁵ The church has had many studies on ministry, and on ordination in particular, each containing a wide variety of suggestions for redefining ordination, but most have not been adopted. Ironically, these studies have resulted in significant changes to lay ministry and diaconal ministry without affecting how ordination is conferred or named.⁴⁶

Item 6 MINISTRY OF THE LAITY

*Ministry of the whole people of God takes place:
wherever followers of Jesus happen to be;
whenever the church calls and designates ministers;
with whomever a follower of Jesus happens to meet;
whenever the spirit moves in known and unknown ways;
sharing whatever gifts a follower of Jesus has been given.*

Individuals grow in their awareness of ministry as they work at living their faith in daily life. This work is sustained by a covenant community. The community lives out its role best when it is intentional in preparing, supporting, and challenging all its members with God's holy shalom.

6.1 An Emerging Consensus

In the early 1960s, the first of many studies on ministry began to appear for the church's consideration. Many of these called the church to open up more opportunities for women in ministry and to recognize the ministry of the laity. This was true not only in the United Church, but also within other denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church during the meetings of the Vatican II Council in Rome.

Writers within the World Council of Churches, such as Hans Ruedi-Weber, were urging that ministry could not be relevant to contemporary times without a clear understanding of the role of the membership within

⁴⁵ Mills, *Ordination in the United Church of Canada*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ The only noteworthy change was the addition of "Pastoral Care" to "Word and Sacrament" in 1970.

Christ's body. In the little book *Salty Christians*,⁴⁷ he sounded a clarion call to the churches to move out and become active in local and international struggles. He warned that if Christians continued to quarrel among themselves about doctrinal and ecclesial matters, the church would become obsolete and disappear.

As the United Church continues to explore questions about ministry for a new century, it must address in greater depth what is meant by the ministry of the whole people of God. A consensus has emerged today within the ecumenical community, claims David Bosch,⁴⁸ that ministry begins with the laity. Key to such an understanding is the conviction that it is upon congregations that the true apostolic heritage of the church rests. It has always been through the active laity that Christ's ongoing ministry in the world is expressed in all its diversity. The presence of Christ is not restricted to the institution; it is alive within the day-to-day life and concerns of all the baptised. Through baptism and confirmation, we become members in the whole body of Christ and in The United Church of Canada. As members, we are each called to share in Christ's ministry to live out God's mission for the world. All members are to be supported in their ministry by the church.

6.2 Previous Ministry Studies

Between 1968 and 1986, efforts were made to articulate more fully the theological concept of the whole people of God. The *Report on the Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century*, prepared for the 23rd General Council (1968), described "The One Ministry" as being the ministry of God, whose relentless love for the hurting world broke into plainest view in Jesus Christ.

The ministry is one and is given to the whole Church. It cannot be given to some to the exclusion of others. Within the one ministry some division of labour is necessary in order that the church's ministry shall not be wasteful and ineffective. Some will be ordained or commissioned to specific functions because God has equipped them with special gifts and they desire and are willing to be trained and employed in ministry.... The ministry is not an order of men (sic) religiously different from those commonly referred to as 'laymen' (sic). The ministry is the Church fulfilling its God-given task through the ordering of all members....⁴⁹

The *Report of the Task Force on Ministry* was authorized by the 27th General Council (1977) to be studied across the entire church. That report offers the following description of the ministry of the whole people of God:

All the people of God are called to ministry....ministry is corporate and personal and all are called to join with others in community organizations, political parties, coalitions and church organizations to strive for social justice and meet the world's physical and spiritual hungers....ministry involves one's occupation. This is true for all who have answered a call to ministry, not only for the ordained or lay people working for the church. There are differences between lay and ordained ministries which are of God and for the well-being of the Church. Lay ministries are spontaneous and dispersed; ordained are accountable and locatable. Lay ministries enable the Church to function everywhere; ordained ministries enable it to have a focus somewhere.⁵⁰

Through the laity, Christ's ministry can have free access to all humanity. It can be spontaneous, immediately responsive and flexible, shaped by the world's needs, and infinitely resourceful. A strong

⁴⁷ Ruedi-Weber, Hans, *Salty Christians* (Seabury Press, NY, 1965).

⁴⁸ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm shifts in the theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis Books, 1991) p. 472.

⁴⁹ *Report of the Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century* (23rd General Council, 1968) p.4.

⁵⁰ *Report of the Task Force on Ministry* (27th General Council, 1977) p.7.

affirmation of the laity enables the church to value all human beings as children of God who bear witness before the world to the powerful acts of God.⁵¹

The Report of Project: Ministry was based on findings from 650 participants who took part in discussions about *The Report of the Task Force on Ministry*. Their key findings (summarized here) included the following:

- Baptism and confirmation are a sign of membership in the body of Christ and a summons to ministry.⁵²
- Baptism is the single act of entrance into the ministry of the whole people of God. By baptism all members enter into the charismatic, apostolic, and servant ministry of Jesus Christ.⁵³
- There is a need for new language which describes the partnership between the ministry of the laity and the specific designated ministries.⁵⁴

6.3 Identifying Gifts for Ministry

Each person is given gifts for ministry. It is God who is the gift giver and who intends that each gift be used. One of the most important ministries a Congregation can offer is to recognize and mutually support the gifts of all its people. This is true whether a person is joining worship for the first time or has been a member for over 40 years. It is true if the individual is a babe in arms in the nursery, a young person leading in the prayers of the people, or a newly arrived person from another country. All can and ought to be invited to share in ministry. To enable this to happen, people must strive to know one another. But it is hard to form a sense of community in a society where population patterns are always changing. There is sometimes little to hold in common. As pressures and stress punctuate so many aspects of daily life, it becomes increasingly difficult to reach out to one another, and increasingly important to do so in an intentional way.

We have a tendency to separate the practice of faith from our daily living. We need to recognize and celebrate all ministries, including those that happen in the secular workplace—as well as those enacted by the leaders, the choir, and the pastoral caregivers of our Congregations. The church has a responsibility to offer education and support to those who see their daily work as ministry, and to those who don't yet recognize it as ministry. In this way, any community to which a follower of Christ belongs becomes a place where the risen Christ may be recognized and known. Such communities, no matter what or where they are, begin to look more and more like the shalom of God.

6.4 Providing Education and Support

Today, many people come to the church seeking to understand what life in Christ can mean, but they do not necessarily have a grounding in the religious beliefs and practices of the faith. They come with curiosity but also with tentativeness. It is a challenge of the church to be open, and also be able to explain the contemporary meaning behind traditions and rituals.

Developing the skill of reflection and prayer is an essential part of strengthening all people in their ministry. In order to live as Christians in daily life, people need to be supported by those who are willing to share what they have learned from Bible study, personal prayer, spiritual direction, theology, worship, and ethics. One of the essential qualities for designated ministry personnel in the future will be the ability to do

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.9.

⁵² *The Report of Project: Ministry* (28th General Council, 1980) p.19.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p.19.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.20-21.

and teach theological reflection on daily living and on the ministry and mission of the church.

People will also need help in developing small group ministries that support the call to live a Christian life in today's society. Through leadership development and theological education, disciples can be enriched and enabled to live out their Christian vocation.

6.5 A Covenant Community

A covenant is a sacred commitment involving God and God's people. In a community of faith, a covenant expresses a commitment to live in a mutual relationship that is practised in daily life and that inspires courage and energy for mission. The Congregation is a local covenant community that provides the base for the ministry of both the laity and designated ministry personnel. It is from such a base that people reach out to one another, to their community, and to the world at large in a living expression of their faith.

In the early church, one of many communities that gathered in Christ's name declared: "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various tongues." (1 Cor. 12:28)

The congregation is the place where Christians are nurtured in faith for outreach. It is also a special community where challenges can be heard and responses developed. As a gathering of believers and searchers, the congregation offers support and friendship. It also has the responsibility to struggle when conflicts and challenges arise. As the members go into the world to live out the gospel in the ordinariness of daily living, they are not alone; they are mutually accountable to one another.

William Diehl, an engineer, has spent many years developing such an idea of mutual support and accountability. He writes: "In the almost thirty years of my professional career, my church has never once suggested that there be any type of accounting of my on-the-job ministry to others. My church has never offered to improve those skills which could make me a better minister, nor has it ever asked if I needed any kind of support in what I was doing."⁵⁵

An understanding of responsibility and accountability is the foundation for the ministry of the laity. Congregations need to help their members discern how God, the church, and the world might use their gifts and abilities. In addition to inviting people to share their stories of ministry in the world, Congregations need to provide opportunities for reflection, evaluation, and training.

6.6 A Call to Accountability

It is through baptism and confirmation of baptism that people become members of the church and are affirmed in the ministry offered by the whole people of God.⁵⁶ Wherever a person engages in ministry, that person represents not only him or herself, but also represents the community of believers as a whole. The ministry of a parent at home matters to all the Christian community, as does the ministry of the person who works as a sales clerk at the check-out counter, or the youth on a volleyball team. Congregations need ways to acknowledge that all ministry is on behalf of the community of believers, and to call people to account for their ministry.

When individuals or groups undertake ministries as representatives of a community of faith—for example, visiting in homes or hospitals—it would be helpful if they had the support and authorization to represent the faith community.

A public ritual can provide an important way to recognize ministry and to show that the community of faith

⁵⁵ Diehl, William, *Christianity and Real Life* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976) pp. v-vi.

⁵⁶ Patricia Page, *All God's People Are Ministers: equipping church members for ministry* (Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1993) pp. 90-92.

authorizes and supports that ministry. Currently, many Congregations have a service of covenanting for their church school teachers and their members of the board, Council or Session. This report envisions that these rituals of covenanting be expanded to include a wider variety of ministries in the church and the world. Following are some examples of the kinds of covenant relationships that Congregations could engage in:

- A nurse who works in a hospital covenants with the Congregation that this is her ministry. She joins a peer group of health professionals in the Congregation, whose members have made similar covenants.
- A person who volunteers with a food bank covenants with the Congregation that this is his ministry, and supports this ministry by becoming a member of the outreach committee.
- A high school student covenants and commits to bringing the issues of young people to the Congregation, and the Congregation covenants to hear and act on them.

6.7 Celebrating the Sacraments

The Book of Acts records that people who became Christian were baptised and found community through the breaking of bread and prayer together. These rituals helped to define and strengthen the community.

Baptism was the outward sign of all those who shared in the covenant of Jesus Christ. Throughout the ages, when Christians accepted baptism, they became part of the covenant community and their individual gifts became expressions of Christ's ministry. It is significant that baptism is normally a public act, for here the entire community renews its covenant with God for ministry in the world.

Historically communion arose as people gathered to remember the crucifixion and celebrate the resurrection. Christ was recognized in the breaking of bread in both the Greek symposium and the Jewish seder meal. Customs from other traditions took on meaning within the developing Christian tradition. Communion was a household and common activity long before there were bishops, deacons, presbyters, or priests. In the early church, the community would designate who in their midst would be the celebrant. Hence the celebrant was acting on behalf of the community of faith and with the community's support and blessing. It was not until later in the church's history that ordination became a requirement of anyone presiding at communion.

Within the life and service of Congregations today, there are increasing situations where communion occurs with no licensed presider. These include gatherings of women who call their sharing of bread and wine *agape* but experience it as sacrament; Sunday school teachers leading children in an act of communion as part of the curriculum; and youth at a weekend retreat who develop a ritual for closing worship that they experience as the Lord's Supper.

The apostolic heritage of the church is vested in the community of faith, and the two sacraments—baptism and communion—belong to the whole people of God. The *Basis of Union* 5.10.1(3) designates the oversight of the administration of the sacraments to the Session (or its equivalent).

This report recommends that it be normal practice for United Church Congregations, as well as Presbyteries/Districts and Conferences, to recognize lay people in their midst to perform the sacraments, and that these people be recognized through a process of discernment, preparation, and the making of a covenant. This might apply, for example:

- to provide leadership in a Congregation where no one is licensed, and where people might otherwise have to wait for a long time for opportunities to celebrate the sacraments
- to enable a lay chair of the Presbytery/District or church board to preside at communion for the duration of the term
- to equip members of the pastoral care team for visiting hospitals and nursing homes.

In the feedback to the preliminary draft of this report, and at the Annual Meeting of the Division, overwhelming support emerged for strengthening our church's commitment to lay ministry and giving authority to the Session (or its equivalent) to grant permission to celebrate the sacraments.

Item 7 DESIGNATED MINISTRY

7.1 Call to Ministry

As we have described earlier in this report, the concept of a call to ministry is understood in various ways in The United Church of Canada.⁵⁷

- God calls all Christians to share in the ministry of Jesus Christ. This is the basic and fundamental call to ministry. The basic ministry in the church is not "ours" at all; it is the ministry of Jesus. Through baptism, God calls and empowers all Christians to share in this ministry of Jesus Christ.
- God calls all Christians to a life of vocation. To have a vocation means to live out one's call in the context of daily life, whether at home, at the work place, in the community or at church. Vocation comes from the Latin *vocare*, meaning to call forth. Ephesians 4:1 reminds us "to live a life worthy of the calling (vocation) you have received." Our God-given gifts—for service, for compassion, for seeking justice, for resisting evil—are called forth in the name of Jesus Christ and the gospel. This is the ministry of all God's people.
- God calls some to ordered ministry. This is not a better call, nor a "higher call." It is the call to a specific leadership role within the community of faith. Some people are called forth from the community of faith for leadership roles of spiritual guidance, education, proclaiming the gospel, celebrating the rites and rituals of the church, and for representational functions within the world. The ecumenical church community usually acknowledges this call after a period of discernment, preparation, and testing.
- God calls some to accountable forms of lay ministry—to use their gifts, experience, and faith in building up and sustaining the community of faith. The *Task Force on Ministry* (1977) identified lay ministries as those that are more "spontaneous and dispersed" (p.8). Lay ministries may occur within the church community or within the wider community. However, for lay ministers to represent the United Church to the world, there must be clear standards of competence and accountability appropriate to their roles.

7.2 Ordering Ministry

The Ministry Study Group was asked to study the implications of various categories of designated ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada, including the question of how we order ourselves. This is also the question which the World Council of Churches posed to all churches through its 1982 study document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (often called BEM). It outlined a two-fold order of pastors and diaconal ministers, ordained or consecrated, and several versions of the three-fold office (diaconate, pastors, and bishops).

The Ministry Study Group considered the many studies within the United Church, as well as BEM and similar studies from the Uniting Church of Australia, the United Church of Christ (USA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Methodist Church. (See Appendix A.) It also considered the feedback received through focus groups, many standing committees of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, and other groups within the General Council, and reviewed and considered all the feedback to the preliminary (September 1999) report.

⁵⁷ See *Report of the Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century* (1968), *Report of the Task Force on Ministry* (1977), *Project: Ministry Report* (1980), *Project: Ministry Revisited* (1988), *Theology of Call* (1994).

The current way of ordering ministry does not meet the needs of the current and future church. The Ministry Study Group looked to the future in making its recommendations to the Division. The group did not limit its vision to what would be helpful only in the next couple of years, but to what would serve God, the community of faith, and The United Church of Canada for many years to come.

A prime question before the Ministry Study Group, the Division and now the commissioners to General Council is this: What would facilitate ministry in the year 2020?

The proposed changes take into account our own heritage and our desire to maintain a mutual recognition of ministries among ecumenical churches. The Division envisions a new way of fostering ministry that is empowering, mutual, co-operative, and respectful. Our aim is to bring greater clarity, simplicity, and flexibility to the categories of ministry in the United Church.

The study group, and the Division, came to these conclusions by first considering the mission of the church (Item 3) and the forms of ministry that will enable the United Church to serve that mission. The conclusions are grounded on the premise that ministry is the work of the whole people of God, the priesthood of all believers, the ministry of all the baptised—which includes both laity and designated ministry personnel.

The conclusions take seriously the context of the church - the realities that we now face in terms of the Canadian and global communities in which the United Church is called to serve. The context is requiring changes in the structure, size and function of Congregations with the result that new conditions for ministry are present (4.3.1).

The Division feels strongly that the church needs to envision concrete ways to encourage persons under 35 years of age to access educational opportunities offered for leadership in ministries through the church. This will require further study, but the structural proposal that follows in may offer new ways for younger people to be actively engaged in ministry.

Table 5 provides an overview of the structure proposed to support this ministry of the whole people of God.

Table 5. Ministry of the Whole People of God

	Ministry of the Laity	Designated Lay Ministry	Ordered ministry
Action	Baptism and re-affirmation of vows Covenant	Recognition Covenant	Commissioning or ordination Covenant
Discernment with	Congregation	Congregation Presbytery/District	Congregation Presbytery/District or Conference
Recognizing Body	Congregation	Presbytery/District	Conference
Education	As appropriate	Clear and measurable standards appropriate to the ministry	Three to five years of theological study appropriate to the ministry
Accountability	Congregation	Presbytery/District	Presbytery/District
Marks of the Ministry	Spontaneous Localized Congregational based	Localized (not subject to settlement) Accountable for a specified period of time Within the United Church	Available to the church (subject to settlement) Lifelong vocation Within the church universal
Criteria for Admission	Active participation in a local Congregation	At least three years membership including discernment Completion of educational program including supervision of ministry	Two years membership Discernment Completion of educational program including supervision of ministry
Placement	By Congregation	By appointment by Presbytery/District	By settlement, call or appointment
Responsibility for Sacraments	Granted by the Congregation or, in some situations, the Presbytery/District or Conference	Granted by the Presbytery/District at the request of Session	Inherent with commissioning or ordination by Conference
Examples	Ministry in the world Sunday School Bible study Youth programs Music ministry Some paid positions within the Congregation Intentional professionals	Diaconal ministry Pastoral ministry Chaplaincy Pastoral counselling Administration Overseas personnel youth ministry music ministry parish nursing outreach ministry	diaconal ministry pastoral ministry chaplaincy pastoral counselling administration overseas personnel youth ministry

7.3 Threshold for Accountability

All ministry that is done on behalf of the United Church, whether paid or unpaid, is accountable to the church. Where the accountability lies depends on the type of ministry and, in the case of paid ministry, the number of hours per week. Many Congregations want to be able to respond promptly and responsibly to ministry needs in their midst. Sometimes a lay ministry starts on volunteer power but grows to the point where it needs the stability and support of someone who is paid an honorarium or hourly wage. The question then arises: At what point does the congregational employment shift from being the ministry of the laity—accountable to the Congregation—to a form of designated lay ministry that is more appropriately accountable to the wider church through the Presbytery/District?

The issue is not only money. Often these ministries of the laity involve pastoral visiting, Christian education, or youth ministry. These are ministries that serve the most vulnerable people in our society; they need to be taken seriously and supported with careful discernment and screening. At the same time, we recognize that too much structure can limit the ability of Congregations to respond to needs as they arise.

The current Needs Assessment process, which is used before a Congregation advertises a position of eight hours or more per week, is helping Congregations and their Presbytery/District to clarify their ministry needs and the ways in which those needs may be met by new staff. But there have been significant concerns raised about this 'eight-hour threshold'. For example, a Congregation might like to hire a university student for a part-time eight-to-ten-month contract, but might feel that the current discerning, screening, and hiring policies are too cumbersome and restrictive. The current policy states that any lay person who is working in the areas of education, outreach, pastoral care, or worship—and who is engaged for eight hours a week or more—must be interviewed by the Conference Interview Board and the Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee *before* being appointed to the congregational position.

The Ministry Study Group recommended that there be more flexibility in the process and that the current threshold be raised from eight to 14 hours per week. The Ministry Study Group, recalling our church's Congregationalist roots, sought greater freedom for Congregations to respond to their ministry staffing needs with part-time, short-term contracts, developed in conjunction with the Presbytery/District and within clear guidelines. The Division heard the proposal of the Ministry Study Group but retained the eight-hour threshold.

The church has struggled for many years with the issue of setting an appropriate threshold between congregational-accountable ministry and Presbytery/District-accountable ministry. Before 1994, anyone working under 14 hours per week was considered to be in a congregational appointment and anyone working 14 hours per week or more was considered to be in a Presbytery/District appointment, requiring Conference and Presbytery/District interviews before the appointment. This is the same time requirement for membership in the Pension and Group Insurance plan for congregational employees. However, in 1994 the General Council lowered the threshold for part-time ministry with accountability to a Presbytery/District to eight hours per week or more.

Among the issues to be clarified for a congregational-accountable ministry position will be criteria about United Church membership, educational expectations, screening procedures, liability, and accountability. If the recommendations of this report are approved, then these guidelines will be developed by the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education and ratified by the Executive of the General Council in a timely fashion.

7.4 Designated Lay Ministry

The ministry of the church is never limited to ordained or diaconal persons. The United Church has always benefited from lay people serving within their Congregations. Lay people who serve in worship and pastoral care have traditionally been called Lay Supply Ministers, and were renamed Lay Pastoral

Ministers in 1991. In 1994, with the rise in the number of lay people serving part-time or full-time in a Congregation alongside a called minister—usually in the areas of education, outreach, or pastoral care—the United Church adopted policies for Staff Associates.

Throughout United Church history, some people clearly have been called to lay ministry, rather than ordained or diaconal ministry. This has been, for the most part, a matter of self-identification and self-understanding. In some cases, a lay person may serve a Congregation in the functions normally associated with ordained or diaconal ministry (word, pastoral care, education, or outreach). The question then arises: What is the difference between the lay “minister” and the Ordained or Diaconal Minister? In other cases, the lay person may be serving as a chaplain in a hospital or nursing home, in a campus ministry, or as a pastoral counsellor in a counselling centre. These lay ministers often want and need some relationship to the United Church, and the United Church needs to hold them accountable for the representations they make on behalf of the church. How can these ministries be recognized and supported by the church?

The preliminary draft of this report recommended the establishment of an order of lay ministry. The intention was to offer the opportunity for lay people who seek to serve in ministry personnel positions to be part of an order that had clear standards for admission, was accountable to the wider church, and served to promote a sense of community among lay ministers. This recommendation was not well supported through the feedback. Many people liked the idea of an “order” for lay ministers such as in other denominations, but others protested the “elevation” of lay ministry to an order like that of ordained or diaconal ministers, and still others accused the study group of making lay ministers more clerical, when they wish to remain clearly lay. The study group also heard concerns about job security for ordained and diaconal ministers and the misconception that the report was lowering our educational standards for ministry personnel. Therefore, this revised report does not recommend an “order” of lay ministry, but offers parallel language by naming certain kinds of lay ministry as Designated Lay Ministry.

The study group found that for many who are currently serving as lay ministers, the inability to access theological education programs was a stumbling block. In our focus group feedback, many Lay Pastoral Ministers, for example, talked about their call to the ministry of worship, sacrament, and pastoral care. The call was not to “lay pastoral ministry,” but to the ministry of Jesus Christ as expressed in pastoral ministry. The inability to access the normal theological educational programs for this ministry caused them to choose lay pastoral ministry. Access to education will be dealt with in the resolutions that follow, but it informs our consideration for designated lay ministry.

This report offers the perspective that the vocation of the Ordained or Diaconal Minister involves lifelong service and accountability to the church. It is ordination or commissioning to the church universal. The vocation of the lay minister, on the other hand, is spontaneous, localized and temporary in its service and accountability.⁵⁸ This report affirms that there is a place for designated lay ministry alongside ordered ministry. Given the demands of ministry today, the church needs to be confident that the spiritual, theological, interpersonal, and educational competencies are the same for comparable ministries. This would be consistent with the United Church commitment to an educated ministry.

Currently, Lay Pastoral Ministers-in-Training must be members of the United Church for five years before being considered for an appointment, and Staff Associates have no membership time requirement. This has created its own problems and unevenness across the church. A Designated Lay Minister who will be leading worship, recommending curriculum for Christian Education programs, leading youth groups or confirmation classes, or providing pastoral care to the elderly, needs to be well immersed in the ethos and culture of the United Church. We propose a minimum of three years membership, which will include a process of discernment, followed by an educational program involving course work and educational supervision. Table 6 shows current and proposed requirements.

⁵⁸ *Report of the Task Force on Ministry (1977)*, p.8-9.

Table 6. Requirements for Designated Lay Ministry

Current for Lay Pastoral Minister	Current for Staff Associate Minister	Proposed for Designated Lay Minister
<p>A Lay Pastoral Minister-in-Training must be a member of the United Church for at least five years and, following one year of discernment, be interviewed by the Conference Interview Board and the Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee before seeking an appointment.</p>	<p>Member in the United Church, although there is no specific time requirement, as there is with other streams of ministry. The person will then be interviewed by the Conference Interview Board and the Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee concerning fitness and suitability to be employed as ministry personnel. Following interviews, Presbytery/District Pastoral Relations Committee may make an appointment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at least three years of active membership in The United Church of Canada, which will include a period of intentional discernment with the community (possibly including the current Discernment Process or some variation appropriate to the individual and context) - interviews with the Conference Interview Board and the Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee before an appointment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - educational supervision for at least three years while in at least a half-time appointment - attendance at three Conference orientation events - successful participation in three residential events (15 days each) - other academic or Continuing Education courses as deemed necessary by the educational supervisor and/or the Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee. <p>First Nations theological schools (Francis Sandy Centre, Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre) offer a three-year study program in their learning circles.</p>	<p>A Staff Associate Minister works in the areas of education, pastoral care, and/or outreach ministry. The person is not licensed to celebrate the sacraments and is appointed for a specified period; the length of appointment is at the discretion of the Presbytery/District. There are no pre-determined educational requirements, although the Presbytery/District may require an educational program as a condition of the appointment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a commitment to participate in an appropriate competency-based educational program, or evidence of having completed an equivalent educational program - a Presbytery/District appointment to a vacancy in a Pastoral Charge, outreach ministry, or Presbytery/District-recognized ministry - final interviews by the Presbytery/District following successful completion of the educational program.

The guidelines for the educational program for candidates for Designated Lay Ministry will reflect the various ministry activities. This could include worship, pastoral care, education, outreach, chaplaincy, counselling, youth ministry, or other ministries. See Appendix E for proposed educational guidelines. These standards for theological education and formation in the practice of ministry will need to be developed.

We envision a five-year phase-in period for the various discernment, screening, educational programs, and support mechanisms. Those who are currently identified as Lay Pastoral Ministers or Staff Associate Ministers would have the option of being recognized as a Candidate for Designated Lay Ministry or a Designated Lay Minister, or continuing their current designation while in their current appointment. Since the educational program would be based on competencies in the appropriate disciplines, previous education and experience would be taken into consideration. Designated Lay Ministers would not be subject to transfer and settlement.

7.5 Ordered ministry

Within the community of the baptised, some are called forth for specific leadership roles to enable and sustain the community. God and the church call some to a lifelong vocation of service and accountability to the church. These people require an ability to preach and teach the Christian gospel, to raise social and theological questions, to represent the love of God to the community and the world, and to represent the church to the wider community. This reflects the traditional and historical terminology of the minister

as "pastor, priest and prophet." Of course, over the history of the church, many other words have been used to describe the roles of the order of ministry.⁵⁹

The Ministry Study Group re-affirms the statements on ministry made by the United Church from 1968 to the present, which declare that there is one Order of Ministry.⁶⁰ Within that one order, there are different roles and functions. Some perform mainly a pastoral role within a Congregation. This includes worship leadership and proclaiming the word of God on a regular basis. It includes a teaching role, an administrative role, a counselling and referral role, as well other roles in response to the needs of the community of faith. These people have traditionally been called *Ordained Ministers*.

Some perform mainly an educational role within a Congregation. This may include worship leadership and proclaiming the word of God on an occasional basis; working with all ages to promote understanding and growth in faith; or helping members of the community to be faithful ministers. Others may focus on a justice-seeking role within the church and the world, working with people on the margins of our church and society. This may involve service ministries, prophetic ministry, or other functions in response to community needs. These people have traditionally been called *Diaconal Ministers*.

All forms of trained, designated ministry in the United Church are called to be the "theological presence" of the church in the community. It has been the distinctiveness of the United Church not to privilege one form over another, but to seek ways to value all.

The United Church needs to recognize a vocational commitment to ministry. Those who are expected to function in specific ministries need to be recognized as fit for the call. Ordered Ministers have a particular calling from God, and the church, which is usually lifelong. Ordered Ministers never exercise ministry on their own, but are subject to a specific call from a Congregation or other organization recognized by the church. The Presbytery/District will always have oversight of Ordered Ministers on their roll. Although membership as a Ordered Minister is lifelong, it is not in keeping with United Church theology that, once ordained or commissioned, one is always authorized to exercise ministry as a Ordered Minister. The exercise of ministry is under the oversight of the church through the Presbytery/District. Therefore, an Ordered Minister may decide not to function for a period of time in a designated role, and so would need to continue under the oversight of the Presbytery/District or voluntarily be "in suspense of function."

A growing number of people are coming to the United Church seeking to be ordained or commissioned without a solid United Church background. Therefore the Division proposes that the length of time for active membership in the United Church prior to beginning discernment be increased from one to two years. In other respects, we affirm the current requirements for commissioning to Diaconal Ministry and for ordination to Ordained Ministry.

Table 7 shows the current requirements for a Diaconal Minister and an Ordained Minister, and the proposed amendment, which applies to both.

⁵⁹ See H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, eds., *The History of Ministry in Historical Perspectives* (Harper and Brothers, NY, 1956, revised 1983) and E. Schillebeekx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* (Crossroad, 1985).

⁶⁰ See *Report of the Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century* (1968), *The Task Force on Ministry Report* (1977), *Project: Ministry Report* (1980), *Project: Ministry Revisited* (1988), *Theology of Call* (1994).

Table 7. Requirements for Ordered ministry

Current for Ordained Minister	Current for Diaconal Minister	Proposed Amendment
<p>- One year of active membership in The United Church of Canada, followed by a year of discernment with a local Congregation and Presbytery/District, and then interviews with the Conference Interview Board and Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee, leading to status as a candidate.</p> <p>- Successful completion of the program of studies at one of the United Church theological schools, which involves academic courses, supervised field education, and courses in integration.</p> <p>- Successful completion of the eight-month Internship Program (if not in a community based program, which includes supervised field work as a part of the program).</p> <p>- Successful completion of the final interviews with Conference Education and Students Committee and settlement into a Presbytery/District-accountable ministry.</p>	<p>- One year of active membership in The United Church of Canada, followed by a year of discernment with a local Congregation and Presbytery/District, and then interviews with the Conference Interview Board and Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee, leading to status as a candidate.</p> <p>- Successful completion of the five-year program of studies at one of the First Nations theological schools, or the four-year program at the Centre for Christian Studies. The four-year program involves academic courses at a theological school, participation in five learning modules (leadership, educational ministry, pastoral care, social ministry, integration), supervision in the practice of ministry, and sessions with a vocational mentor.</p> <p>- Participation in the Internship Program is not a requirement for candidates for Diaconal ministry, but is available on the recommendation of the school and Presbytery/District.</p> <p>- Successful completion of the final interviews with Conference Education and Students Committee and settlement into a Presbytery/District-accountable ministry.</p>	<p>...that the period of active membership in The United Church of Canada before entering the discernment process [ordination or commissioning] be changed from one year to two years.</p>

7.6 A New Rite for Ordination and Commissioning

The Ministry Study Group struggled hard to define a common service to designate all forms of Christian leadership. It felt initially that ordination could be that rite since, in its early history, it was widely practiced by the church. The preliminary draft of this report recommended one Order of Ministry, ordained to the ministry of Jesus Christ and commissioned to the particular role, expression, or function of ministry. This would involve the ordination of future diaconal ministers and pastoral ministers. Many Diaconal Ministers did not support this big shift in the current thinking of the church (although some did like this aspect of the report). The study group eventually moved away from this approach because of several difficulties related to the meaning and understanding of ordination. For example:

- Although it is true that the earliest expressions of designated leadership were recognized (among other ways) through a practice of ordination, it is not true that ordination maintained its early flexible meaning throughout the history of the church.
- Although in practice the word "ordination" is merely a Latin translation of the Greek word meaning to elect by a show of hands or to lay hands on, historically and theologically the Latin word no longer means simply to designate or to choose. It means to set apart or order.
- The consultation of Diaconal Ministers feared for the identity and flexibility of their ministry roles if all members of an order were ordained.
- Although, historically, ordination was an act used by bishops to designate leaders, and was therefore tied to the apostolic sense of leadership, it is not necessary to use the word "ordination" to mean the

consequence of "the laying on of hands."

The Ministry Study Group decided that the historic weight of the word "ordination" made it unacceptable as a term for a flexible, widespread designation of ministry. The group concluded that a common rite is needed to designate ministry, and that it ought to be by "prayer and the laying on of hands," but that a new language of call and designation is needed. The Division agreed with the Ministry Study Group, that there be no change from the language of ordination and commissioning *at the present time*, but will recommend that the United Church commit itself to deliberate thought and consultation to find a new common rite to designate all forms of ordered ministry.

7.7 The Sacraments

The United Church has traditionally held in tension the belief that ordination grants the responsibility of presiding at the baptismal font and the communion table, and that other lay and diaconal leadership could share that responsibility under the oversight of the church. As a result, Conferences have been able to "grant a license for the sacraments" to Lay Pastoral Ministers (-in-Training) or Diaconal Ministers. Also, lay Moderators and lay Presidents of Conference have been granted this role. Currently, *The Manual* makes no provision for "a license for the sacraments" for Staff Associates or Student Supply Ministers.

As the Ministry Study Group reviewed the biblical and historical material related to diaconal ministry, it became clearer that the New Testament makes no connection between the laying on of hands and presiding at the sacraments. Those who receive the laying on of hands are to proclaim the word, share the spirit of the gospel, and engage in other ministries of service for and with the community. Since traditionally the designated leaders have presided at baptism and the eucharist, the diaconal ministries of the church should not have to request the right to practice a sacramental ministry; it is inherent in the commissioning to ordered ministry.

The Ministry Study Group heard from the focus groups that there is dissatisfaction with and misunderstanding of our current practices. Some Lay Pastoral Ministers and Staff Associate Ministers perceive that their ministry is devalued because the church denies them the ability to celebrate the sacraments. Their ministry would be enhanced if it included access to the sacraments. The Ministry Study Group, in its preliminary report, recommended that the Session (or their equivalent) be given the authority to decide who may be granted permission to preside at the table and the font. This recommendation had widespread support from those who provided feedback.

The Division concluded that since membership for Designated Lay Ministers lies in the Presbytery/District, and their accountability is to the Presbytery/District, it is proper that decisions regarding ability to celebrate the sacraments should also rest with that body. The Session (or its equivalent) would consider whether to request permission from the Presbytery/District for Designated Lay Ministers to celebrate communion and baptism within their community of faith.

The Ministry Study Group believes that the history and tradition of the United Church places responsibility for the worship, spiritual, and sacramental life of the Congregation with the Session or its equivalent. Therefore, it makes sense to trust the Congregation to responsibly decide who may preside at the table and font on behalf of the Congregation. Similarly, each other court of the church could make decisions about the sacraments for lay people who are engaged in ministry within that court.

The General Council would set guidelines for granting responsibility for the sacraments for a specific period of time and within a specific location. However, the decision of who could access that responsibility would lie primarily with the Session of the Congregation (for lay persons in the Congregation) and the Presbytery/District at the request of Session (for Designated Lay Ministers). For Presbytery/District, Conference, or General Council ministries or events, the decision would lie with those courts.

7.8 Educational Competency for Ministry

One of the expectations of the church is that it have an educated leadership. This implies not only academic intelligence, but also emotional maturity, spiritual depth, strong interpersonal skills, and social analysis. Historically, those trained for ministry were often the most educated people in the local community. The United Church needs to build on this tradition to ensure excellence and competence in its ministry leaders in the new millennium.

The church must be prepared to raise the stakes in the quality of its leadership. Our church lore is rich with stories of incompetent ministry personnel who ruined thriving Congregations—and of particularly good ministers who transformed dying Congregations into vibrant churches. It is a wise investment to ensure that there will be structures in place to nurture excellence and competence in ministry leadership for the long term. Furthermore, ministers need to constantly sharpen their skills and re-discern their role in a fast-changing world. The viability and the relevance of the church depends on our ability to prepare ministry personnel to meet the spiritual needs of a people and society that are longing for more depth and meaning in life.

The feedback gathered from the focus groups, and a review of previous studies, indicates that the United Church educational institutions have fulfilled their roles well and are providing excellent educational programs for the church. Many of the institutions are offering a variety of new courses, certificate programs, and degrees. Many now offer lay programs in a Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS) or a Certificate Program in Lay Ministry. There are some unique offerings, such as a Diploma in Restorative Justice and Corrections, a Certificate Program in Lay Liturgical Leadership, and a Social Ministry Certificate. Although exciting opportunities are evolving, there are still some aspects of the current educational model which require adaptation and change.

The General Council has the responsibility to identify the components of an educational program that qualifies individuals for membership in Ordered Ministry or Designated Lay Ministry; however, the church has historically left it up to the theological schools to determine the method of the educational program.⁶¹ This report does not want to change that historic relationship and the values of academic freedom at the theological schools. We do want to urge the church to consider and approve some new directions and educational standards for ministry personnel.

The Ministry Study Group heard from several focus groups that there is dissatisfaction with the current educational opportunities and the requirements for those serving as lay ministers (Staff Associate Ministers or Lay Pastoral Ministers). Many of these lay ministers do come to their positions with significant life, work, and church experience, which the United Church honours and recognizes as equivalent to some of the educational expectations for members of the Order of Ministry. However, there are currently no guidelines to assess equivalent competencies and provide an outline of educational requirements.

One of the working principles of this report is that there should be clear standards of competence and accountability appropriate to the various roles or expressions of ministry within Designated Lay Ministry. This would mean, for example, that a current Lay Pastoral Minister who is serving as the minister of word, sacrament and pastoral care would have the equivalent educational competency as an Ordained Minister who is also serving as the minister of word, sacrament and pastoral care. Procedures will be needed to assess an individual's competencies before entering the educational program, and then a program of courses and educational supervision to develop and strengthen the required competencies for the particular functions of ministry. As this report stated earlier, people in ministry who identify themselves as "lay" and who do not envision a lifelong covenant with the church as a Ordered Minister could choose to be a Designated Lay Minister for the term of their appointment. See Appendix E for suggested areas of

⁶¹ *The Manual* Section 725.

competency for the different functions of ministry.

Access to education is another concern of this report. In the focus groups, and other discussions, some people said that their decision to choose a particular stream of ministry was determined by their ability to access an educational program. Some people who felt called to the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral care chose not to be ordained because it involved a four-year residential educational program. Instead, they chose lay pastoral ministry because they could work and study at the same time.

The United Church has been forward-looking in the development of community-based education programs. It can be proud of its past and current educational programs for ministry, but it also needs to look ahead to new forms of education. The church has learned much from the creative programs developed by First Nations ministries. The Dr. Jessie Saukteaux Resource Centre was founded in 1984 and has operated on a community-based, action-reflection model of learning. It has been a leader in this type of community-based education, where students study part-time in a learning circle and work part-time in a ministry setting with the supervision of a Vision Keeper. This type of program is now part of the ministry preparation programs for the Francis Sandy Theological School and the Centre for Christian Studies. But community-based education is available only on an experimental basis to candidates for ordained ministry, and only in five of our thirteen Conferences. The In-Community Program for Ordination (ICPO) was available only to candidates for ordained ministry from the Manitou, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Northwest, and All Native Circle Conferences.

The First Nations ministry education programs at the Dr. Jessie Saukteaux Resource Centre and the Francis Sandy Theological School are open to students studying for diaconal ministry, ordained ministry, lay pastoral ministry, and the laity. We believe that this approach enriches the educational programs and helps to break down some of the current barriers of misunderstanding and mistrust between the different streams of ministry.

7.9 Lifelong Learning

One of the assumptions of this report is that discernment, education for ministry, and the development of a ministry identity, are lifelong tasks. In many professions, members are required to take certified courses to keep up with their knowledge and skills, ensuring that the whole profession is up to date and competent. Some of the denominations in the United States require their clergy to earn a certain number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) over a certain period of time.

The Manual (1998) states that "Ministry Personnel and others in Presbytery Accountable Ministry are entitled to and *are expected to take advantage* of three weeks of study leave per year." [Section 039(a), italics added] The Presbytery is assigned to oversee the continuing education of all ministry personnel.⁶² However, while some ministry personnel do engage in an intentional and regular lifelong learning program, many do not.

The United Church needs to have clear guidelines and an accountability process to ensure continuing growth and learning for its ministry personnel. The preliminary report recommended that the Oversight Committee of the Presbytery/District conduct an assessment of continuing education programs for all ministry personnel as part of its regular oversight function. This was not supported in the feedback because, as many people indicated, Presbyteries/Districts are already very overworked and cannot handle more assignments. Therefore, to keep this matter alive in the church, the Division asks that it be explored further.

As the church and the world change, lifelong learning becomes more and more important. The United Church needs to ensure continuing growth and learning for its ministry personnel. All people who are engaged in ministry need opportunities to continue and enhance their theological understanding and skills for ministry. Ways must be found to do this that are inviting, accessible, and affordable.

⁶² *The Manual* (1998) Section 362.

7.10 Transfer and Settlement

The transfer and settlement procedures for the Order of Ministry have been a longstanding tradition in the United Church, inherited from our Methodist roots. These procedures have provided an important way to try to meet the needs of more isolated and remote Congregations or the smaller Pastoral Charges that traditionally have had difficulty calling a minister. But ordinands and commissionands have expressed much dissatisfaction with the transfer and settlement process over the past 10 to 15 years. The Division of Ministry Personnel and Education has been studying the process and will be recommending some changes to the General Council in another report; therefore, this report will not deal with the question of administering the transfer and settlement process. The concern of this report is with the policy of what constitutes a settlement.

Our recommendation is to open up the settlement process and make a wider variety of sites available. This would mostly affect the candidates for diaconal ministry, and some candidates for ordained ministry.

The current policy requires settlement to a Presbytery/District-accountable ministry. This has been interpreted to mean that the ministry available for settlement must be under the oversight of the Presbytery/District, like a Pastoral Charge or a United Church outreach ministry. Many commissionands for diaconal ministry had hoped to be settled to a social justice ministry or a chaplaincy setting, which are not considered to be "Presbytery/District-accountable." They were ecumenical ministries or secular organizations that may have welcomed a theologically trained person, but did not meet our criteria.

The United Church's theology of ministry has always acknowledged that ministry does not only occur within church settings. Ministry occurs within world settings that may or may not be accountable to the United Church through the Presbytery/District. Diaconal ministry is a ministry of education, outreach, and pastoral care; the ability to settle a Diaconal Minister to other ministry settings would enable and support that distinctive form of ministry. The same principle would also apply to some Ordained Ministers with particular skills or interests.

The significant change here is the understanding that the United Church, through the Presbytery/District, has oversight of the person in ministry and not of the ministry itself. This change will open up the settlement process to enable the church to appropriately match an individual's gifts for ministry with the needs of the institutions. It will enable Diaconal Ministers to use their gifts and skills for social justice ministry in the secular world as well as in the church. Transfer and settlement would be available only to candidates for and members of ordered ministry. Designated Lay Ministers would not be subject to transfer and settlement, but would continue to be subject to the process of annual review and appointment by the Presbytery/District.

7.11 Accountability and Representation

The mandate from the 35th General Council asked the Ministry Study Group to "study the implications of various categories of designated ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada" including:

- "who they represent within the courts of the church", and
- how ministry is ordered.

As has already been stated, people in ministry should be accountable to the appropriate body of the church, as follows:

- Laity are accountable to their home Congregation for their own ministry in the world and in the life of the church.
- Designated Lay Ministers are recognized by the Presbytery/District, are covenanted to a particular expression of ministry, and are accountable to the Presbytery/District while they are in an appointment or employed in a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry.

- Ordered Ministers are ordained or commissioned by the Conference, are covenanted to a particular expression of ministry by the Presbytery/District, and are accountable to the Presbytery/District while in good standing and on the roll of the Presbytery/District.
- Candidates for designated lay ministry or ordered ministry are accountable to the Presbytery/District, and may be appointed to a ministry position while completing educational requirements.

These four statements basically continue the church's current understandings, with the few exceptions that follow.

7.11.1 *Designated Lay Ministry*

Currently lay people who are in a Presbytery/District appointment have dual membership in a local Congregation and in a Presbytery/District. This report envisions that Designated Lay Ministers who are under appointment in a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry are members of the Presbytery/District, and not a local Congregation, while in the appointment.

Once recognized as a Designated Lay Minister, a person who is no longer in an appointment would be listed as a Designated Lay Minister, but would be in "suspense of function" for ministry. When a Designated Lay Minister is not under appointment to a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry for whatever reason (including retirement), their membership and accountability would transfer to the Congregation of their choice.

For the purposes of electing delegates to General Council, Designated Lay Ministers and Ordered Ministers would make up 50 percent of the General Council, in proportion to their numbers. For example, if Designated Lay Ministers in a particular Conference make up 10 percent of the total of Designated Ministers, they would comprise 10 percent of the designated ministers elected to General Council.

7.11.2 *Ordered ministry*

When members of ordered ministry are in a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry and are accountable to the Presbytery/District, their membership is in the Presbytery/District and they are retained on the roll of Presbytery/District. However, when an Ordered Minister is not in a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry, the person must be in a covenant relationship with a Congregation or recognized ministry to be considered for retention on the roll of Presbytery/District. Presbyteries could make exceptions to this requirement for Ordered Ministers who are unable for certain reasons (health or disability or being out of the country) to fulfill this covenant. Ordered Ministers who are unwilling to enter into such a covenant would be placed on a Discontinued Service List.

An example of a covenant relationship between a Congregation and an Ordered Minister could be regular attendance at worship, or it could include helping with pastoral care while the ministry personnel are on holidays or study leave, or providing support to a committee or study group.

7.12 **Our Vision of Ministry**

Through this report, a vision of ministry is offered that is inclusive, embracing all forms and expressions of ministry within the church and society. The resolutions that follow seek to remove some of the hierarchical structures that restrict the freedom of the Spirit to act in the church and in the world. These resolutions are important steps, but they do not represent the whole journey. Therefore, the Division proposes that the church continue to reflect on the issues of ministry and its designation.

RESOLUTION NO. ____

Title: Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century

From: Division of Ministry Personnel and Education

Financial Implications:

Sources of Funding:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The 37th General Council approve the request of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, to adopt the following principles, as outlined in the report *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*:

1. the value and diversity of paid accountable ministries currently existing within The United Church of Canada;
2. the emphasis placed upon a high standard of education required of, and the diversity of training available to, those entering into paid accountable ministries;
3. the uplifting and honouring of the ministry of the laity (for example: the proposal that the Session be given the responsibility to grant permission for congregational leaders to celebrate the sacraments).

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Title: Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century

From: Division of Ministry Personnel and Education

Financial Implications:

Sources of Funding:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

The 37TH General Council approve the report of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, entitled *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*, including the following actions:

1 Ministries of the laity

- a) that Congregations intentionally recognize ministries conducted by lay people (members and adherents)
- b) that The United Church of Canada, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide resource materials and guidelines for developing congregational programs that will enable Congregations and members to discern the ministries of the laity and to devise methods of accountability for those ministries
- c) that The United Church of Canada provide worship resources for rituals celebrating the relationship between faith and life.

2 The Sacraments

- a) that the responsibility for granting permission for congregational leaders to preside at the sacraments of communion and baptism should rest with the Session (or its equivalent) in a Pastoral Charge as an extension of its responsibility to have oversight of 'the administration of the sacraments' [*Basis of Union*, Section 5.10.1(3)]
- b) that the responsibility for granting permission for Presbytery/District or Conference leaders to preside at the sacraments should rest with the Presbytery/District or Conference for those under its responsibility and authority.
- c) That the General Council, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide or identify resource materials for Sessions re: the administration of the sacraments similar to those currently available to Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training.

3 Guidelines for courts of the church when considering those to administer the sacraments

The person who is granted permission to administer the sacraments shall be someone who:

- a) is a member of The United Church of Canada and a member in good standing of the Pastoral Charge, Presbytery/District, or Conference that is granting the responsibility
- b) has the respect of the community and has been proven trustworthy in leadership
- c) has a faith that they can articulate and that has been demonstrated in the community
- d) understands that the responsibility that they are undertaking is to fulfil a role in serving the community, is bringing access to the table, not excluding people from it
- e) is willing to be accountable to the court that is entrusting them with this responsibility, and will act within the policies and guidelines of the Congregation and wider church

- f) is familiar with the polity and practices of The United Church of Canada, particularly regarding sacraments
- g) is willing to engage in reflection and education on the sacraments and the role and meaning of sacrament within the community of faith.

4 Threshold between Congregation and Presbytery/District accountable ministries.

- a) that the threshold between a congregational-accountable ministry and a Presbytery/District-accountable ministry be based on the ministry roles being performed (education, outreach, pastoral care, worship) and on the number of hours in the position description,
- b) that a congregational appointment be made in consultation with the Presbytery/District for any ministry position under 8 hours per week (according to guidelines determined by the General Council),
- c) that any lay ministry position of 8 hours per week or more in the areas of education, outreach, pastoral care, or worship must conform to the requirements of designated lay ministry and be a Presbytery/District appointment.

5 Designated Lay Ministry

- a) that The United Church of Canada establish a new category of designated lay ministry, which will consist of lay people serving in Presbytery/District-recognized ministries (for example, congregational ministries, Outreach Ministries, chaplaincies, and administration),
- b) that this designation would take place at the Presbytery/District level through a ritual of recognition by prayer and the laying on of hands,
- c) that at the beginning of each new Presbytery-recognized ministry relationship, a covenant will be made with the Designated Lay Minister, the Presbytery/District, and those with whom the ministry is exercised.

6 Criteria for recognition as a Designated Lay Minister.

That the criteria for recognition as a Designated Lay Minister be:

- a) at least three years of active membership in The United Church of Canada, which will include a period of intentional discernment with the community (possibly including the current Discernment Process or some variation appropriate to the individual and context),
- b) interviews with the Conference Interview Board and the Presbytery/District Education and Students Committee,
- c) a commitment to participate in an appropriate competency-based educational program, or evidence of having completed an equivalent educational program,
- d) a Presbytery/District appointment to a vacancy in a Pastoral Charge, outreach ministry, or Presbytery/District-recognized ministry,
- e) final interviews by the Presbytery/District following successful completion of the educational program.

7 Standards for Designated Lay Ministers

- a) that The United Church of Canada have clear and measurable standards for Designated Lay Ministers that are appropriate to the roles and functions of their ministry position

- b) that the United Church develop methods to determine an individual's competencies for ministry through a prior learning assessment (PLA).
- c) that the United Church explore and develop ways in which ecumenically shared lay ministries can be affirmed and available for Pastoral Charges, mission units and Outreach Ministries.

8 Ordered Ministry

- a) that the current criteria for ordination and commissioning into the Order of Ministry be affirmed for ordered ministry, with the following change:
- b) that the period of active membership in The United Church of Canada before entering the discernment process be changed from one year to two years.

9 One Common Rite

That a process be developed to ensure that, following the 39th General Council, there be one common rite of entry into ordered ministry.

10 Sacraments: Ordered Ministry and Designated Lay Ministry

- a) that membership in ordered ministry inherently provides the authority to preside at the sacraments of communion and baptism,
- b) that the Presbytery/District at the request of a Session (or its equivalent, or board of an outreach ministry) will have the authority to grant permission to celebrate the sacraments to Designated Lay Ministers with whom they have a covenant relationship.

11 Network of theological schools and programs

That this General Council ensure the existence of a vibrant network of theological schools and programs so that all those who are interested in designated ministry positions will have access to a variety of educational opportunities.

12 Opportunities to study together

That this General Council create more opportunities for the various categories of designated ministry and laity to study together in programs that honour the various forms of ministry.

13 Continuing Education

That the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education and the Division of Mission in Canada be directed to explore new and creative ways to encourage and support continuing education for those in designated lay and ordered ministry.

14 Settlement to Presbytery/District Recognized Ministry

- a) that settlement by action of the Settlement Committee be to a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry, rather than to the current designation of Presbytery/District-accountable ministry
- b) that the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education be asked to develop appropriate criteria for Presbyteries/Districts to determine whether to accept a particular organization, agency, or outreach ministry as a suitable ('recognized') settlement site. These criteria would include, at least:
 - the willingness of the institution to be part of a covenant with the United Church;
 - the willingness of the individual to enter into this covenant and be accountable to the

Presbytery/District; and

- the agreement that the individual will be involved in the life of the Presbytery/District and Conference.

15 Membership within the church courts

- a) that Designated Lay Ministers who are under appointment in a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry will have their membership transferred from a Congregation to the Presbytery/District
- b) i) that for the purposes of electing Commissioners to General Council, Designated Lay Ministers and Ordered Ministers together will make up 50 percent of the General Council, and that the proportion of each will be determined by their numbers [*Basis of Union*, Section 8.1.1]
ii) and that a remit be authorized to test the will of the church in this matter.
- c) that Designated Lay Ministers who are no longer in an appointment will have their membership transferred from the Presbytery/District to a Congregation
- d) that Designated Lay Ministers who are no longer in an appointment will have their name, status, and employment history recorded by the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education.

16 Ordered Ministers not in a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry

That members of ordered ministry who are not in a Presbytery/District-recognized ministry must be in a covenant relationship with a Congregation or recognized ministry to be considered for retention on the roll of Presbytery/District.

17 Further Study

That The United Church of Canada engage in further study and action to incarnate a vision of ministry having these characteristics:

- a) *unity* — where all people are in ministry; where all forms of ministry are equally valued
- b) *responsiveness* — where the church is less institutional and more of a movement, reflecting the characteristics of Jesus as a risk-taker and an alternative voice to the dominant culture (prophetic, joyful and compassionate); the types and structures of ministry are flexible, non-hierarchical, spontaneous, contemporary, just and justice-seeking, and compatible with the spirit of “tent-making” ministry (not necessarily providing a full-time livelihood)
- c) *accountability* — where ministry is rooted in the service of God’s mission in the world, and is expressed in and accountable to the community
- d) *preparedness* — where all those in designated ministry are appropriately prepared theologically and in the practice of ministry for the forms of ministry to which they are called.

18 That the *Manual* be revised to reflect these actions.

Appendix A. UNITED CHURCH DOCUMENTS AND STUDIES ABOUT MINISTRY

Reviewed in Phase 1 of this Ministry Study

- The Basis of Union and the Constitution as found in The Manual (1998)
- Commission on the Ministry in the Twentieth Century (23rd GC 1968)
- Report of the Task Force on Ministry (27th GC, 1977)
- The Report of Project: Ministry (28th GC, 1980)
- Education for Ministry in the UCC: An Historical Probe (DMPE 1983)
- Women in Ministry: Research Project (DMPE 1984)
- Project: Ministry Revisited by Anne Squire (MPE 1985)
- Envisioning Ministry (DMPE 1985)
- A Concise Statement on Lay, Diaconal and Ordained Ministry (DMPE 1990)
- Report of the Consultation on Ministry Vocations (DMPE 1991)
- History of Diaconal Ministry in The United Church of Canada (DMPE 1991)
- So tell me again, what is a Diaconal Minister? (Kay Heuer, 1992)
- Lay Pastoral Ministry Handbook (DMPE 1992)
- Thinking about Ministry (DMPE 1994)
- Discerning the Call (DMPE 1994, revised 199)
- Women's Voices: Stories Shared by Women in Ministry (Joan McConnell, 1994)
- Theology of Call (GC Executive 1995)
- Interim Ministry Guidelines (DMPE 1993, 1995, and 1998)
- Future Hopes for Theological Education and Present Realities for a Community Based Program for Ordination: An Exploratory Study (ICPO 1996)
- Ministry Research Project by Cora Krommenhoek (DMPE 1996)
- Certificate Program in Youth Ministry (Naramata, 1996)
- Summary report of the Evaluation of the Candidacy Process (DMPE 1997)
- Ministry Needs in the New Millennium (DMPE 1997)
- Report on Admission to the Order of Ministry (36th GC, 1997)
- Recommendation for a Unified Placement Project (DMPE 1997)
- Embracing Transformation: Congregational Mission in a Changing Canada (DMC 1997)
- Criteria for Educational Preparation for Diaconal Ministry (DMPE 1997)
- Education for Church Leadership Coordinating Committee Report to 36th GC (1997)
- Various Newsletters from the Ethnic Ministries Council (1997-1998)

Appendix B. **MINISTRY STUDIES FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS**

Reviewed in Phase 3 of this Ministry Study

Together for Ministry, Final Report and Recommendations: Task Force on the Study of Ministry 1988-1993, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1993.

A New Ordering of Ministry, The United Methodist Church (USA), 1997.

Report of the Task Group to Review Ministerial Education, The Uniting Church in Australia, 1998.

Appendix C. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

covenant – a sacred commitment involving God and God's people. In a community of faith, a covenant expresses a commitment to live in a mutual relationship that is practised in daily life and that inspires courage and energy for mission.

designated lay ministry – the ministry of lay people which is recognized by and accountable to the church through the Presbytery/District; this ministry involves employment and remuneration by the church or another agency.

ordered ministry – the ministry of those who have made a lifelong commitment to work within the church universal, and whose vocation is recognized by a Conference. This category includes *Ordained Ministers* and *Diaconal Ministers*. (In *The Manual*, this is currently referred to as the Order of Ministry.)

Diaconal Minister – a person who has been commissioned by a Conference to a lifelong ministry of education, service and pastoral care.

DMPE – the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education of The United Church of Canada.

lay ministry – the ministry to which all Christians are called by virtue of their baptism and confirmation; this ministry may occur within or outside of the church.

Lay Pastoral Minister – a lay person who has completed the required educational program defined by *DMPE* and has been appointed to a Pastoral Charge with the responsibilities for word, sacrament (when licensed), and pastoral care.

ministry of the laity – (see *lay ministry*).

ministry personnel – all those accountable to Presbytery/District in the various categories of ministry, who have been called, settled, or appointed. It includes *Diaconal Ministers*, *Staff Associate Ministers*, *Ordained Ministers*, *Lay Pastoral Ministers* (-in-Training), Student Supply, Candidate Supply, and persons from other denominations under appointment as Ordained Supply or Diaconal Supply.

order – a body of persons united by a common bond or purpose, whose members may be lay or ordained. By tradition, an order has these characteristics: clearly defined requirements for membership; educational standards; membership outside the Congregation served; an understanding that one represents the order, and not merely oneself; a shared understanding of the order's history; an understanding of one's own vocation and how it connects with the vocation of others in the order; formalized accountability to the order. Traditionally in the United Church, those in ordered ministry have been paid; in other words, the church has supported the vocation of ordered ministry with a livelihood.

Ordained Minister – a person who has been ordained by a Conference to a lifelong ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care.

Staff Associate Minister – a lay person who has completed the required interviews by Presbytery/District and Conference and has been appointed to a Pastoral Charge or outreach ministry with the responsibilities for education, outreach and/or pastoral care. Staff Associate Ministers usually work in teams.

UCC – The United Church of Canada.

Appendix D. STATEMENT OF BELIEF ADOPTED BY *DIAKONIA*
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA (1992)

"We are called with all God's people to
be responsible agents of creative transformation
support and caring
liberation and reconciliation
justice and mercy
inviting all into a pilgrimage of
dignity and well-being,
and a ministry of accompaniment.
And we are called with all God's people
into a life of discernment and risk.
Our roots are within the church's earliest traditions,
and we exist today within a world-wide
expression of diaconal ministry.
Diaconal ministry exists within the ministry
of the whole community and is the
responsibility of that community.
The primary task of diaconal ministry
is mutual empowerment
through education, service and pastoral care.
This includes working together
to maintain relationships that are life-giving
and sustaining of community
to meet immediate needs
and to work to create a just and loving world.
We offer an intentional commitment
to stand and be with others on the periphery.
Seeking to be faithful to the gospel,
diaconal ministry remains flexible and
responsive to the needs of the Church and the world,
wherever that may lead."

Appendix E. A MODEL FOR EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION FOR DESIGNATED MINISTRY

Following are some first-draft ideas about an educational program that would be consistent with the vision of designated ministry proposed by this report. We offer it as a starting point for discussions. These ideas will need to be tested with the Education for Church Leadership network, including the United Church theological schools.

Leadership Qualities

In a consultation held in May 1999 on the Future Leadership Needs of the United Church, a list of leadership qualities was affirmed. This list, which had been developed by the Education for Church Leadership network, included the following qualities:

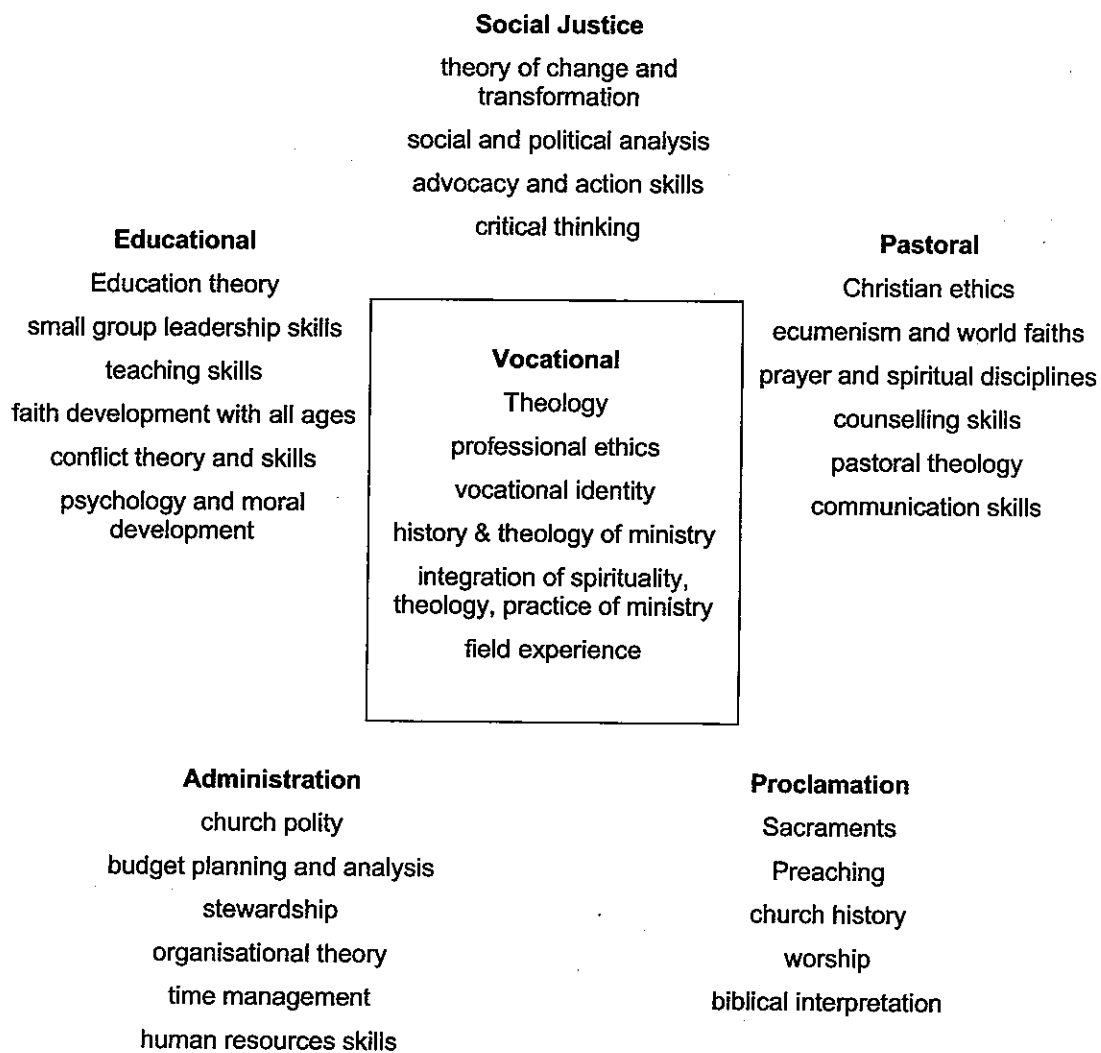
- grounding in Christian faith
- ability to teach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ
- ability to lead in the midst of chaos, ambiguity and diversity
- ability to facilitate and empower the ministries of others
- skills to engage in personal and social transformation
- ability to do critical analysis (theological, cultural, social, etc.) and to act on the basis of that analysis
- knowledge of the tradition and an ability to interpret, re-imagine and revise it in new contexts
- capacity to be in community in ways that are loving, respectful and appropriate
- ability to develop and maintain mutual networks of support and accountability
- ability to facilitate Christian spiritual formation for all ages
- readiness to engage in lifelong learning.

Competencies

Taking these basic qualities as a starting point, the diagram on the following page shows different functions of ministry, and lists some competencies for each function. The concept includes the following assumptions:

- The Vocational cluster represents a core educational program that would be required for all ministry personnel.
- Each cluster includes some competencies that are essential for all ministry personnel.
- Ministry personnel would be able to specialize in a specific functional area.

**Competency Clusters for an Educational Program for Ministry
(under development)**



A preliminary list of qualities, skills and gifts sought in ministry personnel

A Sense of Self-Awareness

Knows the strengths and weaknesses of one's being and shows willingness to learn and grow

Has emotional stability, is able to cope with stresses, shows flexibility

Has a sense of one's power and powerlessness

Shows ability to work alone and in relation to others; is aware of the importance of responsibility to community

Shows respect for oneself and others

Scholarship/Learning

Wants to learn, grow and change

Is willing to learn in different ways

Is a self-learner who is able to integrate theory and experience, and is able to evaluate own growth and performance

Communication

Has competency in oral and written communication

Has interpersonal and relationship skills

Understands the dynamics of conflict and one's own response to it, and has the skills to deal creatively with conflict

Able to communicate well with all ages

Leadership and Group Process

Has an understanding of different leadership styles and the context for which they are effective

Is able to function as a team member in different situations with a variety of personalities

Has awareness of how one functions in groups as a member and a leader.

Has skills in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating group process.

Spirituality and Theology

Can describe one's own spirituality, and is continually developing one's theological base

Is able to see self and others as co-creators with God

Understands one's vocation and its place within the full range of ministry

Is able to give spiritual leadership to oneself and others

Understands the tradition and history of Christian theology

Is able to understand the reality of the world and can bring God's good news to it

Has preaching skills and a style that incorporates biblical understanding, theology and pertinent life issues

Biblical Studies

Knows the biblical story well

Understands and can apply biblical scholarship

Can effectively engage all age groups in biblical study

Social Service/Social Change

Can identify the place of social ministry in the larger church and in the world

Can discern contradictions in society and is willing to struggle, question, and live with ambiguity and complexity

Recognizes as a theological issue the need to confront class exploitation, racism, militarism, sexism, homophobia, and religious and cultural discrimination

Raises questions around the integration of the personal and the political in one's own life and ministry, and recognizes the need to stand in solidarity with the disempowered

Has developed a social analysis that incorporates both a local and global perspective

Pastoral Care

Is able to enter into another's experience, recognizing the difference between identification, sympathy and empathy

Has basic counselling skills to enable others to grow through life experiences

Is able to compassionately respond to crisis

Is aware of self as a pastoral minister and recognizes the importance of presence and pastoral care for all people and situations

Liturgical Ministry

Is willing to honour various traditions of spirituality and their liturgical expression

Has skills in planning, designing and implementing liturgy for whole community and small group settings

Has a sense of sacramental identity within liturgical leadership

Organization and Administrative Skills

Has awareness of the significance of administrative skills as part of ministry

Is able to plan, organize, set priorities, and manage time

Has knowledge and skills in administrative functions, meetings, and staff/volunteer/leadership relationships

Integrated Understanding of Ministry

Is integrating one's knowledge, understanding, attitudes, skills and self-awareness in the practice of professional ministry

Shows ability to relate theoretical learning to a particular context, adapting to changing context and circumstances

Perceives ministries of education, social service, pastoral care, liturgy, administration, word, and sacrament as all part of an integrated ministry of the whole people of God

Has begun to see oneself and relates to others within the role of minister.

... and encouraged by Ministry Personnel, and support group ministry committees, with communication with e.g. Christian Education Committee and Church Board.

4. Regional Organization:

- That the structure be determined by the women in the region, and **correspond to the structure of The United Church of Canada** but which would eventually correspond to the new regional structure of The United Church of Canada; in the interim, this could be the existing Presbyterial, Presbytery/District or Conference, or something new.
- That the responsibilities of the Regional ~~WU/UCW~~ **WUCC** include:
 - sponsor regional events for all women
 - communicate information and provide networking support to congregational women's groups
 - promote leadership development
 - invite representation from all congregational women's groups
 - develop links with other regional ~~WU/UCW~~ **WUCC** for educational or leadership development events
 - submit names to the Division of Mission in Canada for representation on the Trust Fund Allocation Committee and National editorial board (appointees to be selected through the existing DMC process for three-year terms).

5. Implementation:

- That the regional and local networks be provided with staff support through the Division of Mission in Canada.
- That an implementation team be named by the Division of Mission in Canada, to include two members of the Task Group on Women in the United Church (one as named by UCW, one other) and **representation from minority groups and youth.**
- ~~That the current UCW National Consultation continue until September 2002. That the timeline for implementation and related resource production for the proposed United Church women's organization correspond with the implementation timeline for any change in the church's structure.~~
- ~~That the current Presbyterial and Conference UCW complete their work and reorganize as Regional WU/UCW by September 1, 2003.~~
- That resources be provided by January, 2004, to assist local, Presbyterial and Conference groups to make the transition to a new way of relating to all women's groups.
- That Conference UCW's be encouraged to plan a final celebratory event.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that *The Manual* be revised to reflect these changes to United Church Women's Organizations.

Carried

Church Implementation

Resolution #12 - #19: Retention Of A National Gathering Of Elected Representatives From Women Of The United Church

Motion: Ellinor Townend/Joyce Holden

Having heard Petitions #12-#19 and Petitions #20-#28 and having proposed amendments to Resolution #24 to respond to the concerns expressed in these petitions, no further action be taken.

The Moderator urged consideration and care for those women who are so deeply affected by the transition implied by the passage of Resolution #24.

AGNETTE - DIVISION OF WORLD OUTREACH

Jan Evans, Chair of the Division introduced Susie Ibutu from the National Council of Churches in Kenya, ecumenical guest at the Council and previously a leading partner to the United Church as part of the program of the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. Susie greeted the members of the Council and addressed some of the issues facing her own communities, in particular the devastating effects of economic globalization.

DENOMINATION SHAPING ISSUE #4 - DIVISION OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL & EDUCATION

Reading & Reporting Group #4 Report on "Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century"

Jan Fraser (ANW), the Chair, introduced and thanked the other members of the Reading & Reporting group: Marjorie Kent (SK), Jan Loughheed (M&O), Frances Reid (MTU) and Laurie Stevenson (MTU). He explained that this group observed a high degree of acceptance for the general direction of virtually all elements of the resolutions.

Resolution #8 - Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century - Principles

Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen

That the 37th General Council approve the request of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, to adopt the following principles, as outlined in the report *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*:

1. the value and diversity of paid accountable ministries currently existing within The United Church of Canada;
2. the emphasis placed upon a high standard of education required of, and the diversity of training available to, those entering into paid accountable ministries;
3. the uplifting and honouring of the ministry of the laity (for example: the proposal that the Session be given the responsibility to grant permission for congregational leaders to celebrate the sacraments).

Motion to Amend: Ian Fraser/Marjorie Kent

That the wording of the third Principle be changed to read:

~~that the Session be given the responsibility to grant permission for congregational leaders to celebrate the sacraments) and ordered ministry.~~

There was a request to deal with the Amendment in two parts.

On the wisdom of the first part of the amendment – the addition of the words **and ordered ministry** was discussed.

Motion to Amend – Carried

On the wisdom of the second part of the amendment – the deletion of the words ~~(for example: the proposal that the Session be given the responsibility to grant permission for congregational leaders to celebrate the sacraments.~~

Motion to Amend – Carried

Motion as Amended – Carried

Resolution #9 – Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century – Actions

The Reading and Reporting Group #4 recommended that the recommendations contained in the Resolution be dealt with as separate resolutions.

Motion: Paul Currie/ Ken Jones

That the 37th General Council approve **receive** the report of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, entitled *Ministry Together: A Report on Ministry for the 21st Century*, including **and approve** the following actions:

Motion to postpone: duly moved and seconded

That the motion be postponed definitely.

Carried

Resolution #9.1 – Ministries of the laity

Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen

- a) that Congregations intentionally recognize ministries conducted by lay people (members and adherents)
- b) that The United Church of Canada, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide resource materials and guidelines for developing congregational programs that will enable Congregations and members to discern the ministries of the laity and to devise methods of accountability for those ministries
- c) that The United Church of Canada provide worship resources for rituals celebrating the relationship between faith and life.

Motion to Amend: Tressa Brotsky/Adel Compton

That the wording of part a) of Resolution #9.1 be changed to read as follows:

- a) that Congregations intentionally recognize ministries conducted by lay people ~~(members and adherents)~~ **of all ages**

Carried

That the wording of part c) of Resolution #9.1 be changed to read as follows:

- c) that The United Church of Canada provide worship resources **honouring and dedicating the various ministries of the laity**, for rituals celebrating the relationship between faith and life.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: Kathy Kyle/Ruth Noble

That the wording of part b) of Resolution #9.1 be changed to read:

- b) that The United Church of Canada, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide resource materials and guidelines for developing congregational programs that will enable Congregations and members to discern the ministries of the laity. ~~and to devise methods of accountability for these ministries~~

Defeated

Motion as Amended:

- b) a) that Congregations intentionally recognize ministries conducted by lay people ~~(members and adherents)~~ **of all ages**
- d) that The United Church of Canada, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide resource materials and guidelines for developing congregational programs that will enable Congregations and members to discern the ministries of the laity and to devise methods of accountability for those ministries
- e) that The United Church of Canada provide worship resources for rituals celebrating the relationship between faith and life.

Carried

Resolution #9.2 – The Sacraments

Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen

- a) that the responsibility for granting permission for congregational leaders to preside at the sacraments of communion and baptism should rest with the Session (or its equivalent) in a Pastoral Charge as an extension of its responsibility to have oversight of 'the administration of the sacraments' [*Basis of Union, Section 5.10.1(3)*]
- b) that the responsibility for granting permission for Presbytery/District or Conference leaders to preside at the sacraments should rest with the Presbytery/District or Conference for those under its responsibility and authority.
- c) That the General Council, through the Division of Mission in Canada, provide or identify resource materials for Sessions re: the administration of the sacraments similar to those currently available to Lay Pastoral Ministers in Training.

Motion to Refer: Ian Richardson/Marjorie Kent

That the motion be referred to the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education for further work in conjunction with the Committee on Theology and Faith, for presentation to the 38th General Council.

Carried

motion to administer the sacraments

Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen

That the person who is granted permission to administer the sacraments shall be someone who:

- a) is a member of The United Church of Canada and a member in good standing of the Pastoral Charge, Presbytery/District, or Conference that is granting the responsibility
- b) has the respect of the community and has been proven trustworthy in leadership
- c) has a faith that they can articulate and that has been demonstrated in the community
- d) understands that the responsibility that they are undertaking is to fulfil a role in serving the community, is bringing access to the table, not excluding people from it
- e) is willing to be accountable to the Court that is entrusting them with this responsibility, and will act within the policies and guidelines of the Congregation and wider church
- f) is familiar with the polity and practices of The United Church of Canada, particularly regarding sacraments
- g) is willing to engage in reflection and education on the sacraments and the role and meaning of sacrament within the community of faith.

Motion to Amend: David Lambie/Greg Smith-Young

to add the word "and" at the end of part a) through to part f)

Carried

Motion to Refer: Greg Smith-Young/Paul Currie

That the motion be referred to the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education for further work in conjunction with the Committee on Theology and Faith, for presentation to the 38th General Council.

Defeated

Motion to Amend: Wade Reppert/Louise Robson

That the wording of part g) be amended as follows:

- g) ~~is willing to engage~~ **has engaged** in reflection and education on the sacraments and the role and meaning of sacrament within the community of faith, **as deemed appropriate by the relevant Court.**

Carried

It was clarified that the resolution would not displace the guidelines currently in place regarding who may administer the sacraments.

Motion to Amend: Gary Boratto/Bill Rogers

That the words "under current standards." be added after the word "sacraments" in the title line of Resolution #9.3.

Carried

That an immediate vote be taken.

Carried

Motion as Amended – Carried

The Moderator thanked the Reading and Reporting Groups who had presented through the day. He also thanked the members of the Court, particularly the Youth Forum members who had spoken to issues and participated strongly in debate. Bill then gave a brief overview of the process and importance of the Commissions.

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMISSIONS - CHANGES

Motion: Virginia Coleman/Paul Currie

That the name of Marion Pardy be deleted from Commission B and added to Commission A.

Carried

The Court adjourned for the day.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 16, 2000

OPENING WORSHIP

The morning began with singing and worship on the theme of "earth."

The Moderator asked for a moment of silence in prayer for the concerns of the gathered community and the world.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Bob Anderson reviewed some minor changes to the agenda for Wednesday and there was general agreement to the changes. In view of the amount of business before the Court, he suggested a two-hour session to consider items of business on Friday.

Agenda Time Extension

Motion: Virginia Coleman/David Allen

That the Court meet from 7 – 9 p.m. on Friday, August 18, 2000.

Carried

GREETINGS

Larry Wright, official guest of Council and Chaplain at Canadian Forces Base Borden introduced

Captain Roland Murray who brought greetings from the Chaplain General of the Canadian Armed Forces. Captain Murray asked for prayers for members of the Forces who serve, sometimes in difficult situations that challenge their faith, and for the Chaplains who minister to them.

Motion: Virginia Coleman/David Allen

That the General Council receive the reports, petitions and resolutions listed on the INFO-22 page, with the addition of Resolution #94 and Petition #136 and the deletion of Petition #139, as listed on the Changes page, and take the actions contained therein.

Dale Wiggins thanked Virginia Coleman for meeting the request of Saskatchewan Conference Commissioners to provide a replacement accountability report, re-inserting several sentences that had been deleted.

As requested, the following Petitions were removed from the Omnibus Motion:

Petition #136	(page 0-99)	Interpretation of Conference Policies
Petition #140	(page 0-103)	Moratorium on Closings of First Nations Pastoral Charges
Petition #131	(page 0-92)	Development of Policies and Guidelines for Staff Committees of Conferences
Petition #94	(page B-93)	Role of Nuclear Energy in Canadian Life

Carried

WORK TO COMMISSIONS - REASSIGNMENT

Motion to Reconsider: Hugo Unrah/Rebecca Allman

That the 37th General Council reconsider Amendment (Fairchild/Stebbing) "That Petition #125, #126, #127 be removed from Commission C and dealt with in plenary at a time determined and assigned by the Business Committee."
Carried

Petition #125, #126, #127

Motion: Virginia Coleman/Clarke Saunders

That Petitions #125, #126 and #127 be re-assigned to Commission C.
Carried

WORK OF COMMISSION A – INTRODUCTION

David Woodall, member of the Business Committee for Commission A, introduced the other members of the Business Committee for the Commission, Joanna MacQuarrie and Gerald Doré. He provided an introduction and overview of the work assigned to Commission A.

VIGNETTE – DIVISION OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND EDUCATION

Ron Coughlin, staff member in the Division shared two stories of people who were helped to find their call to ministry vocations by their congregations. He reaffirmed the duty and need of Sessions to consider and support people in discerning a call to ministry.

WORK OF COMMISSION B – INTRODUCTION

Jon Jessiman, member of the Business Committee for Commission B, introduced the other members of the Commission's Business Committee, Martha Ter Kuile and Linda Stemp. He provided an overview of the work assigned to Commission B.

The Division presented a side show illustrating its production and program support of the celebration of the 75th Anniversary through such means as print publications, video, the ribbon project, merchandise and the Web site.

WORK OF COMMISSION C – INTRODUCTION

Tressa Brotsky, member of the Business Committee for Commission C, introduced the other members, Teressa Moysey and Ross Smillie. She then gave an overview of the items of business assigned to Commission C.

The Commissioners spent time in table groups preparing response forms for the Commissions in which they would not be present.

VIGNETTE – DIVISION OF WORLD OUTREACH

Deborah Marshall, staff in the Division, introduced the theme of Jubilee, the current mission study in The United Church of Canada. The Jubilee vision and program is being celebrated in three themes - release of captives, redistribution of wealth and renewal of the earth. Omega Bula spoke to the perspectives of global partners and the life-giving alternatives to the dominant economic and social model that are being shared between partners and the United Church. Deborah outlined some of the resources available for study and action on the Jubilee themes.

Time Spent Considering Commission Work

Motion: Murray McFarlane/Margaret Sagar

Since all commissioners have had time to respond individually to commissions and as an affirmation of trust that our commissions will represent the diversity of opinion in the whole council

that no more time be spent in Table Group consideration of items going to commissions and move directly to the business of the whole Council.

Carried

Resolution #9.4 – Threshold between Congregation and Presbytery/District accountable ministries

Motion: Jeri Bjornson/BJ Klassen

That the 37th General Council approve the following actions:

- that the threshold between a congregational-accountable ministry and a Presbytery/District-accountable ministry be based on the ministry roles being performed (education, outreach, pastoral care, worship) and on the number of hours in the position description,
- that a congregational appointment be made in consultation with the Presbytery/District for any ministry position under 8 hours per week (according to guidelines determined by the General Council),
- that any lay ministry position of 8 hours per week or more in the areas of education, outreach, pastoral care, or worship must conform to the requirements of designated lay ministry and be a Presbytery/District appointment.

Motion to Amend: Ian Fraser/Marjorie Kent

That the word "between" be replaced with "for" in part a) of Resolution #9.4.

Carried