

**A NEW WAY OF SEEING:
Innovative Ministry through Friendship
with Adults Who Have a Developmental Disability**

A THESIS

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by

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Dedicated to my parents,

Joan Garthorne Hume Vanstone and Jabez Charles Vanstone,

who gave me roots and wings for my life's journey.

Abstract

This thesis is a vehicle for sharing the story of how we have come to see ourselves, each other, the church and the world differently.

By examining some of the issues that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability raised for us, we came to recognize that we had moved beyond the status quo that separates people of diverse abilities.



Our small group became a crucible for God's transformative love through the regular practice of radical Christian friendship. *A NEW WAY OF SEEING* points to the potential for congregations to become agents of social transformation through direct contact, friendship and public solidarity with the disenfranchised people in our neighbourhoods.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and contribution of co-researchers. To Alfred Bourque, Pauline McNeill, Bill Chabot and Sheena Borich who introduced us to the patterns of another world, we say thank you. To Sandra Hansen, Eleanor McLean, Susan Silver and Ruby LeGourrierc who offered their insights around issues raised by the unconventional nature of our friendship, we say thank you.

We are grateful for the many individuals who have been supportive during the various stages of our journey: all members of the lay facilitation team, diaconal ministry program coordinators, learning facilitators, visionaries of the proposal group, ad hoc committee members, directors of *CONNECTORS*, church folk, staff of community agencies, drop-in participants, volunteers, donors, friends and family.

I extend my personal thanks to friends Beth McLean and Betty Marlin who accompanied me in spirit. Thanks also to my friend and thesis advisor, Mary Lou Rabb, who urged me forward with gentle doses of wit and wisdom.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A General Statement of the Problem

For two years, a diverse team of ordinary citizens supported me in the field work component of the social ministry requirement for the Western Field Based Diaconal Ministry Program where I was enrolled as a student. This study proposes to interpret research data gathered from members of that lay facilitation team who experienced first hand the joys and challenges of bridging differences.

In December 1995 the Northwestern Regional Centre, home to people with a developmental disability, closed. The residents of the institution were moved to homes and apartments scattered throughout the city of Thunder Bay, Ontario. Concerns about their welfare as an uprooted and dispersed community surfaced in newspaper articles. The focus of the field work was timely. By getting to know, face to face and friend to friend, adults who have a developmental disability we anticipated learning about the hopes and challenges they faced in living independently after years of dependency. It was an attempt on the part of lay people and their churches to discern appropriate responses to a changing social reality.

Many of us, who are today's adults, grew up at a time when people with a developmental disability were sent away to institutions. Society placed its faith in the power of science and medicine to find answers. The community of the disabled was hidden from the mainstream. For many years the paths of our two communities diverged. Today they

cross again in grocery stores and neighbourhood parks. Yet separation continues. There is a need to deal with underlying issues so that individuals and groups can be empowered to love their neighbours and assume their social responsibility to build inclusive communities.

People with a range of life experiences and unique perspectives formed the lay facilitation team that supported my field work experience of social ministry. The team represented the collaborative effort of three churches, a community agency, four adults with a developmental disability and myself, a diaconal ministry student. In keeping with inclusive social theory we represented the four kinds of experts recommended by Dieter Hessel for dealing with social issues: the change agents of voluntary organizations, those responsible for administering current policy, the vulnerable population, and an independent analyst. To pay attention to all four kinds of experts without deferring to the established powers is a hallmark of Christian social education.¹ Jesus' first reading in the synagogue at Nazareth announced the inclusion of outcasts.² Walter Brueggemann suggests we become communities of home-makers in solidarity with the strangers who have been displaced by current social labeling.³ Diaconal ministry emphasizes a collegial, consultative and mutual approach to relationship.⁴ Our lay team adopted and adapted a liberative perspective in seeking out and valuing the experience of all team members. These were the theories that undergirded our attempt to bring life to our interconnected relationships.

¹ Dieter T. Hessel. Social Ministry. revised edition. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), p. 117.

² Luke 4:18-19.

³ Walter Brueggemann. Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful Reading to Faithful Living. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 298-306.

⁴ Kay Heuer and Teresa Jones. "Diaconal Ministry as a Feminist Model of Ministry." In Gathered by the River: Reflections and essays of women doing ministry. Gertrude Lebas. Ed. (Dundas, ON: artemis enterprises and UCPH, 1994), p. 112.

In the beginning we could barely talk to one another. Friendship seemed a pipe dream. Yet each of us chose freely to covenant with one another to be friends for two years. For those of us who had only known staff, *friend* was a word, a feeling, a longing that offered a foretaste of what it might be like to be connected at a deep level to life in all its fullness. Our journey into friendship made us aware of some of the challenges of living independently after years of dependency. In moments of prejudice, of insufficient public knowledge and of exclusion of people from mainstream life our group consciousness of new realities took shape. Our experiences, in the church and the public community, with our friends who are differently abled, demonstrated a deep need for compassion and education to ensure the dignity and participation of all people.

Agency staff, friends and family members pointed out the need for community assistance to facilitate the transition from institutions to new homes in neighbourhoods in a way that would be inclusive and welcoming. Funding cuts to existing service agencies highlighted the growing need for caring community response. Opportunities to expand one's circles of friends while maintaining contact with people from previous settings were few and far between. New avenues for the development of friendships with people who are not paid awaited exploration. Our many vulnerabilities suggested the need for a safe place to gather, one that would be physically accessible, centrally located and within the mainstream of community life. These were the salient needs we identified after meeting together for six months.

On the basis of our new knowledge we determined to undertake a pilot project. For two months, March and April, we offered a drop-in opportunity, daytime on Thursdays and

alternate Wednesday evenings. We worked at being friends against the backdrop of seeking to understand one another, seeking to carry out our plans in solidarity with one another and seeking to infect others with a vision of community where all are welcome. Over time this small initiative blossomed into a concrete program to foster friendship and public solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability. We named this bloom **CONNECTORS** - *'where friendships grow.'* A proposal to make it a ministry awaits a response from the United Church.

Our research is an effort to bring to light some of the feelings, learnings, surprises, challenges and opportunities we encountered along the way. Our hope is to share with the wider community some of the insights and stories that have arisen out of our deepening relationship with one another and encounters with the church and the world around us.

The Research Question

We have glimpsed the challenges of moving from the social periphery into the mainstream. Robert Stake suggests that the nature of people and systems become more transparent during their struggles.⁵ The question, "What are some of the issues that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability raise for us?" is designed to reveal the truth hidden at the core of our lived experience.

⁵ Robert E. Stake. The Art of Case Study Research. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), p.16.

Personal Interest

I am a woman of ability whose experience with people who live with a developmental disability has been limited by circumstance and a public policy of institutionalization.

Nonetheless there have been occasions when I have caught glimpses of another world and another community. Recent media publicity, related to the closure of residential facilities and government cutbacks affecting support services have served to turn simmering questions into focused doubts about the ability of our social sector to respond adequately to human needs in these times of transition. Like others of my generation I was privileged to build relationships of my choosing. Such privilege has its cost. For me there is a degree of fear and uncertainty about being confronted by difference not of my choosing. Where will I find support while I learn new skills for relinquishing my present comfort in order to include people who, though differently abled, are also entitled as full citizens to participate in community life?

The field placement in social ministry gave me first hand experiences related to issues of ability and disability both inside and outside the church. My assumptions continue to be challenged as I observe prejudice, public ignorance and sometimes deliberate blocking of people from the mainstream of life. We say we welcome the stranger in our midst, yet frequently our actions belie our words. In the darkness I see angels who guide a wheelchair, join our play and call us by name. They are ordinary folk who sing of growth and freedom. They are part of a growing social movement seeking creative solutions to issues of ability. I am touched by the vision of all people living in a state of dignity, sharing in all elements of living in the community and having the opportunity to participate effectively. I join the march.

Choice of Methodology

Being aware of change in myself and seeing growth in others stirred in me the question ‘why?’ And so I flirted with the idea of doing research. The title, Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins,⁶ piqued my curiosity. The book raised for me the possibility of touching truth at a deeper and more authentic level through collaboration. And so I began to search for a question that would serve our interest. The enthusiastic response of the lay facilitation team to the idea of becoming co-researchers around a question related to our experience of friendship spurred me on. In the end I offered this question: What are some of the issues that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability raise for us? It provided an invitation for us to relive our experiences and to learn from them and from each other. It pointed us clearly in the direction of collaborative phenomenological inquiry.

The task of phenomenological research and writing according to Max van Manen is to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience.⁷ He suggests a methodical structure based on the dynamic interplay of six research activities. I considered each of them in turn as they might relate to us.

1. Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world: Our abiding concern as co-researchers was to shed light on the feelings and meaning behind our recent and ongoing experience of friendship. We hoped the question, “What are some

⁶ Sandra L. Kirby and Kate McKenna. Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins. (Toronto: Garamond Press. 1989).

⁷ Max van Manen. Researching Lived Experience. (London, ON: Althouse Press. 1990). p. 4.

of the issues that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability raise for us?” would be the impetus for reliving our personal and communal experience of friendship at a deeper level.

2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it: As the key researcher I was situated at the centre of the phenomenon we proposed to study. I had connections with lay facilitation team members, churches and church folk, service agencies and service providers and the wider community of people with disabilities. I was in a good position to explore the nuances of our shared experiences and understandings of friendship. A few recorded conversations with other players would add depth and authenticity to our understanding. And my close observations as participant researcher would give voice to the experience of those with a developmental disability. Additional sources of data could be obtained from fiction, a personal journal, reports, photos, video tapes and other phenomenological literature related to friendship beyond difference.
3. Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon: Our quest for meaning through reflection on issues raised for us by our lived experience would reveal the hidden dimensions of being friends with adults who have a developmental disability. The resultant themes would bring structure to our findings. As presenter and spokesperson, interpretation would become my task.
4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting: Creating a phenomenological text would be a leap of faith on my part. I could, however, practice attentive listening, gather data, and work at learning to write anecdotal narrative so as to reveal the essence of our experience.

5. **Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon:** We recognized a need for the research question to keep our conversations anchored and at the same time to pull us into seeing beyond superficialities. We wanted to name learnings and implications for ourselves and for the church.
6. **Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole:** I recognized, from rereading my personal journal, the value of stepping back from the particularity of a situation to consider its implication for the larger context. The experience of one person would be seen in relation to the experience of others. The totality of our experiences might reflect something of our particular context within the larger framework of the church and community.

This examination of our situation in relation to the six research activities outlined by Max van Manen has clarified for me that hermeneutic phenomenology is an appropriate choice of methodology for us.

We are challenged to adapt a collaborative methodology that is conventionally based in a focus group procedure. This is not a possibility that is open to all of us. By combining research methods we hope to honour all of our voices and experiences beyond the differences of our abilities. The themes of Chapter Four arose from interviews with co-researchers Sandra, Eleanor, Susan and Ruby. The issues we uncovered fell broadly into three themes. I chose the interview segments that captured our common insights most clearly and concisely. In Chapter Five I tried to bring to life, by means of narrative portraits, the personalities, voices and contribution of co-researchers Alfred, Pauline, Bill and Sheena. In Chapter Six the illustrations are a synthesis of issues raised during the interview process and during episodes

of public solidarity in both the church and the secular community. They convey the broad dimensions and particular complexities of our insights. They are intended to reflect the spectrum of our new ways of seeing.

Research that follows a methodology of collaborative hermeneutic phenomenology will provide the framework for sharing our story with a wider audience of lay people and the church.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Relating to the Subject

The purpose of the literature review is to learn how current literature on the subject affirms our experience of friendship with adults who have a developmental disability, what from our experience is unique and where there are areas in need of further exploration. I offer some introductory remarks, followed by an exploration of the literature according to the three major themes uncovered by our research: seeing differently, seeing strengths, and seeing needs. These themes are interconnected and make separation somewhat arbitrary. I end with some concluding remarks.

In searching for literary work that brings into juxtaposition friendship and disabilities I learned four things. First, issues of friendship are primarily conveyed through story. Second, questions of ability and disability are generally subjects of scientific inquiry. As a lay person doing research for other church people my focus is intentionally directed toward relational rather than scientific literature. Third, conversations, with people intimately involved through employment or familial relationships in the welfare of people who have a developmental disability, led me quickly to pertinent literary and other resources. Fourth, being a participant observer at several conferences accelerated my learning about a subject whose facets were initially difficult to pinpoint.

Particularly useful in setting the stage for discussion at this time in our collective history is Timothy Findley's novel, The Piano Man's Daughter.⁸ Lily's story begins in the days before there was agency support for people with disabilities and their families. The marriage of Ede and Fred provides the palette from which Findley paints a range of responses to questions raised by difference. In the end fullness of life belongs to Lily who sits in freedom with the stranger in a restaurant. Courage and hope shine through the imaginative ways she and her supporters find liberation to live fully in the world but not of the world. Emptiness of spirit is the price Fred pays for a place in 'the most refined society.' Reflection on the themes of acceptance and rejection that wind through his mother's life lead Charlie and the reader through the valley of inner turmoil. Questions about living contrary to cultural norms and about perpetuating difference rise to the fore. In time Charlie experiences the mystery of new insight. Findley's novel is a timely and truth-telling reminder of the gifts that accrue through acceptance of difference and the alienation that stems from rejection of difference. It provides the historical framework for deliberation of present philosophical, social, economic and political trends related to community inclusion of people with a developmental disability.

Seeing Differently

Al Condeluci, executive director for United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Pittsburgh, has

⁸ Timothy Findley. The Piano Man's Daughter. (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. 1995).

been a leader in developing and implementing creative housing support systems for people with disabilities since 1973. He confesses to internal struggles that revolve around issues of convenience, speed and consciousness.⁹ Condeluci advocates interaction as the doorway to growth and change. He contends that the intentional practice of spiritual traits such as kindness, generosity, forgiveness, hospitality and compassion will help us get beyond difference.¹⁰ We will begin to see life from another perspective. One might expect therefore to find a welcome among Christians.

Dave Hingsburger is a Canadian whose life work has been with people with disabilities. He writes in a conversational storytelling style. His confession of feelings and mistakes encourages the reader to examine at a deep level his or her own experience with adults who have a developmental disability. Dave's books offer readers a multi-faceted and contextual view of life as it impinges on clients, their families, friends, agency staff, issues of sexuality, the community and the systems that bind us. Soon after reading I Witness¹¹ I was privy to hearing almost verbatim the same story of guilt and self doubt from one of our parents. She spoke of the heartache she had experienced in sending her six year old daughter to a part of the province too distant for regular contact. She spoke of the trust she had placed in medical experts. Years later when the professionals changed their tune she regretted not having trusted her own intuition. And now in her seventies she faces ill health and worries about her child's future.

In April 1997 Dr. Lou Brown, professor in the Department of Rehabilitation

⁹ Al Condeluci. Beyond Difference. (Delray Beach, FL: St. Lucie Press, 1996), p. 206.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 98.

¹¹ Dave Hingsburger. I Witness: History and a Person with a Developmental Disability. (Mountville, PA: VIDA Publishing, 1992).

Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin came to Thunder Bay. He spoke to educators, support staff, parents and friends on the importance of social relationships for students with significant disabilities. He pointed to the value of frequent contacts and common experiences with non disabled peers over long periods of time in building the expertise for healthy communities. One might expect therefore to find opportunities for building these relationships in churches.

Communities are collective associations. In a sense, they are more and different than friendship... It is groups of people who work together on a face-to-face basis and are engaged in public rather than private life.¹² It is in this sense that our lay facilitation team moved beyond the limited bounds of individual friendships to become also a community of friends.

Seeing Strengths

Robert and Martha Perske teamed as writer and illustrator to bring us a number of books containing true stories and pertinent issues about friendships across difference.

We long for wisdom to make the world more decent and tolerant and caring, a world where all of us figure in one another's survival. We believe that much of the wisdom needed for this task comes from reaching toward those we may have been programmed to avoid.¹³

Perske's statement confirms the experience of our lay facilitation team. Those, whose

¹² John McKnight, "Beyond Community Services," 1988. In Interdependence: The Route to Community, 2nd ed., Al Condeluci. (Winter Park, FL: GR Press, Inc., 1995), p. 175.

¹³ Robert and Martha Perske. Circle of Friends: People with Disabilities and Their Friends Enrich the Lives of One Another. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), p. 9.

lives have been so different, are the ones who nurtured our growth by their genuine acceptance of us as we are. They tended our awakening to the reality of segregation and to the significant challenge of removing invisible barriers.

Particularly helpful for appreciating the giftedness of people who are marginalized by society is Clifford Elliott's book Speaking For Themselves. Stories of individuals help us to appreciate the presence of God in the midst of our struggles. By asking for help to do up zippers, to turn pages and to get places, our friends with disabilities illuminated the road to interdependence. We learned new ways of communication. We risked experimentation, trusted more in the spirit, practised the art of the possible and let go our notions of perfection.

It would be hard to imagine Jesus rejecting a person like Donna, or requiring her to conform to certain prescribed patterns. He would recognize in her a genuinely spiritual person. We remember how in speaking with a woman in Samaria Jesus refused to become involved in an argument about whether God should be worshipped on a Samaritan mountain or in the temple in Jerusalem. God is spirit, said Jesus, and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth.¹⁴

We have been aware of God's spirit in offers to drive, to accompany and to read. We heard the spirit say 'no' to the suggestion of a separate meeting. We have tasted the spirit in muffins made specially for us. The spirit dances among us in everyday living.

Benjamin Hoff points to the giftedness of Pooh, a Bear of Little Brain.

Abstract cleverness of mind only separates the thinker from the world of reality, and that world, the Forest of Real Life, is in a desperate condition now because of too many who think too much and care too little...If we are smart, we will choose the way of Pooh. As if from far away, it calls to us with the voice of a child's mind. It may be hard to hear at times, but it is important just the same, because without it, we will

¹⁴ Clifford A. S. Elliott. Speaking For Themselves: Hearing the Gospel from the dispossessed, the undervalued and the marginalized. (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House. 1990). p. 40.

never find our way through the Forest.¹⁵

My co-researchers observe the 'way of Pooh' in the instinctive response to each person's special need as it arises. Because 'Poohs' see the world as it really is, they teach us the advantages of living mutually and enjoying spontaneity. A glance toward the coffee perk reminds us that it is time for a break. We are becoming too cerebral. Life is also about participation, about finding 'our way through the Forest.'

Seeing Needs

The 1994 CBC *Ideas* series, *Community and Its Counterfeits*, features conversation with John McKnight. He claims that beyond a certain intensity the professionalization of care, counsel, and consolation turn citizens into clients. He insists that paid services degrade and often destroy abilities which already exist within the community.¹⁶ In Prince George B.C. Project Friendship coordinator, Sandra Nahornoff, shares McKnight's vision of popular sector activities that would shift our understanding of people who have a developmental disability at community and cultural levels. That everybody has a gift and a good community is a place where all those gifts are given is the assumption that undergirds their work, their hope and their dreams.

In The Disabled God Nancy Eiesland sees naming the experience of disability as part of the political work of empowerment and a prerequisite for developing a theology of

¹⁵ Benjamin Hoff. *The Tao of Pooh*. (Penguin Books. 1982), pp. 153-5.

¹⁶ *Ideas: Community and its Counterfeits*. CBC Radio Works. January 3, 10, 17. Toronto: transcript. 1994. p. 1.

disability.¹⁷ As more people with developmental disabilities circulate and participate in public venues, Eiesland detects a new paradigm emerging that is shifting the focus from problem individuals to the social problem of the exclusion of people with disabilities as a group. Eiesland contends that persons with disabilities must gain access to the social-symbolic life of the church, and the church must gain access to the social-symbolic lives of people with disabilities.¹⁸ In her book she offers a reconceived symbol of Jesus Christ as disabled God. In presenting his impaired hands and feet to his startled friends Jesus calls his frightened companions to recognize in the marks of their own impairment a connection with God. Full personhood is fully compatible with the experience of disability. Thus the church that depends for its existence on the disabled God is called to incorporate people with disabilities into all levels of participation.¹⁹

People First of Thunder Bay planned and presented a conference Coming Together in the North in March of 1996. They are part of a movement for social change that Dave Hingsburger characterizes this way:

We are trying to create a means for individuals with developmental handicaps to free themselves of systemic and societal bigotry and enter the world full of pride in who they are and what they have achieved.²⁰

The three main insights that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability raised for us are also major themes of inquiry for others. The fact that a number of

¹⁷ Nancy L. Eiesland, The Disabled God: Toward a Liberation Theology of Disability, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-105.

²⁰ Dave Hingsburger, i to I: Self Concept and People With Developmental Disabilities, (Mountville, PA: VIDA Publishing, 1990), p. 75.

our literary sources are conversant with the work of one another suggests that the experience of friendship beyond difference eventually leads people into working collaboratively for change. Friendship tends to step over the boundaries of social order. Friends teach each other how to walk on water, how to face trials, how to recognize the abundance of God's love.²¹

In 1976 Martha Perske was commissioned by the editors of *Early Years* to draw a number of children's faces eager to begin school in September for the cover of their magazine. In the centre of the montage, she drew the face of a child with Down's syndrome, as a signal that, "Hey! I'm in school this year, too!"²² We recall one of our own peak experiences when a member of our group rose to his feet in the middle of a meeting. With a wide grin that spelled freedom across his face he exclaimed, "Just think! A few years ago we were in an **institution!**"

Relating to the Methodology

We began our research with a view to understanding more deeply the issues that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability raised for us. We hoped it might serve to inform future action and decision making related to relationships between disabled and non disabled people and their respective communities. Michael Patton describes this latter activity as applied research.²³

²¹ Gertrude Lebans. "Liberating Our Images of Ministry." In Gathered by the River: Reflections and essays of women doing ministry. Ed. Gertrude Lebans. (Toronto: artemis enterprises and UCPH. 1994). p. 100.

²² Perske. op. cit., p. 77.

²³ Michael Quinn Patton. Qualitative Evaluation And Research Methods. 2nd. ed. (Newbury Park. CA: Sage Publications, 1990). p. 12.

We proceeded according to the methodological structure outlined by Max van Manen in Researching Lived Experience. Helpful for me around the issue of seeking meaning was the discussion of theme.²⁴ What is a theme? How do themes come about? How do themes relate to the phenomenon being studied? Also instructive was a discussion of writing as the venue that mediates reflection and action. To write is to exercise self-consciousness, to play the inner against the outer, the subjective self against the objective self and the ideal against the real.²⁵ Writing was to become the vehicle through which knowledge of the multifaceted significance of our friendship would be shared.

As a beginning researcher I found the language of methodology daunting and confusing. Robert Stake's book The Art of Case Study Research proved useful for my understanding of the defining characteristics²⁶ of qualitative study pertinent to our phenomenological inquiry. Qualitative study is holistic when the context is viewed from different angles so that the experience can be understood in all its dimensions. It is empirical or naturalistic when it is field based and includes the descriptive language and observations of informants. It is interpretive or inductive when the researchers rely on intuition to focus on what's most relevant as he or she interacts with the subject. It is empathic when the key researcher attends to the motives, value commitments and emergent patterns thereby allowing experiential understanding to arise from the narrative of others. In chapter five I tried to communicate to the reader what the experience itself would convey by employing the technique Stake labels as thick description²⁷ and van Manen describes as oriented, strong,

²⁴ Van Manen. op. cit., pp. 86-88.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 124-129.

²⁶ Stake. op. cit., pp. 47-48.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 39, 42, 102.

rich and deep.²⁸

Henry Wolcott in Transforming Qualitative Data²⁹ offers a helpful distinction between analytical affirmability and interpretive plausibility. It suggests to me that the themes mined from the evidence offered by my co-researchers through interviews and observations can be concretely affirmed. It suggests to me that my intuitive selection of what's important and the manner in which I choose to tell our story can render only a plausible interpretation of the hidden significance of our friendship.

Ruthellen Josselson contends that the essential message of hermeneutics is that to be human is to *mean*, and only by investigating the multifaceted nature of human meaning can we approach the understanding of people.³⁰ She emphasizes the importance of empathy, narrative and the dialogic self. My experience seems to corroborate her theory. Attentively listening to issues based in the lived experiences of co-researchers awakened me to new levels of knowing. The analytic process of selecting events and the creative process of storytelling opened my mind to emerging patterns of meaning at deeper levels. Inner dialogue around new questions has pushed me to see more clearly the implications of our experience within the broader context of church and world as it relates to relationship with people who have a disability.

This review of methodology has opened my eyes to seeing that a parallel to human science methods exists in the action reflection model for ministry which is a key component in

²⁸ Van Manen. op. cit., pp. 151-3.

²⁹ Harry F. Wolcott. Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1994), pp. 24-29.

³⁰ Ruthellen Josselson. "Imaging the Real: Empathy, Narrative, and the Dialogic Self" In Interpreting Experience: The Narrative Study of Lives. Vol. 3. Eds. Ruthellen Josselson and Arnia Lieblich. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1995), p. 43.

the formation of diaconal ministers. The liberative praxis of action, analysis and sharing of life³¹ aims to bring to consciousness the next steps in a justice-seeking journey. It is a methodology whose aim is social transformation. Action stems from the knowledge gained by a research process that is as dynamic as the spirits of the participants. It is based in a shared body of knowledge available to participants of every ability. It is practised in community around a truth that has been illuminated by diverse people and perspectives. Letty Russell contends that the more we connect ourselves to the margin and work for transformation of ourselves and society, the more we become aware of the contradictions between the way we experience social reality and the way it has been interpreted for us in home, church, school, and society. Learning to perceive these contradictions and taking steps together with others to change them is part of our liberating spiritual journey.³²

³¹ Letty M. Russell. Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 177.

³² Ibid., p. 194.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Methodology Outlined

Our study of issues raised by friendship with adults who have a developmental disability was influenced by a number of interconnected themes such as: who we were, in relation to one another; the nature of our context as a group within the larger communities of congregations and neighbourhoods; the effect of our friendship on how we viewed the church and the world around us. Michael Quinn Patton describes phenomenological inquiry as one that uses qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context-specific settings.³³ The open nature of our research question allowed for insight to emerge from a variety of perspectives: from interviews, from participant observations, from revisiting documents, from the heuristic perspective that friendship implies and from the symbolic interactionism that emerges to give meaning to our experience.

In order to remain open through the interview process to whatever emerged, our question, “What are the issues that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability raise for us?” was intentionally discovery oriented. As primary researcher I conducted interviews with three church representatives and one agency staff person. I sought to understand in depth the issues that were foremost in the minds of the interviewees. I tried to

³³ Patton. op. cit., p. 37.

pursue the places where the respondents showed passion - delight, fear, interest, energy, enthusiasm. This was the process of naturalistic inquiry that we followed. The taped interviews were professionally transcribed. Subsequently they were reviewed and corrected by the interviewees. Taking into account our common history as members of a lay facilitation team for two years I have tried to illuminate some of the interdependencies that existed between the details and the context, between the parts and the whole.

To ensure a fair representation of all perspectives I made observations as the key participant in the experiences of our friendship. One of my roles was to give voice to those co-researchers with limited cognitive and verbal skills. Therefore, I immersed myself in the culture and experiences of adults who have a developmental disability, as if to walk in their shoes. I spent time with them in their homes and joined them at their places of work. They were my teachers. We went out together in the evenings and on weekends. After a time we explored new activities. In this way I became both an observer of life as lived by adults who have a developmental disability and an active participant in the daily comings and goings of my friends. I have tried to describe factually, accurately and thoroughly the implications of this friendship. I have tried to view the issues that arose from our inquiry as part of a complex social system. It was our choice as participants doing research from the social margin of society to remain visible and to include the perspective of those who have traditionally been excluded as producers of research. The intent of this unique variation in our methodology was to increase the level of authenticity resulting from our research. Our inclusive solution pointed to possibilities on a larger scale. The need to support adults who have a developmental disability in taking their rightful place and assuming their due responsibility at

tables where decision-making happens will be important as debates spawned by limited public funds and demands for universal participation intensify.

Our documentation consisted of a personal journal, several reports, photos, tapes, video footage and a proposal for ministry. The journal contained regular personal reflections on my experience of social ministry with the lay team members, the church and the community. The reports constituted a public accounting of our work that appeared in newsletters and annual reports. The photo record of our drop-in activity was Pauline's contribution. The video excerpts were taken of a collaborative worship service and our closing celebration. To save time, audio tapes from three meetings were professionally transcribed. The ministry proposal began as a vision statement of purpose, goals and program components. It grew in response to challenges by the church community. As the key researcher, I relived our experience by reviewing the details of our accumulated data. It served to corroborate and challenge emerging issues.

A comparison, among 1) the patterns that emerged from an analysis of the interviews, 2) the major thrust of related literature and 3) the observations of the key researcher based in our common experience and our records, confirmed the finding of three broad themes of insight. We described these themes as seeing differently, seeing strengths, and seeing needs. We used these three themes to illuminate the interconnectedness of the issues of friendship with the wider community so as to comprehend more fully the significance of our relational experience. These became the three lenses through which we were able to probe the broader implications of our experience as it related to the bigger picture of ministry and world, of status quo and need to change. Since I was the instrument for this inquiry, I tried to let our

findings speak clearly to the reader.

The mutual trust implied by friendship led to the discovery of hitherto unarticulated feelings, insights and concerns. Four untutored mentors raised the blind so we could see the patterns of another world. Four individuals articulated the essential issues that arose from our experiences of friendship. These discoveries included tacit understandings that had arisen for me as key researcher as well as explicit understandings that arose in the course of our work as a lay facilitation team. We wove our new understandings into a single tapestry of story. Individual voices emerged at different points in the structure, in direct quotations, through individual narrative portraits and as illustrations of immediate needs. Our unfolding experience and story intersected with the people and the world around us. A common set of issues emerged to give meaning to the experience of our friendship. Discerning what was uncomfortable for us had implications for how we responded as individuals to the challenges of friendship. Discerning both our common humanity and our individual uniqueness had implications for how we decided to stand in solidarity with one another. In the same way, discerning what social changes are necessary for all to be welcome community participants will have implications for how the church chooses to demonstrate its leadership. The findings of a study based in collaborative hermeneutical phenomenology can point the way.

Ethical Issues

As researchers we were seeking to further understand the essence of our friendship. We proposed to investigate the meaning of our experience by recalling for ourselves the

issues that the process of deepening friendship raised for us. Cognitive limitations prevented some of us from participating as interviewees. As co-researchers we could follow neither the collaborative process described by Kirby and McKenna nor the backtalk strategy of Lanzara who worked with his subjects by submitting and resubmitting to them stories that shifted over time.³⁴ The foremost ethical question facing us was how to attest to the reality of our experience through the stories presented in Chapter Five without violating the trust placed in us by our friends. To simply read the depictions to our subjects in order to gain approval would be to shirk our responsibility as friends and reliable researchers. It was incumbent on us to ensure that the fundamental truth about their participation was conveyed with sensitivity.³⁵ Our challenge was to include first hand research evidence from people with a disability in a way that was appropriate, honest and trustworthy. To that end each of us read the content and presentation in Chapter Five as if we ourselves were the subjects. We aimed to respectfully guard each person's dignity.

Janice Morse drew my attention to the ethical issue of using video tape. In our particular instance we taped portions of a worship service and a celebration event that marked the end of our relationship as a lay facilitation team. The taping occurred with everyone's knowledge and consent. As documentation it served to prompt memory.

Storytelling is a complex social process, a form of social action³⁶ that embodies the

³⁴ Donald A. Schön. Ed. The Reflective Turn: Case Studies In and On Educational Practice. (New York: Teacher's College Press. 1990). p. 8.

³⁵ Marilyn A. Ray. "The Richness of Phenomenology: Philosophic, Theoretic, and Methodologic Concerns." In Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods. Ed. Janice M. Morse. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1994). p. 131.

³⁶ Susan Chase. "Taking Narrative Seriously: Consequences for Method and Theory in interview Studies." In Interpreting Experience: The Narrative Study of Lives. Vol. 3. Eds. Ruthellen Josselson and Arnia Leiblich. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1995), p. 2.

relation between narrator and culture. How we use people's stories to pursue our sociological interests is an ethical question. It is important that our work be grounded in the concrete experience of a particular time and place. The choice of my co-researchers to remain visible improves the reliability of our research. Their personal insights enhance the possibility of drawing the reader into dialogue with the text. In the fertile ground of the imagination, where values are the players, insights are the seeds that take root and grow.

Dealing with ethical issues transforms our understandings about the world we live in. In recognizing that we can never fully speak for another from within their experience no matter how intimate the relationship, we learn to discipline our statements with a sensitivity that knows the limits of the truth we have uncovered in this time and in this place. New ways of seeing affect how we respond to people, to cultural myths and to social systems. Feelings of fear and inadequacy, when they are shared, become liberating strengths. They strengthen in us the ability to make what's private public in a way that is respectful. Awakening indignity towards blatant discrimination is tempered by the acknowledgement of our own recent blindness. Newfound courage draws us into new roles on a larger stage. Strategies that transformed us will surely affect others. In dialogue with one person or one small group at a time we discover a talent for sensitively revealing the injustice of certain experiences, of making what's personal political. Storytelling through research is our way of tactfully exposing social wounds so the work of healing may begin.

Chapter 4: Seeing Differently

*Things pushing up to heaven.
Others burning down to hell.
And in between, the living
walking sideways on the earth.³⁷*

Tension: a Prerequisite for Insight

Our research uncovered the significant role of tension in the evolution of our friendship. Tension stirred the ground of our being as a gardener the seed-bed, bringing to light for us and others the lively potential of feelings and assumptions. Tension marked the steps of our shared journey towards a deeper experience of community. Tension was the leaven in the loaf of our expanding consciousness of the world around us, enhancing our capacity for discerning truth. In our attempt as a lay facilitation team to include and befriend adults who have a developmental disability we experienced the tension of ‘walking sideways.’ This is how my co-researchers describe it:

Sandra worries “...that she may be making somebody else kind of dependent.” And yet she says, “It’s quite amazing to find how much they can do for themselves.”

Eleanor explains, “There were quite a few instances when I reflected how these experiences with developmentally challenged people were very similar, almost a parallel situation, with my experience in a different culture. You put yourself in a

³⁷ Findley. op. cit.. . 227.

position where you don't know what other people are thinking about you and you're uncertain about how to relate to other people. I think that makes you feel very vulnerable, uncertain, unsure of yourself."

Susan's insight is "...the realization that we want a perfect world but God wants us to be open to a world as seen through wavy glass...everything's a little distorted and that changes our definition of perfect because it's not God's intention to make everything perfect."

Ruby acknowledges the tendency to remain within one's community or circle of friends and recognizes that participating with us brought other realities to her attention.

Friendship with people who are a social minority has moved my co-researchers and myself away from our comfort zones and into places of tension. Tension surfaces from deep within ourselves. It surfaces in face to face encounters with people who are different. And it surfaces when we adopt new perspectives that reveal distortions of justice. When we relinquish the perspective of the social mainstream, we discover what it means to 'be in the world, but not of it.' It is from uncertain places 'standing sideways' that seeds for interactive and dynamic friendships fall into aerated soil and await the gardeners' care.

An Opportunity to Examine Feelings and Assumptions

Tension that surfaces from deep within us opens the way for a change in how we see ourselves. Al Condeluci urges us to relinquish our fixations on concepts of dependence and

independence and to give more attention to the healthy equilibrium that takes shape when we enter into relationships marked by interdependence. He invites us to look out to differences.³⁸

In such a journey we pass through our own spirits and find ourselves.

E. I got more comfortable with the way to express myself and I guess I became a better listener too.

N. You mean understanding?

E. Not the words, but recognizing the needs. When Pauline would refer to things in her catalogue, it seemed at first that she was going off on a tangent. We felt a need to pull her back to the focus of what we were talking about. But I think, as time went by, we felt it wasn't necessarily a tangent. It was her way of becoming part of the group. It was just a gradual acceptance of that - not feeling uncomfortable with it. Later I came to recognize that this was appropriate.

Risking friendship with people who are different demands a leap of faith.

E. A lesson that I learned overseas time and again was to check my assumptions. And I think I had the same experiences relating with people with developmental disabilities. When I was analyzing a situation, to figure out what went wrong or even what went right, it often came down to a matter of assuming something that was not in fact true.

N. Can you relate any instances where that was clear for you?

E. I guess I made some assumptions about Sheena at the very beginning about her lack of ability. But as I got to know her - although I think she changed a little bit too - I saw her change.

³⁸ Condeluci. Beyond Difference. pp. 197-8.

N. How was that demonstrated for you?

E. Well, I remember during the first year she would often choose not to participate and she gave you the impression that sometimes this was not something that she was interested in and she would often almost fall asleep. She was tired and would be critical of Pauline. I just found her a negative sort of person sometimes... But later she showed quite an excitement about wanting to bring her mother to our group and showing some special caring attitude toward her mother and to other members of the group, that put herself second rather than first. And more confident. I think she just became more confident in her freedom to speak at meetings, rather than choosing just to sit on the sidelines. So I don't know how that fits in with what I was trying to say about making assumptions. I suppose I could have dismissed her as a person that I would never be able to relate to. But, in fact as things have evolved she's one of the participants that I find it easier to talk with.

An Opportunity for Mutual Nurturing of Companionship Skills

Challenges confronted my co-researchers in face to face encounters with our new friends. In relating with people whose capacities differed from the norm, Susan was able to practice skills of assessment and rapid reassessment as new information presented itself. Susan's illustration of engendering success in a new sport is an apt metaphor for the tentative and fragile steps we take in moving beyond relationships defined by ability and disability and into relationships marked by mutual acceptance.

Susan describes her experience of playing 'catch the ball.'

Su. (the challenge) of being able to attract his attention, to communicate that I was going to give the ball to him in a manner that he would have to catch it. He did not have verbal skills; so, it was all in body language, facial expression and the movement of the ball. For me the challenge was to assess exactly what to do in order to get the game going. I had gotten the right hardness, so that there was some give in the ball. He was able, maybe one out of three or four times, to actually grasp the ball. And the sheer pleasure on his face when he was able to do it on his own!

N. And that was rewarding for you?

Su. That was **very** rewarding!

Susan reflects on the value of shared activities.

Su. Sheena enjoyed doing the puzzle. And in doing the puzzle relating the different aspects of what was on the pieces. The challenge for me was to know how much I should put together and how much I should leave for her. I wanted to avoid making assumptions and yet to come away with a worthwhile experience of time shared.

N. And did you?

Su. The social aspect of being able to communicate on a level that seemed very comfortable for both of us was rewarding. And Sheena wouldn't let the puzzle be taken apart! I believe there was joint enjoyment in making the puzzle and that particular enjoyment will be recalled each time the puzzle is looked at.

N. So would you say that shared activities are a way of deepening relationship?

Su. Oh I think so, certainly.

N. And do they have a benefit beyond conversation?

Su. If we can remember something concrete, it's an easy way of remembering a pleasurable situation... Doing a puzzle, drawing a picture or making a dreamcatcher, these are things we can look at to recall the experience. Like snapshots. If we didn't have pictures, some little items of life would be lost because we wouldn't necessarily remember them all the time. And yet if we turn to the picture immediately the thoughts rush back, the feelings rush back, whether they be happy or sad.

Sandra sees through difference to identify our common humanity.

Sa. One of the things about Pauline, it's hard to have a conversation. When I think about inviting her to visit I wonder, "What would we do?" But then, really and truly she entertains herself for long periods and doesn't demand anything and would probably do the same when visiting.

N. When you're at the drop-in how is it?

Sa. She's there with her books and if she wants your attention she speaks. It's really just the way you would deal with any friend. You just sort of take them as they come. If they want you to listen they speak to you.

N. And Pauline?

Sa. She called my name and showed me what she wanted. She was very helpful about helping set things up and put things away at the end of the day.

N. Now, did you have to prompt her to do that?

Sa. No, no. She just knew how things were supposed to be done.

N. So you saw some initiative on her part?

Sa. Yes, oh yes. She could see that I didn't know what to do. She was very helpful.

These stories affirm our Christian belief that we are all sons and daughters of God and that each of us has the power to accompany others in the journey of life. We are not alone. We believe in God who works in us and others by the Spirit.³⁹

An Opportunity to Know the World as It Is

Ruby is the service agency representative on our lay team. The main issue for her relates to barriers to community integration. She is aware that teenagers tease people with handicaps on buses and in public parks. She knows that certain people believe that 'community' is anywhere but the house next door. Her stories are corroborated by this submission to our local newspaper.

The philosophy behind the closure of institutions that housed people with disabilities was warmly received by many citizens. Most people recognized that the opportunity to live a full life was compromised by the lack of freedom in the traditional system. But the measures being taken to integrate people with developmental disabilities into our communities are meeting a level of resistance that is deeply disturbing.⁴⁰

I asked Ruby if she had perceived barriers to inclusion among our lay team members for whom relating with adults who have a developmental disability was a new experience. What she observed was a deepening spirit of community.

³⁹ A New Creed. The United Church of Canada. General Council 1968, alt.

⁴⁰ Scott Carpenter. "The Letters Page." The Chronicle Journal. Saturday, September 7, 1996: A7.

R. It was more like all of us together. The disability sort of disappeared in the friendship.

More 'you and me' rather than 'us and them.'

N. Can you think of an illustration?

R. Sandra giving Sheena rides. Sheena really thinks of her as a good friend. I think that in Sandra's mind the handicap isn't there anymore. It's just a friendship. It has happened one way or another with all the ladies giving rides to the churches, sharing the ribbon time and other duties. It really brought them together.

N. So, a shared activity is one way of bringing people together?

R. Yes. The party at the end of the year was a good example. Everybody was interacting. There didn't seem to be any barriers there at all.

N. Have you any sense of what helped the barriers dissolve? You've named friendship but friendship is very hard to get at.

R. Perhaps just getting to know a person as a person... And not as a label.

N. What do you think facilitated our getting to know people as people?

R. The meetings... because we could get the viewpoint of our four members with handicaps. They have such honest and open opinions. It really really brings you right down to earth. Alfie especially. And Sheena, she's a bundle of information. Bill, quiet as he is, was beginning to speak up more and sing. You could tell he just enjoyed that singing so much!

N. In your work experience do you come across many opportunities for people to mix?

R. There aren't a lot, you know. We try to initiate it. But it's usually with staff and so you still have that wall because they're staff, they're paid. It's really difficult to get into the general stream of things. They have their own Saturday bowling and that's great. But it's

difficult to get them into regular bowling. They need somebody to introduce them. A friend to go with them. Even a spur of the moment invitation. They really appreciate that because not many people do it.

Sandra invited Sheena to her house for supper.

Sa. I didn't think about her having trouble cutting food. If I had thought of it ahead, I probably would have planned differently. It's just as well I didn't. She simply said, "Somebody will have to cut this for me." And handed her plate to the person sitting next. It was just not a problem.

N. How wonderful!

Sa. Yes, it was as easy as anything. You try to anticipate and second guess and really you shouldn't do that. You wouldn't do it with other folks.

Sandra spoke also of a man who had lived for some time with his mother in an apartment. He attended church on a regular basis. After his mother's death, he continued to live in the apartment.

Sa. Now that he's alone, he has taken to calling on the neighbours. He's obviously very lonesome. And the neighbours are good - or some of them are. One spoke to me and said she didn't know what to do. She had had to tell him he couldn't visit at a certain time on certain days because it was interfering with their lives. Then she added that some of the neighbours were saying that somebody like him shouldn't even be allowed to live in the building!

Susan recalls stepping forward to welcome a person with a disability who came to participate in a spaghetti supper.

Su. I just noticed the stop in conversation and felt a withdrawing of those around me.

N. How does that make you feel when you know there is a lack of acceptance?

Su. There seems to be this view, and I'm not using my own words, "Why do those people have the right to be here?" I'm not sure if the worry is that people with disabilities might hurt themselves - on the street, getting on or off a bus, in the mall. Or if the feeling is that in my little perfect world I don't want to see anything imperfect.

N. Do you think the presence of people with developmental disabilities will explode the myth that we live in a perfect world?

Su. Oh, I think so. And I think that is why the hesitance and non acceptance is there. The visibility of people with disabilities - going for coffee, taking pride in their work of clearing tables, eating out - will soften the public. Acceptance will come. It's just going to be slow, at a snail's pace... You would expect a Christian community to be accepting, willing to create a warm haven. I wonder though if we're sitting-in-the-pew Christians or if we're actually practising what God wants us to do?

The evidence of our research indicates that the world is not always a welcome place for people who are different. Though a disability can interfere with the practical running of life, it is the reaction and non-action of society⁴¹ which causes the most problems for persons

⁴¹ Brett Webb-Mitchell. "The Place and Power of Acceptance in Pastoral Care With Persons Who Are Mentally Retarded." In *The Journal of Pastoral Care*. Vol. XLII. No. 4. (Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, Inc., Winter 1988). p. 353.

with disabilities. “Lessons of gentleness,”⁴² by Dave Hingsburger suggests to me that change will occur and violence will end when we choose paths of compassion and long term commitment. Society and the church will have to prove their trustworthiness. People with disabilities will always be a minority in our communities. The majority can exert a subtle but painful tyranny over their tiny group. The power and money of the majority can control the prevailing judgment on any controversial issue raised by people with disabilities. And yet a person with a disability, together with a circle of friends and some accurate, clear-cut facts and values, can generate a spirit that may overcome or change that judgment.⁴³

The implications of friendship with adults who have a developmental disability for all who participated in the interviews proved to be threefold. First, friendship led us to increased self-awareness. Opportunities for examining feelings and assumptions arose out of concrete experience. Secondly, friendship pushed us to be intentional about developing skills for relating mutually with people who are different. And thirdly, friendship gave us insight into issues of justice. Acceptance and rejection became especially visible in public venues. Friendship with adults who have a developmental disability is about seeing ourselves, others and the world differently.

⁴² Dave Hingsburger. “Lessons of gentleness.” In The United Church Observer. Vol. 60, No. 3., October 1996. p. 32.

⁴³ Perske. op. cit., p. 19.

Chapter 5: Seeing Strengths

*And the pride you'll feel inside
Is not the kind that makes you fall -
It's the kind that recognizes
The bigness found in being Small.⁴⁴*

Spending Time Together

Susan and Alfred have different histories of socialization. Susan is accustomed to greeting people with a friendly handshake. Alfred greets people with a hug. Yet Susan and Alfred are friends. They have been meeting regularly for two years as members of the lay facilitation team. The team, reflecting on the significance of friendship, has made the following observations: Friendships, when they are wholesome, are relationships marked by respect. These relationships are mutual and are based in the give and take of shared leadership. Reflection on common experiences issuing from friendship, especially with people different from ourselves, has the power to be transformative of self, others and the world. Experiences of friendship that are liberative and life giving for all have the power to move people into community. Where there are high levels of trust and commitment, friendships can become vehicles for restoring justice.

Al Condeluci, in his book Beyond Difference, provides a useful definition of inclusion.

⁴⁴ Benjamin Hoff. The Te of Piglet. (Penguin Books. 1992). p. 51.

Inclusion implies that all are welcomed into the discourse. It also suggests that people do not have to be fixed or change to participate. Rather, people should be included as they are. It allows for a flexibility and a fluidity of acceptance for culture, physical or cognitive difficulties. It has the values base of kindness and hospitality oozing from it.⁴⁵

From the outset our lay facilitation team committed itself to the practice of radical Christian friendship. We sought in our own piglet ways, the wisdom of ‘the bigness found in being Small’ and the strength found in embracing our Weakness in community.

Powerfilled Individuals

ALFRED

My first outing with Alfred was arranged through staff at his new home. Alfred suggested we go for coffee. He named a particular donut shop. I was not then a frequenter of donut shops. And so Alfred gave directions while I drove. Eventually we found a location belonging to the chain of his choice. “Not the right one,” said Alfred. I yielded to his direction and we drove on. Then pointing to traffic lights in the far distance I said, “If we don’t find the place we’re looking for by the time we reach that intersection, “we’ll just have to turn around and go back to the one we passed.” We turned around. Alfred was not upset. He was fascinated by the ripples that radiated from the pebble he tossed into the air between us. Alfred, I learned, is tuned to life’s currents.

As we sipped juice, Alfred proudly drew my attention to his boots, belt and neck tie. That is how I learned of Alfred’s fascination with line dancing. And so we planned to meet

⁴⁵ Condeluci. Beyond Difference. pp. 204-5.

one evening in the bar where he went occasionally with support staff.

I stepped into the bar. Alfred's smile reached me through the darkness. The music was 'country.' People dressed casually. The mood was relaxed. Alfred and I got up to participate in the next dance lesson. Not being sure about our ability to keep pace, we selected space in the back corner. The first steps were easy. Then my runners stuck to the floor! Alfred was right about the boots! Mid way through the session and all puffed out we retired to our seats. We spent the rest of the evening observing the dancers and delighting in the gaiety of the atmosphere.

Alfred's gift to me that evening was an idea...the possibility of learning to line dance at our drop-in centre. One of my line dancing friends directed me to her friend, who became our friend. This friend taught us to dance the macarena. Then we made a discovery of our own! The macarena is an effective substitute for words to Linnea Good's rendition of Psalm 100. The 'joyful noise!' of our singing through actions reflected the bright eyes and the broad grins of our oneness in the spirit.

"Thanks, Alfred. You are teaching me the value of tossing pebbles and smelling roses!" I am learning that friendship is like a dance. We negotiate the turns by bending and yielding together.

PAULINE

On the first day of our drop-in experiment Pauline descended from the van clutching a number of bags. Pauline pulled out a Polaroid camera. Whereupon she pointed and clicked, demonstrating for all the truth of the advertisements. With gracious pride she presented the

photos. We admired the results - some of us caught unawares! The question of how to honour Pauline's initiative and affirm her intuition begged an appropriate response. It was decided that we use the initial proceeds from our beverage sales to purchase an album. Pauline, a veteran bargain hunter, selected our first album from a sale bin at the mall.

Following Pauline's lead, I have made it a habit to keep a camera tucked inside the pouch I wear at the drop-in. We have two albums full of photos. In her own way Pauline taught us the value of the visual as a tool for communicating with friends and with the public at large. Our photos have a tendency to creep into posters and onto video. Watch for us! We are here and claiming our place!

* * * * *

Front or back seat, Pauline is the driver. Red light! Slow down! Turn here! Her eyes are the eyes of our common good.

With this same consciousness of her surroundings Pauline selected her place at the table in our drop-in space. From the vantage point of a matriarch she oversees our activities, the entranceway, the kitchen and the money pail. Pauline's watchfulness frees me to respond to the needs of newcomers. I explain that we aim to be self managing and self supporting. We enjoy the freedom of making our own coffee and tea. Pauline assists those who forget where to find the coffee and how many spoonfuls make a perfect brew. Like her friend Jesus, Pauline is becoming a liberator for others.

We practice basic economics or the science of the production and distribution of wealth around the money pail. Fifty cents for coffee, pop, soup or hot chocolate. Tea is twenty-five cents for those who respond to the lure of a bargain. Some folks are

concentrating on making change. Others hurry past dropping coins into the pail as a sign of their right to make or select a beverage. All of us are learning to be fiscally responsible to the group. Pauline's announcement by name of those who would abuse the system generally ensures that justice prevails.

BILL

What I remember about Bill is his smile. When I first appeared at his door, he smiled. When I asked if I should come in, he smiled. He smiled while demonstrating for me his ability to make coffee. Then he smiled alternately at me and the television. I only know in retrospect that he was as anxious as I about becoming friends.

Shared activity became a means for deepening our relationship. Bill responded eagerly to the suggestion of a dinking experience. We learned together. Our teachers were church folk who made the game fun in the interest of our developing skills. It became a bright spot in Bill's week, evidenced by the fact that he managed to come on his own during my absence. The group's acceptance of us enhanced our self-expression and growing desire to explore the world. Bill attended our meetings faithfully. Each time he revealed more of his personality ...singing, dancing, stating his view and claiming the place nearest the coffee pot!

Bill had a part-time cleaning job and did not choose to participate in activities at the drop-in centre. Perhaps it wasn't mainstream enough for someone like Bill with no obvious disability and a thirst for adventure. Today we hear about Bill's activities from friends who recognize him and greet him on the street or in the clubs. They are the eyes of guardian angels. They watch over risk-takers like Bill who little by little are penetrating society's

invisible barriers in search of meaningful belonging.

SHEENA

I receive a phone call. There is excitement in Sheena's voice when she tells me she has baked a cake, her first cake. Is a word of congratulations enough for someone who has waited more than fifty years for this creative moment? To celebrate, Sheena chooses to bring me a piece of her cake and together we relive the experience of a first cake. Some weeks later when we are drawing up a list of activities for the drop-in, Sheena suggests we bake a cake. When I wonder who might teach us, Sheena's growing confidence prompts her to offer to share what she has learned.

* * * * *

I received an invitation to attend the opening of a new community enterprise in a mall. Immediately I thought of my friend Sheena who worked a few hours voluntarily at one of the stores nearby. Knowing that more invitations were available I asked my friend if she would like to attend with me. I explained that there might possibly be a few short speeches and a ribbon cutting ceremony. And I thought she might enjoy some of the displays. Because the ceremony was to begin mid morning, we would have to get permission from her 'boss' for time away. I invited Sheena to think it over and give me an answer the next time she phoned. A few days later I met Sheena at work and we made arrangements for time off.

On the day of the official opening, I met Sheena in front of the store and we walked together to the event. I failed to take into account that someone like my friend knows the mayor, not so much from daily news, but rather from the posters and conversations that are

so prominent during elections. And so naturally Sheena fixed her gaze on the mayor, moving closer for a better look. At the same time biased voter opinions and slogans rose audibly from somewhere deep inside. I tried to interest her in one display and then another. Sheena continued to be fascinated by the mayor's face. I felt relief when it came time for us to sit down and for the speeches to begin. It came time for the mayor. This was not to be the occasion of a solemn ribbon cutting ceremony. Instead the mayor was to be strapped into a gyroscope to experience the sensation of turning head over heels and every which way as one who floats through outer space. At the moment the plot was revealed, Sheena stood up tall and shouted, "Hurray for our mayor! Hurray for our mayor!" Her timing was exquisite, her words appropriate. The audience clapped, cheered and some rose from their seats for a better view.

It is not in me to be so publicly spontaneous. Breaking the ice was Sheena's gift to the community gathered that day. She opened the door to celebration!

I met Alfred, Pauline, Bill and Sheena three years ago when they agreed to be part of the social ministry experience for my preparation as a diaconal minister. Through them and their friends I discovered a network of people who, out of necessity, live in mutual relationship supporting and encouraging one another. I received from them the gift of sight. It was like I stepped through a door into a world that has always been here, a world of adults who dream of a time when their unique gifts will be welcomed and appreciated by the wider community.

Powerful Partnership

This was a feel good day! People were overwhelmingly complementary. Some used the word “exciting worship.” One woman wished this had happened forty-five years ago when she brought her daughter to church only to be turned away. The **GAPS**⁴⁶ partners who shared sermon time with me are willing to show their slides at other churches too! Sheena handed out ribbons as people arrived. She appeared comfortable and was delighted when someone invited her to join them for lunch.⁴⁷

A worship service in one community was offered to others. We used a drawing to illustrate the gospel story of the Syrophoenician woman.⁴⁸ Three colours focused our attention - a red doorway, two black figures and green food.

The doorway was a strategic location, a place where the woman was sure to get Jesus’ attention. Sunday morning was the doorway. A time when two groups came face to face in a spirit of friendship - the worshipping community and adults who have a developmental disability. The tall figure, Jesus, symbolized the power of both a male dominated society and the dominant community within that society. The kneeling figure, a woman, represented a minority community, one that did not enjoy the full rights of citizenship. In our particular context the woman might represent those in our community who have a developmental disability and who long for friendship with those in the mainstream and a chance to participate as full citizens in community life. For others she might be the voice of helplessness in the face of systems that permit continued alienation. The food was the focus of conversation between Jesus and the woman. Food is a biblical metaphor for fullness of life.

⁴⁶ *The GAPS Project: Break The Barriers - Fill the GAPS*. Funded through the Lakehead Social Planning Council. Thunder Bay, ON: partnership model: community awareness: screen presentation of *Henry and I'erlin*: training workshop for volunteers & support staff.

⁴⁷ Nancy Post. personal journal. September 17, 1996.

⁴⁸ Mark 7:24-30.

It's what we mean when we talk about equal access to resources, human rights and true democracy. Jesus' flippant answer to the woman's request for food revealed the dominant community's disinterest in the welfare of others and its contentment with the status quo. The woman argued for her community's future when she pleaded for her daughter. Her argument raised questions for Jesus. Questions about relationships and neighbours, and about who God invites to the banquet. In our city we ask ourselves how to live love with neighbours who have a developmental disability.

Our partners from the **GAPS** project showed slides to dispel myths about adults who have a developmental disability and to open our minds to seeing beyond labels. They pointed to opportunities for involvement in the movement towards community inclusion. Pauline and Sheena by their actions invited people to tie ribbons together and place the completed circle on the floor as a sign of solidarity and our intent to weave with others a new creation.

As a small group of touring worship leaders and friends we stepped through the doorway together and into a new understanding of table fellowship. With eyes wide open and other eyes upon us we marked the steps in our Sunday journeys at tables in restaurants sipping pop and eating burgers and fries. Slowly it dawned on us that the blossoming spiritedness of our community was becoming God's vehicle for restoring justice.

Spending time together permitted us to see strengths hidden by disabilities and labels. Alfred taught us that friendship is a dance of the spirit. Pauline was midwife to initiatives that benefited the whole community. Bill claimed his right to citizenship and mainstream living. Sheena's celebration of newly tapped freedom enlivened our world. We saw and were touched by the strength of socially marginalized people.

We observed that churches are uniquely scattered through our neighbourhoods. When an institution opens small doors and a fragile heart in the familiar territory of our daily living, opportunities abound for us to learn to build mutually meaningful and lifegiving relationships. Like an apple on a tree, the opportunity must be siezed; the good and bad of it shared and savoured. Risking friendship with people who are different requires wise leadership and strategic planning for there will be bumps of resistance along the path that leads to growth. Together a community of friends finds the water that quenches thirst. A church community that dares to ask the hard questions will roll away stones of ignorance and apathy. It will galvanize support for the restoration of justice and become a vessel for God's welcoming love.

Spending time together brought us into relationship as friends. Working together as friends enhanced our loyalty to one another. In solidarity we began to see the world as it really is - accepting and rejecting, but mostly unaware of the sustaining strength found in the acceptance of weakness and disability as foundational for riding the waves of life.

Chapter 6: Seeing Needs

*“This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel,
and to be a sign that will be opposed
so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed
- and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”⁴⁹*

“**They** belong with their own kind!” “**They** have nothing to contribute to us!” These are the swords that pierce our hearts, for they would separate us from our friends. They would extinguish the lights that shine for us in the dark corners of our culture where we discover true needs. We offer some typical examples to indicate the wide spectrum of concerns uncovered during our research.

We see a need to monitor the effects of new technology! Adults with a developmental disability living for the first time in the community are learning to use household appliances like washing machines, microwave ovens, popcorn makers, VCRs, computers and telephones. The telephone at our drop-in affords an opportunity for calling home and friends. We have a convenient multi-line system encased in one of the smaller sets devised by modern industry. I watch the unsteady efforts to coordinate hand and eye by people determined to make the telephone work for them and not against them. I begin to see the downside of scientific advancement. The numbers are barely visible! The key pads are ever so tiny!

We see a need to put people first! Attending conferences, coffee hours and public

⁴⁹ Luke 2:34b-35.

receptions with my friends I watch convenience dictate social convention. Coffee, tea and juice are set along side squares and cookies. My friend stirs the sugar into a cup. Suddenly he pops a dainty into his mouth holus-bolus. Some chunks spill down his coat. The caterer standing on the other side of the long table stares in disbelief as a second square follows the first. Carefully my friend picks up the cup and moves back so that others may come forward. There was a time when I would have felt some embarrassment. Not any more! I am learning that our mainstream culture gives my friend with one functioning hand no other option. The crumbs remind me that there are still challenges to be met if our hospitality is to be inclusive of all people.

We see a need to build bridges! Circulating on mainstreet with friends who have a developmental disability teaches me to see beyond cultural illusions. Take city transit for instance. There are riders who pay cash. Most are mainstream people with disposable income. In the evenings I observe that few riders pay cash. Instead they use monthly photo passes. These are signs of fixed incomes and or limited money management skills. People with passes are frequently people who live at the edge of society. They are either friends of my friends who sit and talk with us or they belong to other groups who congregate elsewhere on the bus. My awareness of the solitudes that exist within the *giant heart* of our municipality increases.

We see a need to raise questions! Frequently my friends regale me with stories of bowling, swimming and floor hockey. With beaming faces they show me their trophies. I pause to reflect. At one level we are promoting self esteem and a healthy life style. At another level we are maintaining a policy of segregation through specialized opportunities. How do

we become a community where all people live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community and have the opportunity to participate effectively?

We see a need to examine issues at depth! In a true democracy citizens are free and accountable to each other. However, we live in an imperfect world. Try as we might, our institutions are compromised by self interest. It should not surprise us to discover that the Christian church is not identical with the kingdom of God.⁵⁰ Issues of community inclusion for adults who have a developmental disability are rarely discussed in local churches. They are addressed by the city's integration services department through program initiatives. City employees, like service providers, are paid. Casual opportunities for deepening friendships are limited. The role of fostering friendship and community among diversely abled people is left to citizens. Where is their help?

We see a need to redeploy social power! Simple social analysis helps us to recognize the imbalance of power that works against mutual relationship and compromises principles of equality. Most of us live in the mainstream, are paid for our work and participate in decisions. We are the majority. We are bound by the systems that sustain our dominance. We recoil in fear from the unknown implications of change. Status quo sings a soft lullaby and we close our eyes to others' needs. Adults who have a developmental disability live in a different reality. They are a disenfranchised minority. They remain marginalized in their new neighbourhoods. Their work most often is part time, short term, low paying or volunteer. They do not sit at tables where decisions happen. They are chained to the social margin by lack of acceptance, opportunity and voice. They see the colour of our love.

⁵⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist *Ekklesia*-logy of Liberation. (New York: Crossroad. 1993). p. 68.

We see a need to communicate in a variety of modes! I am sitting in the theatre with two of my friends. The play begins. Latecomers straggle in. They take their seats in the rows ahead of us. No one seems to mind. Bursts of giggles from my friends now and then are signs that they are in tune with the plot. Amidst the excitement a program drops. My friend reaches towards the floor. She slowly crumples the program so as to fit it safely into a pocket. People turn to look. They frown. Both friends remain attentive to what's happening on stage. Why, I ask myself, do some accept behaviour that momentarily blocks the view and condemn behaviour that momentarily breaks the silence? For my friends *story* is enhanced by visual cues. For others, words are paramount. Inclusion is like an orchestra. It respects and reveres the diversity that makes up the harmony of the whole.

We see a need to extend our understanding of accessibility! There is a movement in society to ensure physical accessibility for all people. In our city the public works department is replacing perpendicular curbs on street corners with sloping curbs to accommodate motorized pedestrian vehicles, wheelchairs and strollers. Public funding has been used in our churches to install elevators and make washroom facilities wheelchair accessible. We see people with disabilities in malls, in parks, in the streets and in sports venues. We don't see many people with disabilities in our churches. Despite words of inclusion spoken from pulpits and printed in bulletins, I notice that when my friends attend church events with me I, alone, am the recipient of personal invitations to participate and to belong. My hunch is that we haven't yet looked at the social and spiritual dimensions of accessibility. That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome To People With Disabilities⁵¹ provides a starting place.

⁵¹ That All May Worship: An Interfaith Welcome To People With Disabilities. U.S. National Organization on Disability.

Without intentional strategies for welcoming and incorporating people with disabilities into the life and work of church and the community there is an unresolved awkwardness in the air. People with disabilities are left to figure it out on their own. It appears to me that most conclude they are being deliberately excluded.

We see a need to stand in solidarity, insiders and outsiders together! Carolyn McDade's words and music echo feelings that welled up from our souls.

Oh, friend, help me see the oppressor in me,
I will drop what is yours from my hand.
Oh, God let us care until all have their share,
and then all together we'll stand.⁵²

As co-researchers we have lived the truth of friendship's sustaining spirit through the ups and downs of an uncertain journey. We have tasted living water! We proclaim the power of radical friendship to undo what binds us to our past and to liberate us for a shared future. We acknowledge that change takes time. Insights that emerged from our experience deepened with time, reflection and further experience. Two years allowed time for us to see the needs of the world more clearly and to see our church communities from the perspectives of outsiders. In following a praxis based in communal action and reflection we experienced mutual empowerment.

N. What made it all worthwhile?

Sa. To hear Sheena proudly tell her mother she has friendS.

N. And to hear Alfred's enthusiasm in the question, "When is our next meeting?"

Our research has opened my eyes to seeing that the diaconal model for ministry we

⁵² Carolyn McDade. "With Whom Do We Stand." In Songs for Congregational Singing. (South Attleboro, MA: Ace Printing, 1991), p. 1.

followed is in fact a methodology of research in action. Further exploration of this model *cum* methodology may liberate us for renewed social sector leadership. The needs illuminated for us in the course of our research are only a few of the many needs in a world waiting and hoping for a servant people.

The Woman Who Sat on the Church Step Looking for Friends

Narrator: The dream began on the evening that Chris was unexpectedly dropped off at his Grandma and Grandpa's for supper.

Grandma: Another cookie, Chris?

Chris: Thanks, Grandma. I've been wondering...

Grandma: Yes, Chris.

Chris: There's a new kid in my class. His eyes are really different. They (phone rings).

Grandma: Hello. (pause with nods) You can count on us. We'll be right down. Bye. (hang up) Chris, get your bag and jacket. I'll get Grandpa. We have to go down to the church right away. The Finance Committee is calling an emergency meeting. (they head for the car)

Narrator: Grandma worked hard knitting, baking and organizing second hand sales to raise money for the church. The previous year the ladies paid half the cost of a new roof. Two years before it had been a memorial window. Then it was the organ. Any surplus money would be sent to a church project somewhere in

Asia or Africa. Grandpa was part of the Sunday morning counting group. He would say that it wasn't like it used to be. People weren't coming often enough. (Gpa, Gma and Chris get out of the car and prepare to cross street) Grandpa parked the car in the lot across from the church. Grandma grabbed Chris' arm as they hurried to cross the street. That's when the eyes of the woman fixed themselves on Chris. People knew her as the C(razy) woman. She spent long periods of time perched on the church steps. Most people looked away as they approached the entrance.

Chris: (tugging at Grandma's arm) Grandma, that woman! Those eyes! They are the same as the eyes of the new kid in my class.

C woman: (still staring, smiles at Chris)

Chris: (to C woman) Hi. Do you know my friend Timothy? You have the same look. Are you his grandma?

C woman: Not possible, not me. They took all my babies a long time ago. In an operation, they did.

Chris: You don't have any family?

C woman: Maybe brothers and sisters. They don't know me.

Chris: Why not?

C woman: I was sent to live in an institution. Younger than you, I was. Now I am free to go where I want.

Chris: Why do you wait here?

C woman: Here I can watch people coming and going. I hope someday to belong. I have

heard that church people are good people.

Chris: Don't you have any friends?

C woman: I know Mary and Rita. They like to sit and have a cup of tea in the mall. I like that too. I used to make pom poms but I got tired of that after twenty years. (rummages in her purse) There's Diana, Bob and Gene. They're young ones. They finished school five or ten years ago. Nothing to do now. No place to go. Kids tease Bob when he walks funny. They think he's drunk. I'm here to watch out for him. (finds paper and tucks it away again) And there's Betty, Janet and Roger and Carl. Some days they stop to chat six or seven times. Between bus rides usually. Roger needs Carl to help him find his way. Janet likes to get out of the nursing home where she lives. She would really like to find a way to live with people her own age.

Chris: Where do they go on the buses?

C woman: To the different malls. There's always people there and it's safe. Pardon me, I see Irma. She'll need my help to get her chair over that bump in the sidewalk and turned around. We keep one another company 'til her bus comes. (leaves to help)

Chris: Boy, Grandma! She really sees even though her eyes are funny. O.K. if I wait for you here on the steps? I want to see what she sees.

Gma & Gpa: Sure, Chris. Your conversation has got us thinking too. We're going to raise some new questions at the meeting tonight.

Turning to the Biblical Record

Diakonia is a Greek word meaning service. *Diakonia* was the word chosen by the early Christian community to describe the ministry of all God's people as they lived out their call to embrace the stranger and love the enemy. It summarized the whole ministry of Jesus, who said to his disciples, "I am among you as one that serves."⁵³ Jesus came as light into the world, so that everyone who believed in him should not remain in the darkness.⁵⁴ He was the servant who liberated people from their servitude.⁵⁵

Recall for a moment the story and image of Jesus washing feet. The community's lived experience of their leader choosing the task of a servant coupled with their lively discussion paved the way for Peter's deliverance from enslavement to a hierarchical model of leadership. Jesus' foot washing activity reflected Mary's anointing action of an earlier time. Both times there were objections. Swords pierced the soul and etched permanently into the community's memory these vibrant examples of alternative practice in ministry.

Simeon's prophecy forewarned the early Christian *diakonia* that servant leadership practised as coequal discipleship would be challenged. Yet the *diakonia* continued to be present at points of pain knowing that the transcendent purpose of servanthood was to become a gift of God to the world.

It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.⁵⁶

⁵³ Luke 22:27.

⁵⁴ John 12:46. adapted.

⁵⁵ Elisabeth Schlüssler Fiorenza. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company. 1992). p. 320.

⁵⁶ Isaiah 49:6.

Paul and Barnabas responded to the challenge of the jealous authorities in Antioch by reinterpreting God's truth that came to them from their Hebrew heritage in accordance with the context of their struggle.

For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,
'I have sent you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'⁵⁷

Reflection on the meaning of faith is most profound when it connects with particular contexts, the actual struggles of people of faith. Such engagement reflects intentional complex and concrete theological, political, and cultural struggles.⁵⁸ God journeyed with the Israelites and fed them manna in the wilderness. Joseph struggled in a dream and was reconciled with God and his family. The story of a girl restored to life and a woman healed⁵⁹ is an example of energy released. In making space for personal needs to become public or, in other words, publicizing the effect of the present system on women's lives, Jesus empowered Jairus to see the implications for his daughter in a patriarchal world. He empowered the community to see and be accountable to all its members. The failure of the disciples to stay awake and take events seriously, sealed in their memory Jesus' example of self-giving. What friendship! Jesus demonstrated a profound intimacy with God when he prayed 'Abba...' in the Garden of Gethsemane. The pair on the road to Emmaus awoke to deeper knowledge of Jesus in the breaking of the bread. The tradition is studied in order to be reinterpreted.

Reinterpretation by lay and clergy together adds a diversity of experiences to the pot where new theologies simmer. It is a caring praxis that seeks a change in the oppressive

⁵⁷ Acts 13:47.

⁵⁸ Sharon D. Welch. "Human Beings, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice." In Reconstructing Christian Theology. Eds. Rebecca S. Chopp and Mark Lewis Taylor. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1994), p. 98.

⁵⁹ Mark 5:21ff.

conditions of a current situation. In an open self-giving confrontation, oppressor and oppressed can be mutually empowered.⁶⁰ In writing about the practice of ecojustice,

Catherine Keller invites us:

to liturgically sort through our garbage, to make choices based on awareness of the sinister and/or beautiful web of connections between our food, the weather, our starving and tortured fellow humans, women's bodies, and the homeless - this multidimensional work of recycling releases new ways of being together, a new sense of common goal, of being on the edge together, of consoling and delighting each other in our edginess.⁶¹

All church members share one common ministry which is social in all of its aspects.⁶²

Various acts of ministry are but elements of one prophetic ministry of formation and reformation of alternative community.⁶³ Prophetic ministry consists of offering an alternative perception of reality and in letting people see their own history in the light of God's freedom and will for justice.⁶⁴ The participants in the Exodus found themselves involved in the intentional formation of a new social community to match the vision of God's freedom.⁶⁵ The community in Acts 4 was intentional about sharing its wealth so that there was not a needy person among them. The practical work of attending to points of pain built up the community and energized its people for continued mission and ministry with the world. Their reenactment of Jesus' inclusive table fellowship gave purpose and meaning to their charismatic work of love incarnate, the Word made flesh. Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well was about sharing the knowledge of the source of living water. Our task is to

⁶⁰ Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller, Theological Approaches To Christian Education. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), pp. 256-7.

⁶¹ Catherine Keller, "Eschatology, Ecology, and a Green Ecumenacy," in Chopp and Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

⁶² Hessel, *op. cit.*, p. vii.

⁶³ Walter Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination. (USA: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 14.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

deconstruct the myth that power is limited. God's power is freely available. And power shared multiplies. As people of God we are called to use our power and talents for the common good. Like the mustard seed, one well timed and strategically planted initiative nurtured by altruistic community can become the greatest of all shrubs, supporting life in its branches.⁶⁶

God So Loves the World

In the simple yet complex spirit of friendship diaconal ministry opens hearts to the world. It empowers people to unbend and stand tall. People are the main resource for justice when they organize, engage in popular education, develop networks and coalitions and are encouraged to become participating subjects in their own present and future.⁶⁷ The work is with those on the periphery of both church and society where dialogue among all the players can happen and where systems and structures are most visible. Loren Mead writes:

The future of the church demands a new locus of theology, a change from the library and the university to the place where the baptized person encounters the world, the place I have called the missionary frontier.⁶⁸

To be called to ministry at points of creative tension between order and chaos, right and wrong, the charismatic and the structured, the insider and the outsider, seeing and not seeing, healing and being healed, able and disabled, confident and vulnerable etc. is to be truly human, caught differently in time and place in the web that is creation. Diaconal ministry is a

⁶⁶ Mark 4:30-32.

⁶⁷ Joan Newman Kuyek. Fighting For Hope. Organizing to Realize Our Dreams. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990). p. 59.

⁶⁸ Loren B. Mead. The Once And Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier. (New York: The Alban Institute, 1991). p. 57.

song of community that heals, that bends, that rises and turns and yields a love that moves on.⁶⁹ It is a work that dares to touch the strands of life's threadbare moments, to gather them tenderly and weave from them new patterns of relationship.

We who live in a disintegrating empire today are summoned at prophetic moments to *criticize* the patterns of decline within our culture and within ourselves, to *contemplate* the holiness of God in the midst of these dark times, and, to evoke the *creative* desire in one another for a meaningful alternative for the future.⁷⁰

Our small group of lay team members danced to the tune of radical Christian friendship, a freely chosen relationship based in service with one another. It opened our eyes to new ways of seeing and being. Such a practice has the potential to transform the church and its role in the world. As citizens of planet earth we are accountable to one another and to the Source of All Life for liberation from all that enslaves. What sustains us at the crossroads, where lions and lambs lie down together, is the certain knowledge that we are not alone - lights shine in the darkness and darkness does not overcome them.

⁶⁹ McDade. *op. cit.*, p. 2

⁷⁰ Mary Jo Leddy. Reweaving Religious Life. Beyond The Liberal Model. (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990), p. 164.

Chapter 7: **CONNECTORS**

‘where friendships grow’

Today Alfred, Pauline, Sandra, Sheena, and Susan are directors for **CONNECTORS**, ‘where friendships grow.’ Eleanor is an honorary director. And I am the program coordinator.⁷¹ **CONNECTORS** is the shoot that has sprouted from the stump of our experience as a lay facilitation team. **CONNECTORS** was and continues to be nurtured by friendship. It is a venture in partnership that is directed by adults who have a developmental disability, church lay people, and community partners. It makes possible the building of relationships that lead to fullness of life. **CONNECTORS** offers the church and the community a concrete venue for dealing with difference and the opportunity to practice radical Christian friendship.

A Proposal to the United Church of Canada

CONNECTORS is a program committed to friendship and public solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability. It is a significant part of the body of Christ, celebrating God’s presence, loving and serving with others, seeking justice and resisting evil.

⁷¹ Position Description. see Appendix A.

We believe that *CONNECTORS* is meant to be a program of power that lifts the human spirit to a higher level. For we believe that in the example of Christ, God's power gives us perspective and balance. It can restore wholeness and vitality to a community.⁷²

The implications of this program for the United Church of Canada are contained in its goals:

- to advocate for community inclusion and full acceptance of people who have a developmental disability
- to support adults who have a developmental disability in active participation in community life
- to provide opportunities within the church and the community for friendship and learning with adults who have a developmental disability
- to support groups wishing to engage in dialogue about the joys and challenges of including people who have a developmental disability
- to provide Christian pastoral support and resources for people who have a developmental disability, their families and friends
- to recognize the contribution of volunteers in the process of social transformation
- to network with community agencies that provide support for people who have a developmental disability
- to raise public awareness concerning the realities of community inclusion
- to establish an ongoing relationship of support and advocacy with and for adults who have a developmental disability with both the church and the community

⁷² Theological Rationale. see Appendix A.

- to develop opportunities that facilitate the inclusion spiritually and socially of people who have a developmental disability into the life of churches and the community
- to provide programs of understanding and skill for people interested in working with adults who have a developmental disability
- to provide ways in which the church can participate in this project morally, actively and financially

CONNECTORS offers the United Church of Canada and in particular the congregations in and around Thunder Bay, Ontario a ministry that works directly with people. It offers a ministry that is actively seeking justice in solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability. It offers a ministry that is responding to the needs of today's world in a timely fashion.

Caught in the Web between Acceptance and Rejection

The drop-in experiment of March and April 1995 proved the need for an accessible, safe and centrally situated mainstream location where adults who have a developmental disability could gather. People reconnected with friends and staff from former settings. Some came with new housemates. Everyone shared in the activities. We invited church folk and others to drop by to say hello, converse and mingle. Because churches and church folk have strong roots in the community, we hoped they might be instrumental in welcoming the newcomers and in facilitating their entry into mainstream living. The UCW⁷³ of Wesley

⁷³ United Church Women.

Church paid the initial expenses of just under fifty dollars. Despite the hesitancy of church folk to become directly involved we knew from experience that we were growing with each tiny step.

One of our lay team members was concerned at the outset that we not give people false hope. And so we intentionally looked ahead to the end of our commitment and talked of what we might do to celebrate our time together. At mid point a separate group began to meet with me to put into words a concept for community outreach with adults who have a developmental disability. This group based its vision on insights related to emerging needs of people with disabilities **and** of mainstream people like ourselves and our faith communities. So as not to raise false expectations our visioning or proposal group did not include anyone with a developmental disability. We shared our draft with the clergy of the affiliated churches. We sent it to the executive members of the Official Board at Wesley Church, the site of the drop-in. We invited response. Informally people told us they had difficulty understanding our proposal. We reworked it into point form under the headings A Purpose, B Goals, C Needs, and D Program Components. These sections became the core of the document which is provided as Appendix A.

In addition to space, we identified a need for a mailing address and a financial structure. The people of First Church United allowed us to use of their address. Because there appeared to be no solution to our need for a financial structure at the congregational level, in the fall of 1995 I began to attend and report to meetings of Zone Four of Cambrian Presbytery. In accordance with a motion⁷⁴ passed in January, an ad hoc committee was

⁷⁴ Minutes of Zone Four of Cambrian Presbytery, Tuesday, January 9, 1996, at Pinegrove United Church.

established to develop a model for implementing community ministry. It was to meet and report as soon as possible.

The work of the ad hoc committee included an elaboration of the needs, the addition of a brief history, the inclusion of a theological rationale, proposed terms of references for the board of directors and the fundraising subcommittee, a draft position description for the coordinator, a proposed budget based on a negotiable contract with a lay professional diaconal minister and a suggested series of steps for implementation.⁷⁵ The committee attached a letter of support from Wesway. Wesway is a community agency meeting needs for respite care. Wesway grew from an outreach initiative of Wesley Church people in the nineteen seventies. The expanded proposal was an agenda item at the May meeting of Zone Four. In the wake of some objections, further discussion was postponed. The budget was reworked to reflect the salary implications of a ministry position. In June the following motion⁷⁶ was presented, discussed and carried.

That Zone Four recommend to Cambrian Presbytery:

1. the establishment of *CONNECTORS* as a three year outreach ministry of Zone Four of Cambrian Presbytery (September 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 June 30),
2. the approval of the Terms of Reference for the Board of Directors of *CONNECTORS*,
3. the approval of the Terms of Reference for the Fundraising Subcommittee of *CONNECTORS*,
4. the approval of the Position Description for the Coordinator for *CONNECTORS*,

⁷⁵ Appendix A.

⁷⁶ Minutes of Zone Four of Cambrian Presbytery, Wednesday, June 16, 1996, at Knox-Pruden United Church.

5. the position of coordinator for *CONNECTORS* be a ministry position according to the budget attached while proceeding with:
 - (a) the establishment of the Board of Directors and their approval of the budget,
 - (b) the establishment of the Fundraising Subcommittee and its input to the budget and,
 - (c) the Board of Director's engagement of the coordinator of the program
6. through the Oversight of Pastoral Charges Committee of Cambrian Presbytery and Cambrian Presbytery itself, a request be made to the Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario Conference Committee overseeing the distribution of Mission Support Funds to receive \$5,000.00 from the 1996 undesignated funds.

At the fall meeting of Cambrian Presbytery a motion⁷⁷ "that the matter of the recommendations from Zone Four regarding the *CONNECTORS* program be referred to the Executive with a report to be given to the court at the February Presbytery meeting" carried. In late summer work to prepare an application for a Mission Support Grant began. At the same Presbytery meeting a motion⁷⁸ "that Cambrian Presbytery support the request for a mission Support Grant for *CONNECTORS* of \$9,000.00 from the Mission Support Fund of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario" carried. In November *CONNECTORS* received notice of a Mission Support Grant of \$7,000.00 from the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada. Good news indeed!

In the fall of 1996 a skeleton Board of Directors began to organize their work. The directors established a set of bylaws to meet the application requirements of Revenue Canada

⁷⁷ Minutes of Cambrian Presbytery Fall Meeting, September 26-29, 1996. St. John's United Church, Marathon, Ontario. p. 2265.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 2265.

for registered charity status. This action resulted in a further addition of bylaws to the proposal document. The apparent need for yet more structure perplexed and frustrated all of us. At the same time encouragement for our work came through monetary donations from the UCW of First Church United, a concerned individual and drop-in participants who raised money by holding a bake sale.

At the 1997 winter meeting of Cambrian Presbytery the chairperson announced that “the *CONNECTORS* program had been discussed by the Executive but since no decision had been reached, the Executive will:

1. Appoint a Task Group of three people with power to add
2. Prepare Terms of Reference for the Task Group
3. Request an Interim Report at the June 1997 Executive meeting
4. Receive a final Report at the September 1997 Meeting of Presbytery.”⁷⁹

The *CONNECTORS* proposal is clearly caught in the web of church structure and process somewhere between acceptance and rejection.

The structures of the church, formed as they were for stability and endurance, mitigate against innovation. How many experiments in the churches have worn themselves out trying to get permission from the legal entities of the denominations? Where the experiment did get off to a limping start, often the suspicious requirements for reporting and justifying the change wore down the innovative enthusiasm. Of course, when that happens, the system says, “There! We knew it wouldn’t last!”.

The churches must learn to encourage innovation and even fund it, rather than handicap and punish it...Working experimentally is a key to making some of the changes we need to make for the future church...And until the churches begin seriously to make their structures accountable to the new missionary boundary, they will face continuing declines.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Minutes of Cambrian Presbytery Fall Meeting, February 23-27, 1997, Wesley United Church, Thunder Bay, p. 2295.

⁸⁰ Mead. op. cit., pp.73-79.

Collaborative Community Leadership

Where friendships grow so also do partnerships. Beginning in the spring of 1996 *CONNECTORS* shared its vision with people beyond the church. The Lakehead Association for Community Living praised our work and our goals. They contributed a staff person for much needed oversight at the drop-in. They encouraged participation. They supported one of their clients in assisting Wesley's church secretary a half day each week. The GAPS project offered a workshop for staff, friends and volunteers. Two of us participated and came away with a useful binder of material related to building friendships and community with people who have a disability. Staff from the city department of integration services visited us at the drop-in. They have included our advertising in the Thunder Bay 'key' at no charge. A city representative attended the first organizing meeting of *CONNECTORS* Board. To encourage a mixing of people we have begun to explore the idea of a city sponsored activity within the parameters of *CONNECTORS* drop-in. A Wesway staff person volunteered support as a director for *CONNECTORS*. The Thunder Bay Committee for Community Inclusion invited us to share our goals with them. These friendly overtures resulted in opportunities for me to learn⁸¹ more about issues related to the inclusion of adults who have a developmental disability as citizens and for

⁸¹ *Rendezvous on Respite: A Global Conference on Short Term Care*. Hosted by Wesway Inc., Thunder Bay, ON: March 6-8, 1995. Guest speakers: Reverend Bill Gevanta, director of community training and coordinator of congregational supports for the University-Affiliated Program of New Jersey; Dave Hingsburger, psychologist, supervisor of behaviour management at York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill, ON, and sessional instructor at Bishop's University, P.Q.

Interdependence: A Process for Building Community with Al Condeluci, Ph.D. Conference presented by The Thunder Bay Advisory Committee on Community Inclusion, November 3, 1995.

CONNECTORS to display⁸² its albums and video tapes at locally sponsored conferences.

I participated as a member of the Steering Committee in the planning and execution of the city's first ever Inclusion Week, April 5-11, 1997. In March 1997, I was nominated and selected as a community representative to the newly established Community Planning Group (CPG). In April I was nominated and acclaimed as the Chairperson for the CPG. Its mandate⁸³ is to develop and recommend a long term strategic plan which will describe future services and supports, including the conversion of provincial block funding to individualized funding for adults who have a developmental disability. This exciting and challenging opportunity to influence public social policy arose from the collaborative practice of diaconal ministry undertaken by lay team members who dared to walk sideways into unmapped territory.

⁸² *Coming Together in the North*. Conference presented by People First of Thunder Bay. March 28-30, 1996. Guest speaker: Patrick Worth. co-founder of People First Ontario.

Facing the Future... June 6,7,8th. A conference which brought together families of people who have a developmental disability to talk about their personal futures and the future of services in Thunder Bay. Presented by Choices Project Family Alliance.

⁸³ Community Planning Group Orientation Package. section 13. p. 4.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Summary of Results

CONNECTORS is a living model of people who make a difference in one another's lives. It is a model where people of every ability are learning to build mutually trusting relationships. It is a model that invites congregations to be present and hear the stories of another reality. It is a model for everyday ministry. It is an invitation to be present at the points of pain in people's lives. It is ministry that follows in the tradition of the women and men who stood helpless at the foot of the cross. We who are part of *CONNECTORS* have passed through the valley of our own vulnerability into the place where we have good news to share with the community. We know that friendship with adults who have a developmental disability has the power to transcend difference. We know that the practice of radical Christian friendship changes the way we perceive each other and the world. We know there is potential for congregations to become agents of social transformation through direct contact, friendship and public solidarity with the disenfranchised people in our neighbourhoods.

CONNECTORS invites the church to abandon the status quo that separates people of diverse abilities and to join in a dance that has already begun! A dance of the spirit that evolves, transforms and empowers individuals, neighbourhoods, institutions and society!

Revisiting the Literature

The issues that our study raised for us pointed to a world where themes of acceptance and rejection still persist. They were consistent with issues described by experts in the field, such as Al Condeluci and Dave Hingsburger. They drew us into recognizing our common humanity as emphasized by Clifford Elliott and Nancy Eiesland.

It was around perceptions of the church in relation to people with disabilities that we noticed discrepancies. At a global conference on short term care,⁸⁴ guest speaker Reverend Bill Gevanta, director of community training and coordinator of congregational supports for the University-Affiliated Program of New Jersey, spoke in glowing terms of the churches in his area. He described them as congregations of welcoming people with programs already in place to facilitate belonging. Sunday schools offered parents of disabled children an hour of much needed respite. Small fellowship groups provided social contacts for people with a disability beyond usual caregivers. Regular community celebrations promoted a sustaining vision of humanity's interconnectedness with all of creation. People experienced life as equal participants in the same family of God. Condeluci supports Gevanta's description when he writes that most churches are wonderful places. They promote values of acceptance and hospitality and they offer a superb starting point for community actions. Condeluci recommends meeting the pastor and learning about a church's activities.⁸⁵ Based on our experience of the United Church in Thunder Bay, Hingsburger offers a more realistic view.

⁸⁴ *Rendezvous on Respite: A Global Conference on Short Term Care*. Hosted by Wesway Inc., Thunder Bay, ON: March 6-8, 1995.

⁸⁵ *Interdependence*, op. cit., pp. 182-3.

“Whole in God’s eyes”⁸⁶ reveals the cost and the promise of bringing a person with a developmental disability into contact with Christians. The cost for some church members will be a crisis of faith. When identities become rigid and bound in the manner of Lazarus, friends and family may show concern, but it takes the fresh perspective of an outsider to loose the cloths. The god of the Perfectly Created Order, namely the Status Quo, will struggle with the gods who call us to journey as co-creators and justice seekers. A community will discover its calling in the struggle to provide hospitality to strangers. The promise for the people at Collier Street United Church in Barrie is already evident. They think they are privileged to be able to have the Jesus Walk people⁸⁷ with them. Bernie Lappin explains:

I now see people a lot differently. They bring out the child in you. There is so much love in them that you carry it out with you when you leave...I feel that if this group were to disappear, part of us would be missing - that is how much they have become a part of the life of the congregation.⁸⁸

The uniqueness of our particular research sprang from our monthly meetings where we practised Christian values and where the ratio of people with a developmental disability to people without a developmental disability approximated one to one. In reflecting on scripture we came to understand *community* as the soil⁸⁹ in which the seeds of our true selves are nurtured by the Holy Spirit working through us and others in hidden, mysterious and unexpected ways. Balanced perspectives gave us a rich context or fertile garden for observing and measuring growth. As we experienced change in ourselves and others we were empowered to speak confidently of what we knew to be true at the hidden level of the human

⁸⁶ Dave Hingsburger. “Whole in God’s eyes.” In The United Church Observer. Vol. 59, No. 3., September 1995. pp. 25-6.

⁸⁷ A group for people who are developmentally handicapped. Collier Street United Church, Barrie, ON.

⁸⁸ Donna Danyluk. “Walking with Jesus.” Celebrations. Friday, February 16, 1996: p. 1.3.

⁸⁹ Luke 8:4-15.

spirit.⁹⁰ We relinquished the oppressions of yesterday, accepted our interdependence and stepped boldly into a new future. Like the jackals and ostriches in Isaiah 43:20, we praised the One who gave us rivers in our desert! We drank the living water of erotic power described by Rita Nakashima Brock.⁹¹ With the energy of wild animals we served the world!

Further Topics of Inquiry

It would interest me to learn about the unique challenges and joys experienced by others who follow liberative methods of empowerment, shoulder to shoulder, with people who are socially marginalized. It would be helpful in our pluralistic society to highlight those passages of scripture that reflect the struggle to establish mutual and equitable relationships.

In Liberation Ethics⁹² Thomas Schubeck relies heavily on the Latin American based theories of Gustavo Gutierrez, Miguez Bonino and Jon Sobrino. I believe such discussion might be enhanced and made more explicit by the inclusion of concrete examples of liberative diaconal praxis demonstrated daily in a variety of contexts by members of the worldwide **DLAKONIA**.⁹³ The tension between vision and reality propels the creative process.⁹⁴ If we only focus on theory we never figure out the steps necessary for change. We need models that exhibit the interdependence of theory and practice, of word and action. There is potential

⁹⁰ Nancy Post. personal journal, December 12, 1995.

⁹¹ Rita Nakashima Brock. Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power. (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

⁹² Thomas L. Schubeck. Liberation Ethics: Sources, Models, and Norms. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993).

⁹³ The Worldwide Federation of **DLAKONIA** celebrated its 50th anniversary as an ecumenical and international organization in Friedrichroda, Germany July 3-11, 1996.

⁹⁴ Carolyn R. Shaffer and Kristin Anundsen. Creating Community Anywhere: Finding Support and Connection in a Fragmented World. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993), p. 227.

then, for their issue to be an authentic and relevant Wisdom.

Areas of Potential Application

Friendship is one of God's blessings. It is freely available to all people everywhere. Our Christian heritage has long recognized that friendship has the power to elicit from humans such traits as kindness, hospitality, generosity, compassion and forgiveness. The biblical record repeatedly raises questions fundamental to our social well-being. How do we welcome the stranger? Who is our neighbour? What is the meaning of *love your enemies*? These questions point to the fruit of friendship, namely an unconventional expression of love. This radical or unorthodox embodiment of love is precisely the business of the church.

The model of our experience has potential for application in those church communities located in areas where a change in public policy has uprooted adults who have a developmental disability as if to send them into foreign lands. Adults with a developmental disability are the *strangers* in our land. They are the different *neighbours* that we see in our malls and on our streets. They are also potential friends who will show us the way to loving the *enemies* that dwell in our hearts - fear, self-centredness, blindness, meaninglessness.

At this juncture in our United Church history there is a need for models of what Don Posterski describes as 'the people of God deployed.'⁹⁵ These structured programs of ministry shared by church folk, a socially, economically or politically marginalized group and pertinent agency partners would provide a deeper view of social issues and lead to meaningful social

⁹⁵ Donald C. Posterski and Irwin Barker. Where's a Good Church? Canadians Respond from the Pulpit, Podium and Pew. (Windfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1993). p. 200.

analysis. A people deployed would introduce fresh insights and support for initiatives that would ensure the relevancy of the church in an ever-changing world.

We hope that our research findings will encourage the church to leave behind its reactive and non-active stance towards innovative social ministry. In a pluralistic and multicultural world we believe the future of the church lies in a variety of ministry expressions.

A Personal Statement

The opportunity to explore the implications of social ministry formed, informed, and transformed my call to ministry. I began the Western Field Based Diaconal Ministry Program hoping to contribute to the church in a way that might ensure its viability for my children and their children. Learning to relate with people at the margins turned my conventional expectations related to ministry inside out. From this experience I have learned that friendship is the yoke we choose. It holds us in relation. Its spirited power works in us and others to open us to our true selves as vessels of God's enduring love. Today ministry for me means working directly with folk on the margins of our culture and society. It is from this vantage point that scripture becomes relevant. From this perspective I see opportunities for churches to become significant partners and contributors to the design of our social evolution.

Adults who have a developmental disability were the ones who helped me to see specific social needs. The spirit has called me into ministry with them. We have chosen a collaborative work of building an inclusive community. Inclusive communities know how to

welcome people of all ages, of every ability, race, faith and of no faith. The United Church is situated in Canada, a country that for many years exercised a public policy of assimilation. The practice continues today in subtle ways in most of our institutions. Fortunately for us, adults who have a developmental disability cannot be assimilated. They can, however, teach us to celebrate our diversity. They have been instrumental in freeing me to be who I am in ministry for these times!

The United Church has a grand uniting heritage, much accumulated wisdom, and many faithful members. People who cannot be assimilated because of visible disability or ethnicity may hold one of the keys to ending our congregational enslavement to practices that belong to former times.

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Interdependence: A Process for Building Community with Al Condeluci, Ph.D. Conference presented by The Thunder Bay Advisory Committee on Community Inclusion, November 3, 1995.

The GAPS Project: Break The Barriers - Fill the GAPS. Funded through the Lakehead Social Planning Council, Thunder Bay, ON: partnership model; community awareness; screen presentation of *Henry and Verlin*; training workshop for volunteers & support staff; shared worship leadership; member Board of Directors 1995-6.

Coming Together in the North. Conference presented by People First of Thunder Bay, March 28-30, 1996. Guest speaker: Patrick Worth, co-founder of People First Ontario.

Facing the Future... June 6,7,8th. A conference which brought together families of people who have a developmental disability to talk about their personal futures and the future of services in Thunder Bay. Presented by Choices Project Family Alliance.

Steering Committee for Inclusion Week '97, April 5-11. Guest Dr. Lou Brown, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin. "*Serving Students with Significant Disabilities In Regular Education Settings*"

Community Planning Group. Thunder Bay, ON. member and chairperson

The Hunchback of Notre Dame, A Walt Disney Masterpiece, VHS home video. Based on Victor Hugo's The Hunchback of Notre Dame. translated from French.

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Appendix A: Proposal Document

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS re: CONNECTORS

whereas

1. the two year experimental program of **CONNECTORS** in Thunder Bay has proved its worth in providing an inclusive experience for more than thirty people who have a developmental disability and has alerted a number of churches and groups about the need to be intentionally inclusive;
2. the two year experimental program has been developed with no financial outlay to the churches of Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery other than support for the diaconal field work placement from Wesley, Broadway and First Church;
3. we believe that the goals and achievement of the **CONNECTORS** program are very much in keeping with the attitude and spirit of Jesus Christ and therefore with the mission of the United Church of Canada;

be it therefore resolved that Zone 4 recommend to Cambrian Presbytery:

1. the establishment of **CONNECTORS** as a three year outreach ministry of Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery (September 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 June 30).
2. the approval of the Terms of Reference for the Board of Directors of **CONNECTORS**.
3. the approval of the terms of Reference for the Fundraising Subcommittee of **CONNECTORS**.
4. the approval of the Position Description for the Coordinator for **CONNECTORS**.
5. the position of coordinator for **CONNECTORS** be a ministry position according to the budget attached while proceeding with:
 - a. the establishment of the Board of Directors and their approval of the budget.
 - b. the establishment of the Fundraising Subcommittee and its input to the budget.
 - c. the Board of Director's engagement of the coordinator for the program
6. through the Pastoral Oversight Committee of Cambrian Presbytery and Cambrian Presbytery itself a request be made to the Conference Committee overseeing the distribution of Mission Support Funds to receive \$5,000.00 from 1996 undesignated funds.

CONNECTORS is a program of friendship and public solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability.

HISTORY

It originated in the fall of 1994 as a requirement for the Western Field Based Diaconal Ministry Program, St. Stephen's College, University of Alberta. For two years the Lakehead Association for Community Living (LACL), the congregations of Broadway Church, First Church and Wesley Church supported Thunder Bay diaconal ministry student Nancy Post in the two year field work component of her social ministry experience.

Today people who have a developmental disability live in a variety of home settings in neighbourhoods throughout the community. The recent closure of institutions has contributed to the identification of an existing need for community connections. Friendships with citizens who have strong ties to the community are a key factor in making a successful transition from institution to home and neighbourhood. Ties to the community through friendships serve to make inclusion a reality. Supportive friends make it possible for adults who have a developmental disability to live in a state of dignity and to participate socially and politically with others in all elements of living in the community.

Early in 1995 the Lay Facilitation Team identified with Nancy the need for a safe place to gather, one that would be centrally located, physically accessible and within the mainstream of community life. A drop-in experiment took place at Wesley Church which served to determine the parameters for the regular drop-in component of the program.

During the summer and fall of 1995 an ad hoc group of interested people met to draft a proposal that envisioned **CONNECTORS** as an ongoing outreach ministry in the city of Thunder Bay. It is the proposal together with response from **CONNECTORS** participants and positive community feedback that has provided the impetus behind the work of an ad hoc committee of Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery to develop a theological rationale, a position description for the coordinator of the program, and the terms of reference for a Board of Directors and a Fundraising Committee.

Although the field placement has ended, conversations about social sector collaboration among churches, community agencies and groups are ongoing. **CONNECTORS** offers the potential for participants to maintain connections with people from previous settings and to expand one's circle of friends. It offers possibilities for connecting with people who are not paid and of trying new things together, such as outings according to areas of mutual interest. To participate with Christians in the life of their churches would do much to accelerate the social acceptance and development of people who have a developmental disability.

THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

How humans relate with one another to achieve the experience of “community” is a subject to which the church turns time and time again. We leave it to the reader to determine how successful the church has been in incorporating it.

Our Scriptural tradition leaves little doubt that all humans belong to the same family; and, though discrimination against those who appear different or foreign from the “norm” may be an all-too-human disposition, the Bible renders such behaviour as reprehensible.

When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the stranger. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt, I am the Lord your God. Leviticus 19:33-34

There’s little doubt we have advanced the cause of the person who has a developmental disability in many ways. And yet many still ‘fall between the cracks.’ Our own Canadian hero, Rick Hansen (*Man of Motion World Tour*) has served to remind us that to feel included as part of the greater social fabric, we must cease seeing people as disabled, or as a burden to society, and more as sisters and brothers who have gifts to share. To work mutually is to risk the tension of uncertainty. What sustains us at the crossroads, where lions who and lambs lie down together, is the certain knowledge that ‘God is with us, we are not alone.’

Our Christian tradition affirms that we have an obligation to create a community that sees all people as vital participants in bringing in the reign of God.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

CONNECTORS is a program of friendship and public solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability. It is a significant part of the body of Christ, celebrating God’s presence, loving and serving with others, seeking justice and resisting evil. We believe that **CONNECTORS** is meant to be a program of power that lifts the human spirit to a higher level. For we believe that in the example of Christ, God’s power gives us perspective and balance. It can restore wholeness and vitality to a community.

And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, that there may be no dissension within, but the members are to have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured all rejoice together with it. I Corinthians 12:21-26

PROPOSAL FOR AN OUTREACH MINISTRY

in the city of Thunder Bay

A. PURPOSE

CONNECTORS is a program committed to friendship and public solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability. Such a program requires a coordinator, a Board of Directors and trained volunteers.

B. GOALS

- to advocate for community inclusion and full acceptance of people who have a developmental disability
- to support adults who have a developmental disability in active participation in community life
- to provide opportunities within the church and the community for friendship and learning with adults who have a developmental disability
- to support groups wishing to engage in dialogue about the joys and challenges of including people who have a developmental disability
- to provide Christian pastoral support and resources for people who have a developmental disability, their families and friends
- to recognize the contribution of volunteers in wazzu the process of social transformation
- to network with community agencies that provide support for people who have a developmental disability
- to raise public awareness concerning the realities of community inclusion
- to establish an ongoing relationship of support and advocacy with and for adults who have a developmental disability with both the church and the community
- to develop opportunities that facilitate the inclusion spiritually and socially of people who have a developmental disability into the life of churches and the community
- to provide programs of understanding and skill for people interested in working with adults who have a developmental disability
- to provide ways in which the church can participate in this project morally, actively and financially

C. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

based on personal investigation

- media reports of institutional closings highlighted the plight of former residents now dispersed in the community and raised questions about community inclusion
- friendships with people who have a developmental disability made the investigator aware of the challenges of living independently after years of dependency
- the investigator's awareness was challenged in moments of prejudice, lack of public knowledge and exclusion of people from the mainstream of life
- the investigator's experiences in the church and in the public community, with friends who have developmental disabilities demonstrated a deep need for education to ensure that all people live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community and have the opportunity to participate effectively
- the investigator discerned the need for a safe place that is physically accessible, centrally located and within the mainstream of community life

needs according to key informants (agency staff, friends and family)

- community assistance is required to facilitate the transition from institutions to new homes and neighbourhoods in a way that is inclusive and welcoming
- funding cuts to existing service agencies and cuts to disability pensions further highlight the need for compassionate community response
- community participation in making available opportunities to expand one's circle of friends while maintaining contact with people from previous settings
- avenues for the development of friendships with people who are not paid

resulting from a pilot project

- the drop-in made visible people, previously hidden, who have a developmental disability and the wider community's limited knowledge of their gifts and needs
- the growing participation of adults who have a developmental disability at the drop-in points to a role for churches in the social sector of society
- a need for opportunities to experience the satisfaction of trying new things together and of exploring areas of mutual interest in the church and community
- a need to accelerate the social acceptance and development of adults who have developmental disabilities through participation with Christians in the life of their churches and involvement in the community

D. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

COORDINATOR, a paid position

- works with people who have a developmental disability and volunteers to set up mutual community-building programs such as [i] drop-in centre(s) [ii] activities that are requested by participants as volunteer participation allows
- fosters links between [i] participants and volunteers [ii] participants and church [iii] participants and public [iv] church and public community [v] church and agency
- facilitates the recognition and acceptance of adults who have a developmental disability with [i] volunteers , [ii] the church community [iii] the larger community
- supports adults who have a developmental disability in the self-management of a drop-in opportunity
- recruits and supports volunteers in making initial connections with adults who have a developmental disability
- networks with churches, agencies and the community to nurture the development of ongoing relationships
- maintains records
- reports regularly to the steering committee and supporting churches
- meets with volunteers, participants, the Board of Directors and supporting churches
- recruits and orients volunteers from church and community to connect with adults who have a developmental disability
- provides necessary administration related to organizing, developing and maintaining the **CONNECTORS** program
- continues to develop a program that helps people who have a developmental disability feel comfortable in the church and in the community
- ensures that all program components address the goals of the program
- conducts a yearly program review and submits a report to the Board of Directors

VOLUNTEERS

- are recruited from churches and the community
- are committed to friendship and public solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability
- are the vehicle for program implementation
- are trained to guide and mentor others through the mutual sharing of experiences and outings
- find ways to make room for full community participation for adults who have a developmental disability
- use their knowledge and links to life in the community to foster connections where the unique gifts of adults who have a developmental disability will be valued
- express their faith in tangible ways by sharing a part of themselves with fellow humans along the road of life

- meets with the coordinator at least monthly while the program is operating
- reviews and modifies the coordinator's role according to program needs
- acts in an advisory and supportive capacity for the coordinator
- develops constructive strategies and necessary policies to achieve its mandate
- responds to program evaluation material
- plans and implements volunteer recognition

EDUCATION

- by increasing public awareness concerning the realities of community inclusion
- by training volunteers for ministry with adults who have a developmental disability
- by sharing resources with individuals, families, church groups and service agencies
- by offering a model of community ministry
- by inviting theological discussion related to issues of inclusion, disabilities and the role of churches and the social sector of society

PASTORAL CARE

- by addressing the need for support for volunteers, adults who have a developmental disability, their families and friends
- by sharing information on request about Christian life, the church community, developmental disabilities and available services
- by addressing spiritual needs in conventional and unconventional ways

NETWORKING

- by liaising with churches and community agencies
- by keeping abreast of community trends and opportunities
- by advocating with others for community inclusion and acceptance of people who have a developmental disability

DROP-IN CENTRE

- is an environment that is safe, physically accessible, centrally located and within the mainstream of community life
- is a place where adults who have a developmental disability find encouragement and support in becoming self-managers of the drop-in centre
- is a meeting place where friendships are nurtured
- is a place to make connections with people who can open doors to the wider experience of Christian communities and the world
- is a base from which people with mutual interests may pursue their common interests beyond the drop-in centre

Terms of Reference for the BOARD of DIRECTORS for CONNECTORS

A. STRUCTURE:

A Board originating with Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery of the United Church of Canada working collaboratively with people of faith, Thunder Bay agencies and groups who also work to enhance community inclusion.

B. MEMBERSHIP:

Twelve persons including:

- 4 persons who are members of the United Church of Canada, who live in Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery and who will be appointed by Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery [at least 1 to be from First Church United & 1 from Wesley]
- 3 persons who are **CONNECTORS** participants
- 3 persons who represent the larger community of Thunder Bay [e.g. The Lakehead Association for Community Living (LACL)].
- chair of the Fundraising Subcommittee
- the program Coordinator (non-voting member)

The Board is to name its own chair.

The Board will be represented at meetings of Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To oversee and promote the work of **CONNECTORS** in accordance with its purpose and goals.
2. To retain and evaluate staff.
3. To act in an advisory and supportive capacity for the coordinator and to be the body to whom the coordinator is accountable.
4. To be the avenue of accountability for **CONNECTORS** to Cambrian Presbytery through Zone 4.
5. In consultation with the coordinator to facilitate communication and education regarding the issues related to the program.

D. TASKS:

1. To meet with the coordinator at least monthly while the program is operating.
2. To review and modify the coordinator's role according to program needs.
3. To develop constructive strategies and necessary policies to achieve its mandate.
4. To ensure that the work of the program coordinator is evaluated annually.
5. To ensure that the program is evaluated annually in accordance with its mandate.
6. To respond to both the coordinator and program evaluations.
7. To plan and implement volunteer recognition.
8. To regularly share/report on the work of **CONNECTORS** at Zone 4 meetings of Cambrian Presbytery.
9. To forward minutes of the Board of Directors for **CONNECTORS** to the chair of Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery.

10. To oversee the work of the Fundraising Subcommittee in these ways:
 - To recruit members for the Fundraising Subcommittee.
 - To ensure that the Fundraising Subcommittee elects its chair.
 - To receive and approve monthly financial reports of the Fundraising Subcommittee.
 - To receive, approve the annual financial report of the Fundraising Subcommittee and submit same to all Zone 4 churches of Cambrian Presbytery and 4 copies to Cambrian Presbytery itself.

Terms of Reference for the FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE

A. STRUCTURE:

A subcommittee of the Board of Directors of **CONNECTORS** with links to First Church United and Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery of the United Church of Canada and the community of Thunder Bay.

B. MEMBERSHIP:

At least seven persons, including:

- 3 persons who are members of the United Church of Canada [at least 1 of whom shall be from First Church United]
- 2 persons who are **CONNECTORS** participants
- 2 persons who represent the community of Thunder Bay

The committee will have power to add.

C. RESPONSIBILITY:

To raise funds for the **CONNECTORS** program consistent with United Church policies and practices.

D. TASKS:

1. To consult with the Board of Directors for **CONNECTORS** regarding the annual budget needs of the program.
2. To make funding applications, including the Mission Support Grant application.
3. To appeal to ecumenical partners and other faith communities for support.
4. To appeal to community service groups for support.
5. To develop plans to meet ongoing funding for the program.
6. To name an administrator of funds who would:
 - be one of 3 signing officers [2 signatures required].
 - be a liaison with the treasurer of First Church United
 - ensure the safekeeping of funds [e.g. banking, record keeping, disbursements] .
7. The signing officers shall be the administrator of funds, chair of the Fundraising Subcommittee, chair of the Board of Directors.
8. To submit monthly financial reports to the Board of Directors.
9. To submit audited annual financial reports to the Board of Directors.

Position Description for the COORDINATOR for CONNECTORS

A. PURPOSE:

To be a visible sign of the church's commitment to friendship and public solidarity with adults who have a developmental disability.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To work with people who have a developmental disability and volunteers to set up mutual community-building programs such as [i] drop-in centre(s) [ii] activities that are requested by participants as volunteer support allows.
2. To foster links between [i] participants and volunteers [ii] participants and churches [iii] participants and public [iv] church and public community [v] church and agencies.
3. To facilitate the recognition and acceptance of adults who have a developmental disability with [i] volunteers [ii] the church community [iii] the public community.
4. To recruit, orient and support volunteers from church and community in making connections with adults who have a developmental disability.
5. To educate [i] by increasing public awareness concerning the opportunities and challenges of community inclusion [ii] by training volunteers for ministry with adults who have a developmental disability [iii] by sharing resources with individuals, families, church groups and service agencies [iv] by inviting social and political analysis of our present reality related to issues of inclusion and disabilities [v] by inviting theological and ethical discussion related to issues of inclusion, disabilities, the role of churches in the social sector of society.
6. To offer pastoral care [i] by addressing the need for support for volunteers, adults who have a developmental disability, their families and friends [ii] by sharing information on request about Christian life, the church community, developmental disabilities and available services [iii] by addressing spiritual needs in conventional and unconventional ways.
7. To network [i] by liaising with churches, agencies and the community to strengthen relationships [ii] by keeping abreast of community trends and opportunities [iii] by advocating with others for community inclusion and acceptance of people who have a developmental disability.

8. To encourage and support **CONNECTORS** participants in becoming self managers of the drop-in centre [i] by nurturing the development of new skills [ii] by cooperatively planning for activities [iii] by supporting people in their chosen work [iv] by acknowledging the contribution of drop-in leaders.
9. To meet regularly with volunteers, participants, the Board of Directors and Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery.
10. To provide necessary administration related to record keeping, organizing, developing and maintaining the **CONNECTORS** program.
11. To be responsive to changing needs of participants, supporting churches and the community.
12. To ensure that all program components address the goals of the program.
13. To conduct a yearly review and submit a report to the Board of Directors and the supporting churches, agencies and community groups.

C. RELATIONSHIPS:

1. Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery
2. First Church United through the appropriate committee
3. Wesley United Church through the Church Administration Committee
4. Ecumenical partners
5. Community agencies (e.g.LACL)
6. Other groups concerned with people who have a disability

D. ACCOUNTABILITY:

Professional accountability to Zone 4 of Cambrian Presbytery (through at least 2 people appointed by Zone and who shall be approved by Cambrian Presbytery Executive). Day to day direction and support for this position is through the Board of Directors for **CONNECTORS**.

E. TERMS of EMPLOYMENT:

A ministry position, renewable for three years. Initially a three year contract pending an overall evaluation of the program by the end of the third year.

BUDGET for CONNECTORS PROGRAM**E. Budget - Central Pastoral Charge Treasury or Outreach Ministry Treasury****...a la Mission Support Grant Application**

BUDGET	1996	1997	1998	1999
<i>Income</i>				
opening balance				
allocations				
fundraising		3,822.00		
interest income				
rental income				
other - partners	1,000.00	3,000.00	5,000.00	7,000.00
registration		400.00		
Mission Support	5,000.00	9,000.00	7,000.00	5,000.00
<i>Total Income</i>		16,222.00		
<i>Expenditures</i>				
salaries:				
ministry		6,692.00		
personel				
secretary				
other - vacation		268.00		
travel		1,000.00		
housing allowance		2,885.00		
manse expenses				
book allowance		375.00		
continuing ed.		150.00		
CPP, UIC, WCB (127,277.66.)		470.00		
disability, EHT (82,124.)		206.00		
church pension		680.00		
group insurance		96.00		
office expenses		2,800.00		
phone		300.00		
utilities				
mortgage/loans				
insurance				
Pres/Conf assess.				
transfers - repairs				
- moving				
- other				
volunteer recog.		300.00		
<i>Total Expenses</i>		16,222.00		
CLOSING BAL.				

By-laws and procedures for the CONNECTORS program

1. The work of the **CONNECTORS** program shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used solely to promote its objectives.
2. The terms of reference for the Board of Directors and the Fundraising Subcommittee, sections B, set out the requirements for membership. Appointments shall be for three years and staggered to ensure a degree of continuity.
3. The secretarial task of recording minutes of meetings will rotate among the directors and subcommittee members until a regular secretary is named.
4. The books and records shall be kept by the administrator of funds.
5. The fiscal year end shall be May 31st.
6. The annual meeting shall take place before June 30th. Directors, committee members, participants, volunteers, donors, members of partner organizations and interested members of the public shall be eligible to vote.
7. Amendments to the by-laws and procedures may be made by a 2/3 majority at any regular meeting of the directors.
8. Amendments to the constituting documents may be made by a majority vote at an annual meeting.
9. For meetings of the Board of Directors and its subcommittees, a quorum shall be a majority of their members.

Appendix B: Letter of Support

,



305 125 N. Syndicate Ave

Thunder Bay, Ontario

P7C 3V3

Tel 807 623 2353

Fax 807 623 6413

April 18, 1996

CONNECTORS

c/o Nancy Post
208 Edgewood Place
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7B 5X2

Dear Nancy:

Many thanks for the opportunity to review the proposal for this exciting new project!

CONNECTORS will clearly be a welcome support mechanism for many individuals with developmental disabilities. The importance of offering opportunities to participate more fully in the spiritual life of our community is surely strengthened through this model. The focus on inclusion will ensure that the unique needs and preferences of individuals can be addressed holistically, and will also promote the development of steadfast relationships. Further, there will be opportunities for reciprocal support, given that the volunteers will surely benefit from the gifts and capacities of the participants. This will have the positive results of enhancing the self-worth of the participants, and reinforcing their potential to contribute to their church community.

Through this joint undertaking, you have shown leadership in developing partnerships within the community, and have also taken the time to ensure that the service will be responsive to the needs of those who will be served.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your committee on your initiative and perseverance in the diligent pursuit of the establishment of CONNECTORS, and to extend to you Wesway's wholehearted support. Please let us know how we might provide further assistance as this important venture evolves!

Sincerely,

Carol Neff
Community Team Facilitator

Appendix C: *CONNECTORS* Pamphlet

*'where
friendships
grow'*

CONNECTORS

*people live, work and play
according to principles of
community inclusion. In
learning how to accept
differences we learn also
how to become effective
participants in community
life. Our open door leads to
the development of new
relationships and self-
confidence.*

**Friends of CONNECTORS
thank:**

The Mission and Service Fund of
The United Church of Canada

Wesley United Church

First Church United



The Lakehead Association for
Community Living (L.A.C.L.)

many caring citizens

CONNECTORS works collaboratively

with organizations taking steps to welcome
all people. We offer a fall and winter drop-in
opportunity which is advertised in the
Thunder Bay 'key'. If you would like to
become involved as a participant, a director,
a volunteer or a financial partner, we invite
you to:

- telephone Nancy Post at 767-6850 or
- write to **CONNECTORS**
c/o First Church, 201 E. Brock St.,
Thunder Bay, On, P7E 4H3



Mission and Service Fund

CONNECTORS

*'where
friendships
grow'*

CONNECTORS

CONNECTORS is an opportunity for individuals to meet, socialize and maintain long-lasting friendships.

Thursdays are filled with fun activities, arts and crafts, games, puzzles, cooking, music, computer activities and community outings.

CONNECTORS is about encouraging co-operation, sharing, interdependence, interaction, participation, and friendship.

WESLEY CHURCH
130 N. Brodie Street (opposite
bus terminal)

...the place to connect on
THURSDAYS
10:30 am - 3:30 pm

fall Sept.-Nov.
winter Jan.-Mar.

Participants help determine the calendar of activities. Bring your own lunch and extra spending money for coffee, tea, pop, etc.

Cost: \$2.00 per day
\$10.00 per term

Do you want more
community
involvement?

- Get involved!
- Bring a friend!
- Get connected with...

CONNECTORS
'where friendships grow'

initiating directors: *Sandra Hansen, Sheena Borich, Susan Silver, Jim Moffatt, Janet Stewardson, Alfred Bourque, Bruce Widenoja, Carol Neff, Merrilee Houston, Pauline McNeill, Roy Nicol-Macdonald*

Appendix D: Consent Forms

Consent Form

I have read the transcript of my interview with Nancy and consented to its use for our research purposes.

I have read chapter 4 and approve its presentation of my input.

I have read chapter 5 as an advocate for our friends and approve its presentation.

I release to Nancy all rights to the material contained in our thesis.

Dated: _____

Signed: _____

Consent Form

I have read my story and/or my story has been read to me.

Nancy may use it for our research.

I release to Nancy all rights to the material contained in our thesis.

Dated: _____

Signed: _____

Consent Form

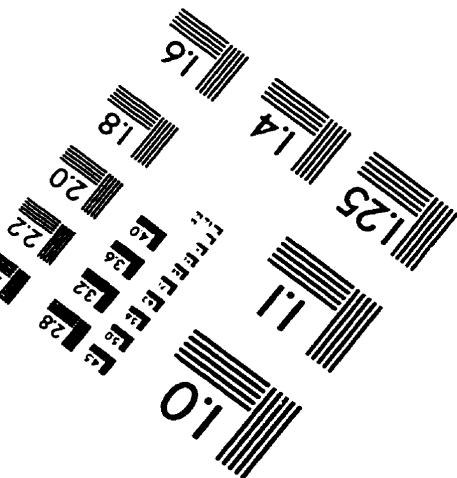
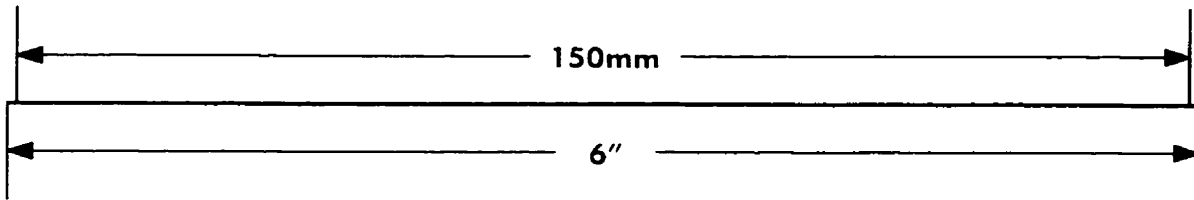
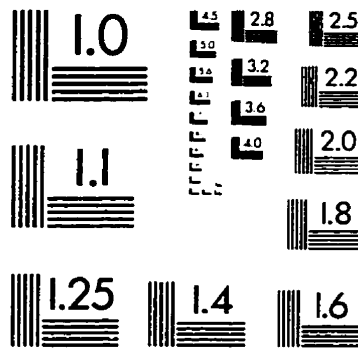
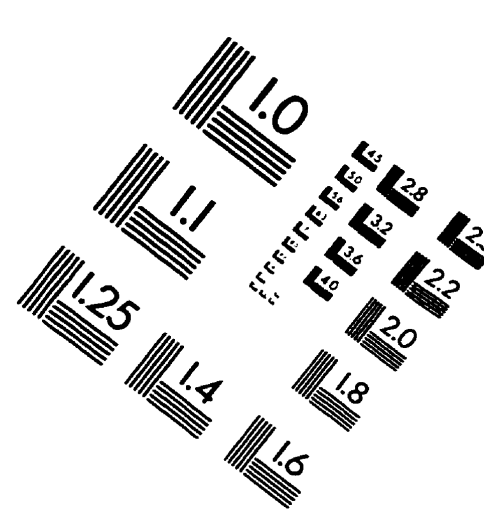
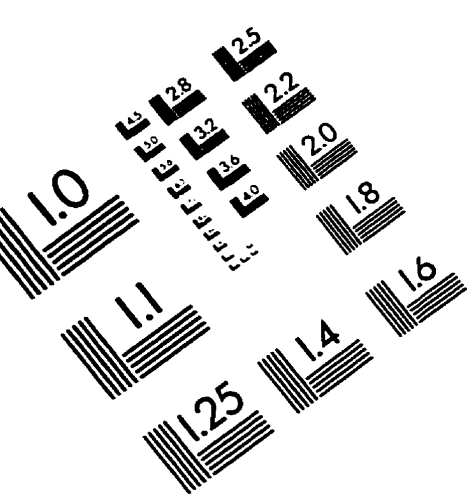
Nancy has given me a copy of the photo.

I release to Nancy all rights to the photo for use in her thesis.

Dated: _____

Signed: _____

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc.
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

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