

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION
AND ELIGIBILITY
FOR
THE ORDER OF MINISTRY**

**Report of the Division of Ministry
Personnel and Education
on the Ordination and Commissioning
of Self-Declared Homosexual Persons**

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ORDER OF MINISTRY

Report of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education
on the Ordination and Commissioning
of Self-Declared Homosexual Persons

At the Annual Meeting of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, February 14 - 16, 1984, the sixty members from across Canada studied the Report entitled "Sexual Orientation and Eligibility for the Order of Ministry" and debated the recommendations in the Report.

After due consideration, the Division approved the Report's principal conclusion (Section 1.5) and recommended that the 30th General Council also approve the principal conclusion:

THAT IN AND OF ITSELF, SEXUAL ORIENTATION SHOULD NOT BE A FACTOR DETERMINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORDER OF MINISTRY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.

This conclusion would in effect re-affirm the responsibility of conferences in matters related to the ordination/ commissioning of suitable candidates for the Order of Ministry. At the same time it would provide to the conferences the "clear statement" requested to clarify the matter.

Also approved for the General Council's favourable consideration were implementation options 6.1, 6.2, or 6.3. Options 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 were included in the report to General Council for information as other possible courses of action.

The other decisions of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education are noted in section 7 as recommendations.

WHILE APPROVED BY THE DIVISION OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND EDUCATION, THIS REPORT AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ARE NOT POLICY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA. IT WILL BE UP TO THE 30TH GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING IN AUGUST, 1984, TO DETERMINE TO WHAT EXTENT THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA SHARES THE OPINION OF ITS DIVISION OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL AND EDUCATION.

Table of Contents	Page
Summary	3
A. THE TASK	4
1.0 Introduction	
1.1 Mandate	
1.2 Membership of the Task Group	
1.3 Why the Task Group was Formed	
1.4 Method of Operation	
1.5 The Task Group's Principal Conclusion	
1.6 Growth in Understanding and Agreement	
1.7 Glossary of Terms	
B. HOW UNITED CHURCH MEMBERS SEE THE ISSUE	7
2.0 Positions the Task Group Identified in the United Church	
2.1 "Don't Know"	
2.2 "No, Never"	
2.3 "No"	
2.4 "Yes, Celibate"	
2.5 "Yes, But Not Yet"	
2.6 "Yes, Now"	
C. EXPERIENCES OF HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS: SOME BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS	10
3.0 Introduction	
3.1 Specific Texts in Scripture	
3.2 The God of Justice and the Experience of Oppression	
3.3 The God Who Accepts: The Question of Choice and Change	
3.4 The God of Shalom — Wholeness and Illness	
4.0 Lifestyle	
D. ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING	16
5.0 Ordination and Commissioning in The United Church of Canada	
6.0 Options for the United Church	
6.1 First Option	
6.2 Second Option	
6.3 Third Option	
6.4 Fourth Option	
6.5 Fifth Option	
6.6 Sixth Option	
E. RECOMMENDATIONS	20
7.0 Recommendations	
8.0 Guidelines for the Conferences	
F. APPENDICES	22
9.0 The Specific Texts in Scripture	
9.1 Selected Bibliography	
9.1.1 Supportive of the Task Group Report	
9.1.2 Not Supportive of the Task Group Report	
9.1.3 Other	
9.2 Educational Approaches	
9.3 Studying this Report	

Summary

In response to requests from the conferences for guidance regarding the ordination and commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons, the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, under the direction of General Council Executive, set up a Task Group to study the issue and make recommendations to the church. The Task Group solicited responses to the issue, studied the scriptures, traditions, and theology of the United Church as well as other denominations, and consulted with individuals, groups, and congregations. The Task Group grew in their own understanding and appreciation for the complexity of the issues, reaching their conclusions after many meetings, discussion, and studies.

The Task Group's main conclusion was that "in and of itself, sexual orientation should not be a factor in determining membership in the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada." In addition, they became most concerned about homophobia (the irrational fear, hostility, and even hatred felt and displayed toward people of homosexual orientation) found in society today.

The Task Group discovered that there are a number of positions regarding ordination of homosexual persons held by people within the United Church. These can be summarized as: "I don't know"; "No, never"; "No"; "Yes, Celibate"; "Yes, but not yet"; "Yes, now". In each case, there would be both negative and positive implications for the church if that particular position were adopted.

The Task Group spent a good deal of time in biblical and theological study. They looked at the biblical texts which referred to homosexuality and found that apart from some references to male homosexual acts, there were very few scriptural references to homosexuality. The report examines in some detail the passages that are found. In all their deliberations, the Task Group found that their work became concrete in the stories of gay and lesbian people they met.

The Task Group also examined the experiences of homosexual people in light of our understanding of God as a God of Justice, a God who Accepts, a God of Shalom (wholeness), and could find no biblical, theological, moral, or health arguments to support the exclusion of gays and lesbians. They found that gays and lesbians are and have been an oppressed people individually and collectively. They suffer from discrimination in housing, employment, etc., and are denigrated by society: in religion, homosexuality is often seen as "sin", in law as "crime", in medicine "disease", and in everyday language there is an emphasis on the stereotype of child molester or promiscuous hedonist.

Some consider homosexuality a sin and call on homosexuals to repent and change their orientation and expression. From their studies and discussion, the Task Group found that it is rarely possible for a homosexual person to

change his or her orientation. The causes of homosexuality are not fully understood, but most today see homosexuality a given, not a choice.

Indeed, the meetings with gays and lesbians broke down most of the popular stereotypes based on the assumption that homosexuality is a mental illness. The Task Group met people who had a richness and wholeness to their lives, a commitment to the church and celebration of their relationship to God. They concluded that perhaps the experience of homosexual persons, of recognizing that they are different and yet accepted by God, might be a unique gift to the church.

The question of lifestyle is inevitable in any discussion about possible ordination/commissioning of homosexual persons. The question is even more important right now because the issue of appropriate sexual behaviour for everyone in the church is being debated. Fidelity, love, and commitment are among the key principles in any relationship, and all persons should be a part of the discussion of an appropriate Christian lifestyle for United Church members.

In any discussion of this kind, it is necessary to look at the various roles of the ordained and commissioned minister so we can decide whether or not to admit homosexual persons to the Order of Ministry. Many see ministers as a group set apart, people with superior spiritual and moral character, acting as mediators between the congregation and God. The Task Group rejects this thinking, feeling that Christ's ministry belongs to the whole people of God. Within that ministry, some of its members are set apart for Ordination (the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care) and Commissioning (the ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care). A call to such a ministry comes from the conviction that God can use the gifts of an individual to particular use within the church. In The United Church of Canada, this internal call is confirmed by presbyteries and conferences, and by training and preparation for ministry. One of the key aspects of the rite of ordination/commissioning is the placing of candidates into a relationship of accountability to the church.

The Task Group does not feel that one's sexual orientation should determine a call to the ordained or commissioned ministry. They believe that homosexual persons, just as heterosexual persons, have the right to be examined by the church concerning their personal character, doctrinal beliefs, and general fitness for ministry, and upon that basis should be ordained or commissioned and accept the oversight and discipline of The United Church of Canada.

The Report presents six possible options for The United Church of Canada to follow. In each case, the stated option includes possible advantages and disadvantages. The options recommended are summarized as follows; to declare that sexual orientation in and of itself is not a

factor determining fitness for ordination and commissioning and to advise conferences of General Council's support for ordaining/commissioning suitable self-declared homosexual candidates at the annual meeting of conferences in either 1985, 1986, or 1987. In order to do this, General

Council would need to develop a comprehensive and immediate program of education and pastoral care and support for the candidates and families, as well as those within congregations disturbed and distressed by this decision.

A. THE TASK

1.0 Introduction

For the past few years, the conferences within The United Church of Canada have expressed a need for support and guidance as they go about the task of making decisions related to the ordination/commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons. In response, the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education held discussions, produced some resources and approached the General Council Executive which, in March of 1982, passed the following motion:

"That the Executive commend the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education's intention to develop a statement of guidance for the conferences as they exercise their responsibility to decide for the whole church about the Commissioning/Ordination of self-declared homosexual persons, special attention to be given to consultation with Division of Mission in Canada personnel and with those responsible to interpret the polity of the church, and that the Executive request the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education to establish a four to five person task group, centrally based but consulting widely, to carry out as soon as possible the task outlined in the following 'Terms of Reference' along with 'Membership', 'Time line', and 'Budget' hereby approved by this Executive."

1.1 Our Mandate

In the spring of that same year the Division created the Task Group under the following *Terms of Reference*:

- To review the polity of The United Church of Canada with regard to ordination/commissioning.
- To study the present General Council requirements for the basis of assessment of candidates for ordination/commissioning.
- To consult with colleagues in the Division of Mission in Canada with regard to its statements on

homosexuality and human rights, and the polity implications thereof.

- To consult with representatives of the Manual and/or Judicial Committees regarding both the polity and practice of our Church in terms of particular standards applied to those admitted to the Order of Ministry.
- To consult with conference Ministry Personnel and Education network people about these matters.
- To articulate guidelines for conferences in their exercise of the responsibility to ordain/commission as it applies to self-declared homosexual people; and
- To report to the Executive of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education in October, for information and feedback at the November, 1982 Executive, en route to the 1983 annual meeting of the Division.

Membership:

4-5 persons with staff, elected, men/women balance.

Budget:

Within the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education.

1.2 Membership of the Task Group

The membership of the Task Group was drawn from the three most western conferences, in part because some preliminary work on the issue had been done by Ministry Personnel and Education Division units in those conferences. Members included men and women, laity and ordained and diaconal ministers, and grandparents and parents of young children. Representation from the gay and lesbian membership of the United Church was included in the Task Group.

1.3 The Context of Our Deliberations

The United Church has been moved to undertake such deliberations by a small but significant number of Christians of homosexual orientation who have made public

their orientation and have declared themselves to be called by God to serve in the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada. This group includes those who have been serving in the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada for years, as well as students in our theological schools or colleges. Some of these students had become intended or full candidates before they made their sexual orientation public. At least one of these students was recommended as a candidate by his home congregation and presbytery after he had made a public disclosure of his sexual orientation. Within the next few years, several students will have completed their studies and will present themselves to their conferences for ordination or commissioning. The issue, then, is squarely before us.

The church, no less than any other institution or organization, has been significantly affected in recent years by the increasing discussion on human rights. Within that debate, voices raised by gay and lesbian Christians have pushed the church to acknowledge something it has infrequently, if ever, had the courage or honesty to assert: homosexual persons are and always have been part of the community of faith.

For the past few years, the United Church has been engaged in discussions of human sexuality sparked by the study "In God's Image". Other denominations have been involved in similar studies and in particular, have been wrestling with the issue of homosexuality as it affects membership in the church, pastoral care, and the ordering of ministry.

This Task Group was not appointed in response to questions about rights, freedoms, and opportunities for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Nor was it appointed because of heightened awareness and sensitivity regarding variations of sexual orientation and expression. However, the Task Group found it necessary to look at these broader issues as it struggled with the question of ordination and commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons.

1.4 Method of Operation

The Task Group met seven times for two or three day periods. The first three meetings were spent gathering information through correspondence and personal consultation with a number of groups and individuals in the United Church and other denominations. The scriptures and traditions of the church were examined, as was the present polity of the United Church in relation to requirements for ordination and commissioning. Advertisements in the United Church *Observer* elicited a substantial number of letters as well as submissions from individuals and groups representing a wide range of opinion.

The Task Group consulted with and sought opinions from the following:

- AFFIRM (the Association of Gays and Lesbians in The United Church of Canada)
- Division of Mission in Canada staff officers
- Personnel Officers of the United Church
- the Judicial Committee of the United Church
- the writing team for the Human Sexuality Report
- seven theologians and ethicists of the United Church
- the United Church Renewal Fellowship
- the Human Rights Commissions of the ten provinces
- other major denominations in Canada and the United States

In addition, the relevant actions of all the conferences and the 29th General Council were noted. Many books and articles were studied (see bibliography in Appendices).

Consultations were held with five congregations. Two were urban congregations; two, small-town; and one, suburban in a commuter community.

Throughout the process, the Task Group kept in touch with the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education by reporting to both the 1983 Annual Meeting and two Executive meetings. Permission was given by the Division to extend the time-line of the Task Group, as well as to include a biblical and theological rationale for the Task Group's conclusions.

The Task Group spent considerable time in studying and digesting the gathered materials, working toward agreement on a particular position so that a draft report could be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Division in April, 1983. Consultations were again held with members of AFFIRM, with several theologians and ethicists of our church, and with representatives of the United Church Renewal Fellowship before the second draft of the report was written.

The report was tested with the Division Executive and a number of consultants available to the Task Group. At its final meeting, the Task Group reworked the Report into its present form.

1.5 The Task Group's Principal Conclusion

AFTER DUE STUDY, CONSULTATION, DELIBERATION, AND PRAYER, THE TASK GROUP HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT, IN AND OF ITSELF, SEXUAL ORIENTATION SHOULD NOT BE A FACTOR DETERMINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORDER OF MINISTRY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.

1.6 Growth in Understanding and Agreement

One of the first things the members of the Task Group did was to share where we stood personally on the question of the ordination/commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons. At that meeting, the thinking and feeling of the Task Group members could be described as various forms of an "I don't know" stance. Some found

themselves in that position because they were unclear about issues related to sexual orientation. Others who had worked their way through to some understanding and belief about those issues were still unsure because of their concern about how the church might be affected by the decision to ordain or commission self-declared homosexual persons.

All members of the Task Group benefitted greatly from study and discussion together and believe the Holy Spirit was with us in our deliberations. We changed significantly in our understanding of sexual orientation and, more importantly, in our acceptance of homosexual persons. Our appreciation of the complexity of the church's responses to this issue has increased. Because we recognize that we were not chosen to serve the church on this Task Group for our biblical or theological or scientific expertise, we reviewed a great variety of information, scholarship, and opinion from a wide range of sources. We learned that for Christians this issue brings out fundamental questions about biblical interpretation, human sexuality, and justice.

Our consultations with representatives from AFFIRM, in particular, moved us far beyond what could have been an academic and impersonal exercise. The stories of struggle, and the journeys of faith shared by gay and lesbian persons were most significant to us and must, we believe, be involved in any process the courts of the church use to grapple with this issue. At the same time, our meetings with those who hold differing viewpoints lent authenticity to the feelings of persons who would oppose or are unsure about the ordination and commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons. As a Task Group we are aware that all positions must be taken seriously and that the church needs to demonstrate effective pastoral concern for all persons who take positions on this issue.

Our experiences at workshops and educational events in congregational, presbytery and conference meetings were important steps toward our understanding and agreement. We were able to observe, firsthand, what happens to some people as they purposefully begin to engage and struggle with the issue of homosexuality and move to a different understanding. We would be naive to think that such experiences mean that there will be an easy engagement of the issue. But we have seen movement and growth, and dare to believe that the Holy Spirit has been involved in that process.

On the other hand, one of the experiences which sometimes brought us near despair was the receipt of considerable correspondence filled with misinformation and hate. We are convinced that the church must not fail to address the reality which we define as homophobia: irrational and persistent fear of homosexuality which leads to dislike or hatred of homosexual persons. This effort must begin immediately. It will require, among other things, major educational initiatives directed, first of all, to counter the

homophobia which pervades both church and society; and secondly, to provide direction for those who are confused and unsure about homosexuality and who have not had personal contact with gay and lesbian members of the church. We were encouraged in these convictions by all individuals and groups with whom we consulted, regardless of their position on the ordination/commissioning question.

As a result of the experiences described above, we conclude that homosexual orientation, in and of itself, should not be a barrier to the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada. We have identified six options (see page 18) to consider as means of implementing our principal conclusion.

1.7 Glossary of Terms

1. Advocacy — acting in support of another's claim to justice or fair treatment.
2. Bisexual — one who has sexual and emotional responses to both sexes.
3. Celibacy — the intentional decision to forego any expression of genital sexual activity with another person.
4. "In the Closet" — a metaphor that describes keeping one's homosexuality hidden from others.
5. "Coming Out" — a metaphor that describes the process by which one shares with others the fact of one's homosexuality.
6. Commissioning — the church's rite by which a person is admitted to the Order of Ministry for the purpose of participating in the church's ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral care.
7. Diaconal Minister — a member of the Order of Ministry commissioned to the church's ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral care.
8. Gay — self chosen word to describe homosexual males.
9. Hedonist — someone who lives only for pleasure.
10. Heterosexual orientation — emotional and sexual attraction predominantly to someone of the other sex.
11. Homophobia — irrational and persistent fear of homosexuality which leads to dislike or hatred of homosexual persons.
12. Homosexual orientation — emotional and sexual attraction predominantly to someone of the same sex.
13. Lesbian — a homosexual female.
14. Lifestyle — the way persons live out their values in actions and relationships.
15. Metropolitan Community Church — a Christian congregation associated with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Its members are primarily gays and lesbians. (See Appendix 9.2.B.)
16. Ordination — the church's rite by which a person is admitted to the Order of Ministry for the purpose of par-

ticipating in the church's ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care.

17. Order of Ministry — that group of persons who have been commissioned to the church's diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care or ordained to the church's ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care.

18. Promiscuity — having sexual relationships with many partners.

19. Self-affirmed homosexual or Self-avowed — a gay or lesbian who identifies and accepts positively his or her sexual orientation.

20. Self-declared homosexual — a gay or lesbian who has acknowledged publicly in varying degrees his or her sexual orientation.

21. "Straight" — a heterosexual person.

B. HOW UNITED CHURCH MEMBERS SEE THE ISSUE

2.0 Positions the Task Group Identified in the United Church

Individuals rarely fit into neat categories or come to their positions in a strictly logical manner, in spite of claims to do so. Most of us are unaware of factors which come into play when we make a moral decision. We often claim the decision results from particular biblical or theological stances when, in fact, other influences can be at work. These acknowledged factors can lead two persons to take different positions using the same information.

In the process of our consultations, we became aware of six possible positions on the question of whether or not to ordain or commission self-declared homosexual persons. These positions are:

1. DONT KNOW
2. NO, NEVER
3. NO
4. YES, CELIBATE
5. YES, BUT NOT YET
6. YES

The Task Group took seriously all six positions because we recognized that for a variety of biblical, theological, ethical, sociological, emotional and experiential reasons, each has considerable support in various segments of the church's membership.

The following section gives a brief and very general description of the six positions with some of the implications which might follow if a particular position were adopted by the United Church. In no way is the section to be seen as an exhaustive description. We have not tried to elaborate on all the consequences arising from a particular position or how the consequences might vary.

2.1 "Don't Know"

(a) Description

There are probably a lot of United Church people in this position. A number, when first confronted with the question, admit they have never considered it and honestly don't know. Others may have had an initial opinion, but after studying the issue and becoming more aware of its

complexities, are no longer certain where the "right" answer lies and see good arguments for more than one position. Still others who have never had an opinion but have studied the issue thoroughly, also remain undecided. With more information, some of the unknowns may be resolved, enabling a "yes" or "no" decision at a later date.

Many others in this category are worried about the conflict that will be generated by engaging this issue directly. They wonder whether this issue should be a priority for the church when so many other justice issues require attention.

(b) Implications of adopting this position

- The problem of homophobia is not addressed.
- The future of gays and lesbians, who are candidates or are seeking to become candidates, is left in limbo.
- Conferences are given no guidance, and standards may be applied unfairly across the United Church.

2.2 "No, Never"

(a) Description

This position came through very clearly in many of the letters written to the Task Group, the United Church Observer and the Division of Mission in Canada on the subject of homosexuality. Some seem to reach this decision through an interpretation of the Bible which for them clearly states that homosexuality is a sin against God's plan for creation and that sexuality is to be expressed only through heterosexual marriage relationships. There is no distinction made between homosexual orientation and homosexual acts. A homosexual person is, therefore, in their view a sinner and is not seen as fit for ordination or commissioning. People holding this position conclude that they have all the information necessary and have little interest in acquiring more knowledge or making personal contact with gay and lesbian church members.

The majority in this position who wrote us take a selectively legalistic approach to the Bible on this issue; attack or ignore contemporary biblical scholarship; are judgmental and in some cases, punitive; are influenced by

popular myths and stereotypes; express varying degrees of anger and even hatred toward homosexual persons. The feelings underlying this position are usually deep and intense.

(b) Implications

- This decision would clear the air for some, freeing the United Church to concentrate on other concerns. Some who have threatened to leave the church unless gay and lesbian persons are barred from the Order of Ministry, would choose to remain.
- The decision not to ordain or commission gay and lesbian members solely because of their sexual orientation would cause hurt and sorrow for these people, their families, and friends as well as those who view this as a justice issue. Some would no doubt leave the church. Others would question the meaning of being in a faith community which discounts a significant minority in the church on such basic issues as identity, ministry, sexuality, and spirituality. Serious consequences for gays and lesbians in society are also possible if the church were seen to give support to negative attitudes and actions directed at homosexual people.
- Some homosexual persons already in the Order of Ministry but in the closet would remain fearfully there. Those across the church who have expressed anger or hatred toward homosexual persons might perceive the adoption of this position as a mandate to harass self-affirmed gays and lesbians and to "expose" those in the closet, interpreting the church's stance as non-acceptance of them as persons.

2.3 "No"

(a) Description

Those in this position have reached a similar conclusion to those in the "No, Never" category. However, they give more weight to modern biblical and historical scholarship in determining their stance, and look to the sciences to inform their position. Some in this position show a sense of pastoral care for homosexual persons and their families and view homophobia as a sin to be acknowledged and addressed. Some are open to new information about homosexuality.

On formal theological grounds, strong distinction is made between homosexual orientation and practice, opening the way to change (seen as either healing or conversion) on the part of the homosexual person, and forgiveness and acceptance on the part of the church toward those who change, or those who try but fail. In keeping with their interpretation of scripture and their understanding of God's purpose for sexuality, those who take this position would permit the ordination and commissioning of only those homosexual persons who do change.

Others who hold the "no" position may have no serious biblical or theological reasons to oppose the ordination or

commissioning of gay and lesbian members. Their main concern is with the conflict which a "yes" decision might generate. For them, this conflict would deflect the church from its mission priorities and perhaps weaken its already limited capacity to respond to urgent needs.

(b) Implications

- The United Church would continue to be in step with most other churches and traditional practice if this position were adopted.
- For some it would clear the air, freeing the church to move on to other pressing issues.
- Those threatening to leave the church if a "yes" would choose to stay.
- Others will leave the church if a "no" stance.
- Because this position is not as extreme as the "No, Never" position, the likelihood of a "witch hunt" to expose gay and lesbian members and ministers may be reduced.
- The church can begin to combat homophobia and provide pastoral care for homosexual persons and their families.
- Because this position assumes that change is not only possible but desirable (at least in sexual practice if not in orientation), there might be strong pressure brought to bear on known homosexual persons in the church to change, pressure that they might experience as oppression. This pressure could lead to "changes" of limited duration and effect.

2.4 "Yes, Celibate"

(a) Description

This general position is the stance of churches like the Anglican Church of Canada. Those in the United Church who hold this position see no problem in principle with ordaining or commissioning those whose sexual orientation is homosexual. It is not orientation that is at issue here, but homosexual practice. Because many believe that genital sexual expression must occur only within the bounds of heterosexual marriage, celibacy would be required of gay and lesbian members of the Order of Ministry. To be consistent, those holding this position would want the same sexual standards for homosexual persons as for single heterosexual persons. Some would be prepared to drop the "celibacy" requirement if acceptable standards could be developed for homosexual partnerships.

(b) Implications

- Some members of the church would see this as a further injustice because it requires celibacy of gays and lesbian members, while leaving celibacy as a freely chosen option for heterosexual persons. A further complication would be that the United Church has no consistent tradition of valuing celibacy as a vocation.
- Some ministers and candidates would consider the

denial of their sexual expression as unnatural and unfair, leading them to consider leaving the church. Others might be willing to make celibacy their vocation — even if required — just as some single heterosexual persons choose to do. We might ask whether or not gay and lesbian ministers would feel under constant surveillance or what would happen if a vow of celibacy were broken. The church would need to do careful screening to make sure such persons could cope with that particular stress. It would also need to be prepared to give pastoral support.

- Some members of the church would regard this as an acceptable "compromise" position, because from their perspective, it accepts homosexual persons without endorsing the sexual activity of gays and lesbians. In adopting such a position, the church would still need to have a comprehensive educational programme to combat homophobia and pave the way for acceptance of celibate homosexual ministers in congregations.

2.5 "Yes, But Not Yet"

(a) Description

Those taking this position agree in principle with the ordination or commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons for a variety of reasons:

- biblical, theological, ethical, sociological, etc. For many, sexual orientation in and of itself is not a consideration in determining fitness for ministry. Their hesitation is related to timing. Some would like more information to confirm their position; some believe that polity changes are necessary before ordination and commissioning is possible; others believe advocacy and educational programmes need time to be effective; still others want clarification of appropriate lifestyles for all persons in ministry regardless of sexual orientation. Pragmatism plays a key role in the "Not Yet" stance.

(b) Implications

- Taking this position assumes that time, along with concerted action will lead to a "Yes" response by the majority of church's members. But this assumption is debatable. Moreover, the church could use this "Yes, But" position as a way to postpone making a decision indefinitely while doing little to advocate for the implementation of the principle. This would be acting contrary to the justice intentions assumed in the "Yes" part of the position.

- Some holding the "No, Never" and "No" positions would find themselves hurt, angry and perhaps unable to remain in the church. Some homosexual persons, already in the Order of Ministry or in the candidacy process, would become impatient and leave. Others might see hope in this position. The promise of a decision and action by a specific date might give encouragement to the latter and

help the church move toward more concrete action on this issue.

2.6 "Yes, Now"

(a) Description

The people who are prepared to ordain or commission now have arrived at this position via routes similar to those in the "Yes, But Not Yet" and "Yes, Celibate" positions. They see little reason to wait, believing that change of attitude in the church will take place faster if practical problems have to be dealt with immediately. Some feel that the church should be prepared to live through considerable conflict over a justice issue of this significance. They see no reason for qualifications such as celibacy. In their opinion, our sexuality, regardless of orientation, is a gift from God and, therefore, is good and worthy of appropriate expression. Neither heterosexuality nor homosexuality is the superior state, the former being no more than the orientation of the majority in society.

Some, however, would want to apply to homosexual relationships the same principles of love, fidelity and commitment that the church affirms for heterosexual marriage. Others feel that it is too early to determine an appropriate homosexual lifestyle, and that it is up to the gay and lesbian members of the church to take the lead in identifying such standards.

(b) Implications

- The adoption of this position would be good news to all the gays and lesbians in our church — laity as well as Order of Ministry, signalling that they are indeed part of the body of Christ. For friends and families of gays and lesbians and for all in the church who regard this as a justice issue, the "Yes" position would be a positive turning point in the struggles related to this issue.

- Some people might leave the church; others, though unable to agree with the "Yes, Now" stance would remain with reluctance and pain. Some might view the church as taking a prophetic stance for justice, while others might see the church as unprincipled and unheeding of scriptural injunctions. Conflict may result within congregations.

- The United Church would need to be prepared for: difficulty in placement and acceptance of self-declared homosexual persons in congregations; pastoral care of those not able to accept a homosexual lifestyle; pastoral care of gays and lesbians who might find themselves being tested just as the first women ministers were.

- An immediate educational programme would be a must, as well as recognition of the fact that the church has played a major part in the oppression of homosexual people. Confession and repentance would be required.

C. EXPERIENCES OF HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS: SOME BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

3.0 Introduction

As stated in the Report's General Introduction (section 1), the Task Group has concluded that, in and of itself, homosexual orientation should not be a barrier to entry into the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada.

The development of the Task Group's thinking is difficult to describe precisely because it means choosing a starting point in a process which kept circling and repeating itself as we moved from real life situations to biblical and theological reflection, back to the stories of gay and lesbian Christians, to return again to the Word.

The Task Group members approached their task with an understanding of homosexuality already shaped by biblical study, tradition, experience, and our culture and society. Our challenge was to examine our various positions critically and thoughtfully.

We sought always to be open to the Spirit as we struggled to discover what God is calling the church to do today regarding the ordination/commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons.

As Christians we took with utmost seriousness the biblical witness when recommending a course of action for the whole church.

We took several approaches to biblical study. First, we delved deeply into the passages that seemed specifically to address the issue of homosexuality. This involved "word study", analysis of texts, and other methods of biblical scholarship. Because no member of the Task Group was a biblical scholar in the formal sense, our study was informed by extensive reading and consultation.

The second approach involved an appreciation of the context of scriptural passages. *The Lordship of Jesus Report* affirmed by the 27th General Council (Calgary) pointed to the importance of recognizing this dimension as we seek to understand and interpret scripture. Since a certain biblical text was written in a particular historical setting, Christians need to discover what that text meant in the writer's world, and what that text now means for us who live in a world both radically different, yet similar. In recent years, for example, the church has had to address the issue of the role of women in the church. We know that I Timothy: 2 says that women are to keep silent in church and are not permitted to teach. But the United Church has not permitted itself to be bound by this and similar texts, recognizing that context and time have changed. This approach clearly affects the interpretation of scripture and understanding of its authority.

The third approach involves seeking to understand the Bible as a whole. There are overarching themes in the scriptures which must be kept in view as we study any par-

ticular passage. As Walter Wink states in his succinct article (*Christian Century*, Nov. 7, 1979 p. 1086).

"The fact is that there is, behind the legal tenor of scripture an even deeper tenor articulated by Israel out of the experience of the Exodus and brought to sublime embodiment in Jesus' identification with harlots, tax collectors, the diseased and maimed and outcast and poor. It is that God sides with the powerless, God liberates the oppressed, God suffers with the suffering, and groans toward the reconciliation of all things."

This, for the Task Group, means that scripture itself is used to assess scripture, and that finally we read and interpret scripture in the light of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

3.1 The Specific Texts in Scripture

The obvious place to begin is with the biblical passages that make direct reference to homosexuality. One of the problems of this approach is that homosexuality is simply not discussed in a substantial way in the scriptures. The concept "homosexuality" is modern and was not used by the biblical writers. The explicit references (usually to male homosexual acts) are very few, very brief and usually not the main topic of the overall passage. Jesus never mentions the subject at all. When we try to address the issue of homosexuality, it is as if we are asking a question of the Bible that is not directly addressed in its pages. Certainly the Bible gives no straightforward response to the matter of the ordination and commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons!

This lack of specific direction means that there are going to be different interpretations of the biblical material. We must be wary of misusing the Bible, choosing only to discover what we already believe. We want to avoid "proof-texting" (whatever position we hold); on the other hand, there is the demand to be faithful to the text and to hear deeply what is being said to our times.

The Task Group concentrated on several passages:

1. The Creation Stories: Genesis 1,2.
2. Sodom and Gomorrah: Genesis 19, especially verses 4ff.
3. The Leviticus passages: 18:22 and 20:13-14.
4. Deuteronomy 23:17-18.
5. I Kings 14:22-24; 15:22; 22:46.
6. Romans 1:26 ff.
7. I Corinthians 6:9.
8. I Timothy 1:10.

We refer the reader to Appendix 9.0 for a detailed examination of these texts. Our basic conclusion is that these passages do not and cannot provide the church with specific guidance about homosexuality and the place of gay and lesbian Christians in the church.

At the same time, we have been confirmed in our belief that the Bible does address our concerns with a Word of judgment and grace. We believe that God's judgment is upon all of us who have contributed to and participate in the oppression of homosexual people and that we are called to repentance. We also believe that God's grace is at work as homosexual persons are released from this oppression and are enabled to live as fully human beings.

We need to stress again the impact of hearing the stories of gay and lesbian people. The place where our biblical work became concrete and the moment when our theologizing was made real occurred when those people whose lives were under examination shared with us their experience and their vision of the world. These life stories provided a context for our study, and were a constant reminder that our task was not theoretical, but very much embodied in these people.

This is not the place to share the particular stories, many of which were told in confidence. There were, however, in all the stories common threads which echoed basic scriptural themes. It is important to stress this aspect, because it became the reference point on our circle of understanding. We believe that this emphasis on story telling in conjunction with the study of scriptures is "doing theology" in a context. It is hearing the living Word today.

3.2 The God of Justice and the Experience of Oppression

The Task Group found it very disturbing to discover and then admit the extent of the oppression of gay and lesbian people, because it raised challenging theological questions for us as Christians. We believe in a God of justice, a God who throughout the history of the Israelites was constantly siding with the poor, the marginalized, the outcast — the ones who were oppressed by the powerful. We believe in Christ who focussed his ministry upon that group of people who were despised by those in power. Over and over in the pages of scripture, the cries of the oppressed rise up to God: "And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help, and their cry under bondage came up to God." (Exodus 2:23b) The Word proclaimed is liberation — freedom from all that oppresses, that breaks the human spirit, freedom from the power of sin as it makes itself known both in individual lives and in social structures.

Gay and lesbian people are oppressed individually and as a people in history. This oppression is both painfully personal and built into our systems. In this country, it was not until the late 1960's that homosexual activity between consenting adults in private was even legal. Even now, sexual

orientation is not included in the Federal Bill of Human Rights, and Quebec is the only province which has made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Because of this, gay and lesbian people have very real fears concerning eviction from housing, job security, etc.

The elusiveness of defined civil rights for gay and lesbian people is supported by existing social attitudes and understanding. It is disturbing to examine our language and realize how negatively homosexuality has been seen. Religious language has termed it as "sin"; legal language has labelled it a "crime"; medical language has identified it as a "disease"; and colloquial language and popular stereotypes have misrepresented, denigrated, and insulted gay and lesbian people by their portrayals of promiscuous hedonists and child molesters. There is routine ridicule and contempt for gay and lesbian people as a group.

The other side of all this is the process of internalization by which gay and lesbian people like any oppressed minority end up accepting for themselves the images generated by the dominant culture.

Homosexual people experience deep personal pain as they seek to come to terms with their sexual orientation. Their negative self-images; their attempts to deny and become heterosexual; the progression from endless psychoanalysis to aversion therapy, to electric shock treatment; the lives spent hidden in the "closet" — all this speaks powerfully of the pervasive and destructive oppression experienced by gay and lesbian people.

It is important to remember that this kind of oppression is not new but has been part of our western culture for some time. Gay and lesbian people have frequently spoken of their isolation, with no sense of there being others of their kind, either now or in the times past. This refusal to acknowledge the history of gay and lesbian people can occur on a very individual level, with family decisions not to talk about "that" relative, or accounts of significant historical figures omitting any mention of their homosexuality. It can also be more far-reaching and frightening. Few people are aware that the derogatory term "faggot" is rooted historically in the mediaeval practice of burning homosexual people at the stake. It is not until recent times that many have heard of the systematic slaughter of gay and lesbian people under the Nazi regime. Death camps claimed the lives of a quarter to half a million gay and lesbian people. We have chosen to quote a passage outlining this experience from material submitted to our Task Group by AFFIRM — Gays and Lesbians of The United Church of Canada, because it emphasizes the depth of oppression they experience as despised people:

"In the camps gay people wore the pink triangle, and in the social order developed among prisoners, we were on the bottom of the scale. After the camps were liberated, lesbian and gay people remained on

police files — homosexuality remained a criminal offence. We did not receive compensation, no one spoke for our release, or championed our cause after the war. No one kept accurate records of how many of us died. The Holocaust is part of our history as gay and lesbian people, and a very real part of our present and future fears."

(AFFIRM *Brief* to the Task Group)

The conclusion of our Task Group is that our society has deeply ingrained fears and hatred of homosexual persons (homophobia), and that these attitudes have shaped all of us. The church has participated in this development at times, even providing theological "justification" for acts of cruelty and discrimination to gay and lesbian people. All people are implicated and we call on our society and our church to repent. Regardless of any final decision concerning ordination and commissioning, the church is called to champion the civil rights of gay and lesbian people, to counter homophobia. This is not a new challenge. In 1977, The United Church of Canada's Division of Mission in Canada resolved:

"... We affirm the right of persons, regardless of their sexual orientation to employment, accommodation, and access to the services and facilities that they need and desire."

and recommended

"that in all areas covered by the Canadian Human Rights Act, provision should be made for prohibiting discrimination on the basis of 'sexual orientation'."

Gay and lesbian church members told us of how the story of the Exodus speaks to them. Like the people of Israel, they experience themselves as oppressed, groaning in captivity — and they cry out for deliverance; but the hand of the oppressor does not unclench easily. Nevertheless, they witnessed to us that they have experienced God's gracious liberation — not as a change in their sexual orientation — but as acceptance of themselves for who they are. They pointed out that although they often experience this "exodus" as a march into the wilderness, they are still strongly convinced that they are being led by God toward the life abundant.

The Task Group believes this witness to be genuine. We share the conviction that homosexual people are an oppressed group. We believe that God is always calling on the powerful to acknowledge their role in oppression and to heed the cries of those being ground under.

This conviction does not automatically answer the question of the ordination and commissioning of self-declared

homosexual people. There is a valid distinction to be drawn between the civil rights of groups of people and the individual's eligibility for ordination or commissioning in the church.

We have, however, been struck by western Christianity's history of using scriptural and theological arguments to deny ordination to groups who are society's victims, e.g. blacks, women, and slaves. We note that this is a pattern which needs to be taken into account as our church addresses the issue of ordaining and commissioning self-declared gays and lesbians. The Task Group feels that there are no scriptural and theological arguments to deny ordination or commissioning. Therefore, if gays and lesbians are not allowed to enter the Order of Ministry, THE ONUS IS ON THE CHURCH TO DEMONSTRATE THAT TO DENY ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING TO HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS AS A GROUP IS NOT PART OF THIS HISTORIC PATTERN OF OPPRESSION, BUT THAT IT IS IN SOME WAY PART OF GOD'S DIVINE PLAN.

As a Task Group we believe that the Bible favours the oppressed, that God's divine plan does not call for systematic exclusion of gays and lesbians from the Order of Ministry, and that there are no convincing biblical and theological arguments to support such exclusion.

3.3 The God Who Accepts: The Question of Choice and Change

The question of choice and change formed another major theme in our discussion and study. Some Christians believe that homosexuality is a sinful condition; that homosexuals have in some way chosen their sexual orientation; and that, if homosexuals would repent of their sin, they could be led by God's grace to change their sexual orientation and expression.

The Task Group is unable to support this view. The vast majority of gay and lesbian people we heard from described themselves as having "no choice" in the question of their sexual orientation. To them the appropriate word was "discovery": at various stages in their individual development they began to realize that they were "different". Instead of experiencing sexual attraction to members of the opposite sex, they were drawn toward members of the same sex. It was not something they chose, but was simply the way things were. Moreover, most of the storytellers described lengthy and painful struggles where they sought, through self will, therapy and prayer, not to be homosexual, but to become heterosexual. *They did not want to be different*; they were highly aware of the very negative connotations and consequences of being gay or lesbian in a society like ours: the price is incredibly high. The realization that their orientation was a given, not something they had wished, not a reality they had chosen came slowly.

This personalized experience of "no choice" seemed to correlate with much of the reading we undertook. The causes of sexual orientation are not fully understood, although a number of theories have been put forth: an inherited, genetic given; a genetic tendency or potentiality; a hormonal (im) balance; fetal environment; postnatal environment, socialization and upbringing. It is most probable that a variety of factors come together to shape one's orientation. Moreover, the terms heterosexual and homosexual suggest that there are only two distinct polarities in sexual orientation, while there is a growing awareness of the need to think in terms of a range of sexual orientation and of the existence of bisexuality in certain cases. What does emerge fairly clearly, however, is that sexual orientation is usually established at an early age, *before* there is any element of conscious choice.

Further, research indicates that a large majority of gay and lesbian people find it impossible to change their orientation. We most certainly heard very painful stories from individuals who have tried — who have spent thousands of dollars and much time on what was intended to be treatment or therapy; who have spent hours, days, and years in prayer, hoping for "change"; who have asked to be "exorcised of the demon homosexuality" — and all to no avail. They remain gay and lesbian people. The real conversion occurred when they began to accept themselves as they were and to believe that God accepts them, too.

We have also had the opportunity to explore the "ex-gay" movement, where a number of Christians claim that homosexuality can be "cured" and that, with the power of the Spirit, sexual orientation and expression can be changed. No ex-gays in The United Church of Canada responded to the general request of the Task Group to submit briefs or testimony. We did have occasion to hear one personal testimony and to read the same story in the United Church Renewal Fellowship publication *The Small Voice*. We wonder whether the text of the article sets forth a description of a heterosexual person who had been terribly abused as a child and who later found the freedom, forgiveness, and opportunity to act on his given heterosexual orientation.

We are aware that there are some ministers offering support to homosexual people who are still struggling with the question of change or who feel unable to affirm their homosexuality because of the great personal risks and costs involved in such a step. Such ministries can be affirmed to the extent that they demonstrate genuine pastoral care and enable homosexual persons to make decisions without pressure or coercion.

Nevertheless, the conversations we have had and the reading we have done led us to agree with the comments of Ralph Blair in the book *Ex-Gay*:

... "There is still no (little) documented empirical

verification of any permanent change from homosexual orientation to heterosexual orientation through the 'ex-gay' processes."

(*Ex-Gay*, p.2)

Another writer on this subject, Sylvia Pennington, describes her follow-up with a group of "ex-gays", who had been involved in a church group:

"They weren't at the church, and I learned that, one by one, they'd all dropped out months before... Except for one, I was soon able to locate them. What I found was shocking, and very depressing. Each one was still a homosexual and all had stopped their Christian walk. I heard sad, lonely sounds from them. They missed Jesus. They'd all had a genuine touch... They had tried to hold onto their faith believing that God had delivered them, even if they hadn't yet seen the evidence. Most had made at least one non-gay sexual contact to prove to themselves ... but the attempts ... left them knowing that they were as gay as ever. To stay in the church meant wearing a mask, continuing a facade of deliverance, telling lies ... What I didn't hear was hope. Nor did I have any to offer ..."

(*But Lord, They're Gay*, pp. 30, 31)

We are left with the reality of homosexuality — an orientation not chosen and rarely, if ever, changed: a fact of life for about seven to ten percent of our population and present in nearly all societies studied by anthropologists and in all historical periods for which records are available. We are left with the mystery of sexuality — the gift and dilemma — and recognize that orientation is one facet of that mystery. As a Task Group studying this matter, we do not feel that answers are available to all the questions surrounding sexuality and sexual orientation. No psychological, sociological, or physiological theory is capable of providing a final explanation and we wonder whether a final explanation will ever be forthcoming. We were still, however, confronted by the question of what place homosexuality assumes in the order of creation.

Two possibilities emerged for us. First, there is the view that homosexuality is a consequence of the Fall (Genesis 3) and part of the brokenness of creation. Because personal choice is not involved, homosexuality does not fit into the category of personal sin. Therefore, repentance for this consequence is not necessary. Other features of human reality are understood in a similar way. The example of blindness can, for some, be a useful parallel because, in our society, it is not a matter for which one is judged on moral or ethical grounds. (we note that in biblical times, blindness and sin were related, Cf. John 9:2)

At the same time, it is not considered to be the "ideal" for humanity. Instead, we accept blindness as a given reality in our imperfect world. We label it a handicap, yet we recognize that the blind can offer unique gifts. Blindness in and of itself is not regarded as a barrier to ordination or commissioning. Clearly, blindness is a tragedy at one level; it is also an opportunity for the Spirit to bring new possibilities for ministry.

While this view may be helpful for some people, as a Task Group we are not convinced that the image of handicap is the most appropriate way to understand homosexuality's place in creation. Although the concept of handicap does not carry any "moral freight", it is usually seen as a restriction on one's ability to engage in the full range of human activities. We are convinced that homosexuality is mysteriously wrapped up in personal identity and is a far more complex and subtle phenomenon than a physical handicap like blindness.

Second, there is the view that homosexuality's place in creation is simply a matter of difference.

The British Society of Friends uses the image of left-handedness as being the appropriate parallel. This example is evocative. Left-handedness, a minority trait, has also been treated at times as if it were wrong, and well intentioned but misguided efforts have been expended on trying to change left-handed individuals into "normal" right-handed people.

According to this view, homosexuality is not considered a consequence of the Fall; rather, it illustrates clearly the marvellous diversity in God's creation. It is not wrong, but merely different from the orientation of the majority. Appropriate ministry from this perspective involves communicating God's acceptance of homosexual persons, supporting them in their orientation and in all the changes in self understanding and human relationships this can involve.

Our theological reflection on the whole question of choice and change brought us to the conclusion that

HOMOSEXUAL ORIENTATION IN AND OF ITSELF SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A BARRIER ON MORAL GROUNDS TO THE ENTRY OF GAYS AND LESBIANS TO THE ORDER OF MINISTRY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.

3.4 The God of Shalom — Wholeness and Illness

Some of the popular stereotypes associated with homosexuality are based on the assumption that homosexuality is an illness. For some, the word "homosexual" brings forth images of neurotic and self-destructive individuals, incapable of stable and loving relationships. For

others, "homosexual" conjures up spectres of deviants molesting children and seducing youth.

The Task Group realizes that there have been situations in which homosexual persons have acted in an irresponsible or deviant manner. We would not want to deny this reality or to trivialize in any way the experience of those who have been the victims of such behaviour. It must also be acknowledged, however, that many women and girls have been sexually harassed and abused by heterosexual men. In all such incidents, it is crucial to understand that we are dealing with the irresponsible or deviant behaviour of a segment of the male population, both heterosexual and homosexual.

Our experience of hearing the stories of gays and lesbians broke the stereotypes that may still have been lingering in our minds. We saw and heard real people, committed Christians, members of the United Church, brothers and sisters in Christ. There was richness and wholeness in their lives. In the lives of these gay and lesbian people we saw the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). We were privileged to meet people of faith who were struggling with, growing in and celebrating their relationship with God. Even when for many years they experienced the condemnation of the church, they remained committed. We met with people who have ministered faithfully and well — lay, ordained, and diaconal. Sometimes it was difficult to accept the full truth of meeting gay and lesbian people who so totally refute the images of homosexual persons that we have carried. Our theology is forced out of the abstract and we are challenged to clarify our understanding of wholeness. Essential to wholeness, we believe, is the ability to love God and to care for the neighbour while caring for self. Our personal contact with homosexual people convinced us that homosexuality and wholeness need not be understood as contradictory terms.

Modern research supports this understanding. It has been recognized that past medical assessment of homosexuals as "ill" is erroneous. Many times judgment was based on samples of individuals who were under psychiatric treatment: people disturbed about their orientation, or suffering from other disorders. Homosexual people have the same capacity for health, happiness, intimacy, and service as do heterosexual people. We note that the American Psychiatric Association no longer lists homosexuality as a disease.

THE TASK GROUP IS CONVINCED THAT IT HAS MET GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE WHO ARE FIT FOR ORDAINED AND DIACONAL MINISTRY, whose call by God is vivid and demanding, who have been recognized by the church as offering leadership gifts. Does their homosexual orientation put all this into question? Our response is "no". We found much food for thought in the story of Cornelius (Acts 10:11-18). Obviously this is not a "proof text" since its historical context concerns the inclu-

sion of Gentiles in the Kingdom without the necessity of first adopting the Jewish way. What emerges in this situation, however, is that God is doing a "new thing": what was once considered wrong and even repulsive is not so now. When we saw the presence of the Spirit in the lives of many gay and lesbian people, we felt ourselves to be like Peter when confronted by Cornelius: "If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17)

As a Task Group, we have worried about all the negative aspects of the question the church has asked us to study. Are we being faithful? Are we merely expressing the values of our culture? Will this issue generate destructive conflict in the church? What will "other people" think of us? We talked about justice, and steeled ourselves for possible negative reactions. Gradually, however, we came to a new perspective: it may be that God is calling gay and lesbian people to a new ministry in our times. This strange reversal struck us quite forcefully when we heard the witness of gay and lesbian people. They may well have unique gifts needed by the church. The whole experience of recognizing and accepting that one is different from the majority, knowing the pain and cost of this, but ultimately believing that this is God's gift and call — such a reality may truly help the church as we struggle to free ourselves from cultural captivity. We cannot fully anticipate all the gifts of shalom that self-declared homosexuals might contribute to the church.

4.0 Lifestyle

Although consideration of appropriate lifestyle was not part of the mandate for the Task Group and more properly lies within the scope of a statement on human sexuality (Division of Mission in Canada Report), a few observations are necessary in the light of our consultations and research across the church.

Inevitably, the question of lifestyle arose in discussions of the possible ordination or commissioning of homosexual persons. "What does it mean to live as a Christian who is a practising homosexual person?" Some see the lifestyle question as a reason to delay a decision on ordination or commissioning; some want assurance that the lifestyle will not be based on the promiscuity they read and hear about in the media; some want to know, in detail, to what lifestyle they are saying "yes" or "no" before making any decision. Possible responses include: celibacy; covenanted relationships; relationships like "open marriage"; serial relationships. This question is being discussed throughout the gay and lesbian community as well as in wider church circles.

There is no doubt that the question is of great concern now because the whole issue of appropriate Christian lifestyle and sexual behaviour is before everyone in the church

— those in the Order of Ministry as well as lay persons. It is our impression that traditionally assumed standards of marital fidelity and genital exclusivity or single celibacy are often honoured more in theory than in practice. We believe there are a number of areas where double standards concerning sexual behaviour are operative in the church today. Falling short of the church's traditional ideal of marriage exclusivity or single celibacy has been more readily tolerated and forgiven for men than for women; for laity than for the Order of Ministry; for heterosexual persons than for gays and lesbians. This situation, in our view, is hypocritical and needs to be reviewed in the light of the United Church's stated theology of the ministry of the whole people of God, so that *all* church members can be challenged to greater commitment in living out their faith.

The Task Group believes that our human sexuality is a gift from God, full of power and mystery and is open to sinful action as well as faithfulness. We also believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in our present confusion and struggle, helping us search out and discover God's will for us in our present-day society and that all persons — heterosexual and homosexual, abled and disabled, men and women, single, married, and celibate — should be part of the ongoing discussion and search for standards marking the appropriate Christian lifestyle for United Church members.

We sense that members of the church are seeking clearer standards as they struggle with the lifestyle question. The Division of Mission in Canada's human sexuality study document "In God's Image..." has sparked lively debate and encouraged this search.

As a Task Group, we are convinced that, whatever lifestyle standards are adopted by the church either at the 30th General Council or at a later time, they must be based on similar underlying principles for *all* church members. We believe that those principles must be rooted in a sound and clearly articulated biblical and theological base which avoids legalism and emphasizes grace and forgiveness when failure occurs (which it inevitably does, since we all fall short of God's intention). We would see longstanding fidelity, love and commitment among the key principles in any partner relationship, ruling out promiscuity for both heterosexual and homosexual persons.

Regardless of what the church decides about appropriate lifestyle, we see a great and immediate need for effective pastoral care — far more than is presently available — for all gays and lesbians in the church (lay members and those in the Order of Ministry) as well as for their families and friends; and for those heterosexual church members who find this issue disturbing and difficult to understand. This pastoral care needs to be the responsibility of laity as well as those in the Order of Ministry and will require specific education and pastoral training.

D. ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING

5.0 Ordination and Commissioning in The United Church of Canada

The United Church of Canada has affirmed a theology which declares that all people are called to participate in Christ's ministry. All members of the Church, whether heterosexual or homosexual, have a part in this ministry.

In this section, we look at what we expect from those already in the Order of Ministry or those who are planning to enter the Order of Ministry. These expectations are both idealistic and realistic. Taken by themselves, they are incomplete, but might help us better define the role ordained and commissioned ministers should play and help us decide whether homosexual orientation prevents a person from functioning within that role.

The Minister as Spiritual Example

This image of the minister suggests that those the church sets apart should have the most profound experience of God. These individuals are to be sources of inspiration to others, examples of what the Christian spiritual life should be. The lives of the ordained or commissioned ministers become spiritual models for other people to emulate. This image may be held by many people, but it is not necessarily accurate. We all know that there are people in our congregations who could probably serve as better models of spirituality than those the church has chosen and prepared for the Order of Ministry.

The Minister as Moral Example

This is a stereotype which shifts the focus away from the minister's spiritual life to his or her outward behaviour. The minister is called upon to become the "good person" — the one who knows, lives, exemplifies, and teaches the people the highest moral values. Even though deep down everyone knows "the minister isn't perfect", an assumption is still made that the minister should somehow be better than other members of the congregation, the one after whom other Christians (especially youth) can pattern their lives.

The Task Group believes that all Christian people are called to live out their lives in faithful response to the call and the command of Christ. We are able to do this because of the grace we have received, not because of any special merit of our own. "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). It is of utmost importance that we resist every attempt to make the ordained or diaconal minister into a spiritual or moral example of the church and the community. What is of primary importance is the communication of the Good News of the grace and faith offered to us freely by God who has come to us in Jesus Christ. To be faithful, the diaconal/ordained

minister must resist attempting to become regarded as the exemplary centre of the church's life. The church can only have one centre; if the minister occupies this centre, then it cannot be occupied by Christ.

The Minister as the Mediator Between God and the People

The assumption behind this image is that the ordinary Christian is not good enough to come before God on his/her own. Those ordained or commissioned by the church somehow stand between God and the people; they represent God to humanity, and put all humanity's case before God. Ministry ceases to be the work of the whole people of God and becomes the private concern of the diaconal/ordained minister. The grace of God in Jesus Christ is no longer the basis of the life and work of the church; rather, those who are set apart by the church become the conveyors of this grace to the people. In this way, the responsibility for the life and work of the church is taken away from the church as a whole and is given to an elite group of professional clergy.

In examining the above roles and expectations of ministry we might ask ourselves whether they are limited to the Order of Ministry. We believe they are part of every Christian's ministry and as such, see no reason to believe that homosexual persons cannot fulfill these aspects of ministry, (as far as it is possible for anyone to fulfill them). At the same time, we do not think these images convey a sufficient understanding of ministry in the United Church. What would be a more complete understanding?

The United Church of Canada's Stated Understanding of the Order of Ministry

How are we to understand the particular ministries of those who are called into the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada? We have been struggling with this question for many years. More recently, the attempt to address the question began with the report of the *Commission on Ministry in the Twentieth Century* which reported in 1968 to the General Council Meeting in Kingston, Ontario. The Commission's report was followed by a *Task Force on the Ministry* which reported to the General Council meeting in Guelph, Ontario, in 1974, and in Calgary, Alberta, in 1977. More recently, *The Report of Project: Ministry* was received by the General Council meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1980. At the Halifax meeting, General Council affirmed "the essential thrust of *The Report of Project: Ministry*." (p. 913 Record of Proceedings)

The Report of Project: Ministry speaks of "Ordering" gifts and assignments in the polity of the church and says "the polity of The United Church of Canada leads us to af-

firm that since membership in The United Church of Canada consists of those in membership in its congregations, and the ordained and commissioned presbyters in membership in its presbyteries, ministry in the church emerges out of this total membership; and that, as the Spirit summons and enables, all in this total membership undertake together the assignments which are essential to the life and witness of the church." (page 25) In our judgment, this is a strong restatement of the great Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers which proclaims that Christ ministers through the whole church.

While it is true that Christ's ministry belongs to the whole people of God, The United Church of Canada (and a majority of other denominations) sets apart some of its members for a particular ministry. There are two such ministries in our tradition: those in Ordained Ministry who are set apart for the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care; and those in Diaconal Ministry who are set apart for the ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care. Ordained and diaconal members of the Order of Ministry serve as a sign and as agents of the two central activities of God's people: gathering for hearing the Word and celebrating the sacraments; dispersing to serve each other and God's world.

At this point it might be useful to look at what is meant by a "Call to Ministry" as it relates to those who are set apart through the church's rites of ordination and commissioning. How does one receive such a "Call to Ministry?" A call to ordained or diaconal ministry comes out of God's call to every Christian to participate in ministry. Often God uses people — parents, pastors, teachers, friends; special occasions such as conferences; or a growing sense of great need in the world to mediate this call. A call comes from a growing inner conviction that God can put the gifts received by an individual to a particular use in the church. This call to the ordained ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care or the diaconal ministry of Education, Service, and Pastoral Care is something which must be experienced not only by the individual concerned but also tested and confirmed by the church.

In our tradition, the internal call of the candidate is confirmed through an external call from the church, and the candidate's fitness for ministry is determined by the presbytery and the conference. When the training and preparation as determined by the church have been satisfactorily completed, the individual is set apart for a particular ministry through the rite of ordination or commissioning at a public service of worship under the auspices of the conference. In all of this, there is no sense in which a person being ordained or commissioned is either expected to be or to become spiritually or morally superior to other Christians called to exercise their ministries in the church and in the world. Any suggestion that those who

are received into the diaconal or ordained ministry are superior to other Christians is to encourage the kind of elitism or self-righteous behaviour which attracted Jesus' most scathing attacks.

It is very important that the church keep in mind what it is doing as it accepts people into its diaconal and ordained ministries. We must at all costs avoid the temptation of creating a special status for the ordained and diaconal ministries and of making the people involved into an elitist group.

The Task Group has been asked to formulate guidelines for the conferences in the matter of the ordination or commissioning of persons who have a homosexual orientation. We have faced this question: "Does one's sexual orientation, in and of itself, have anything to do with one being called into ordained or diaconal ministry, or with the church recognizing the particular gifts different individuals bring to ministry, or with the church authorizing these individuals to undertake their share in the particular assignment or service that comes with ordination or commissioning?" We believe not! Indeed, we have come to know and appreciate many individuals who are gay and lesbian and who are uniquely gifted for the Order of Ministry. As with any candidates who offer themselves for the particular ministries related to ordination or commissioning, these individuals will need to be examined by the appropriate courts of the church concerning their personal character, doctrinal beliefs and fitness for ministry. Just as there are heterosexual people that the church in its wisdom does not consider suitable for the Order of Ministry, there will be homosexual people that will not be accepted as candidates. In every instance, the church is called upon to make responsible decisions. In the final analysis, the church will have to satisfy itself that each individual who offers him or herself for the Order of Ministry has the appropriate concern for the health and well-being of the whole church as well as the appropriate gifts for ministry.

We believe that one of the key aspects of the question of ordination or commissioning is the willingness of each individual "to undertake this assignment in life-long accountability to Christ and the church." Ordination/commissioning does not confer special status; it does, however, place the people chosen by the church for these particular ministries into a relationship of greater accountability to the church. In the vows made by the candidates at their ordination/commissioning the question is asked: "Are you willing to exercise your ministry in accordance with the scriptures, in continuity with the faith of the church, and subject to the oversight and discipline of The United Church of Canada?" The words "oversight" and "discipline" speak of accountability not only to Christ but to the church as a whole and indicate a willingness on the part of the candidate to

assume the responsibilities related to serving Christ and the church. All candidates, regardless of sexual orientation, are required to exercise their ministries "subject to the oversight and discipline of The United Church of Canada." In this way, they are made aware of the unique relationship to the church required by ordination/commissioning.

6.0 Implementation Options

To implement the Report's principal conclusion that homosexual orientation in and of itself is not a barrier to entry into the Order of Ministry, six options consistent with the conclusion are presented for the consideration of the General Council.

The Division of Ministry Personnel & Education recommends to the General Council the adoption of one of options 6.1, 6.2, or 6.3. Options 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 are essentially the same except that the date differs. Options 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 are presented for information only and are *not recommended* to the General Council by the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education.

6.1 First Option (recommended: ordination and commissioning not later than 1985)

1. The General Council:

- decides to state that sexual orientation in and of itself is not a factor in determining a person's eligibility for ordination or commissioning;
- advises the conferences of General Council's support for ordaining and commissioning suitable self-declared homosexual candidates at the annual meetings of conferences not later than 1985;
- asks the whole Church to use the intervening time to set in place the supportive structures which will enable effective implementation;
- reaffirms the responsibility of conferences for decisions to ordain or commission suitable candidates as laid down by the Basis of Union and the Manual;
- requests the conferences to co-operate in implementing the decision.

2. The 30th General Council takes the following steps in order to prepare and to facilitate ongoing implementation of the decision not later than 1985.

A. Requests the Division of Mission in Canada:

- i. to develop an educational programme with a strong biblical and theological component to enable the church at all levels — pastoral charges, presbyteries, conferences, and General Council — to study homosexuality in the context of human sexuality, and, in particular, to address the phenomenon of homophobia in church and society.
- ii. to continue working toward a comprehensive statement concerning appropriate lifestyles for all

members (heterosexual and homosexual) of the church, including those in the Order of Ministry.

- iii. to provide means to ensure ongoing pastoral care for all those most directly affected by this decision: gay and lesbian candidates and members of the Order of Ministry and their families and friends; those within congregations disturbed and distressed by this decision.

B. Requests the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education and its networks:

- i. to recognize the need for ministers to be equipped through continuing education programmes to provide pastoral care for all affected by this decision.
- ii. to work with the conferences at providing student internships for candidates who are self-declared homosexual persons.
- iii. to assist the conferences as they work to provide settlement for those self-declared homosexual persons who may be ordained or commissioned.

ADVANTAGES

- provides a clear guideline to the conferences.
- affirms the present system of determining who shall serve in the Order of Ministry, thereby enabling the conferences to struggle with and accept the decision about this issue for themselves
- demonstrates that action is being taken on the General Council's decision
- requires the church to be honest and realistic about its decision
- shows pastoral concern for gays and lesbians seeking to be ordained or commissioned, for congregations who might be involved with gay or lesbian ministers, for members who might be confused or disturbed by the decision
- demonstrates that the church is willing to be in more open dialogue with gays and lesbians about issues of sexuality and to develop new understandings
- demonstrates the church's willingness to speak against discrimination of gays and lesbians in church and society
- affirms that gays and lesbians have a valid place as members of the church and that their experience of oppression can enrich the church's ministry
- recognizes need for and provides some time to prepare the church and its systems for implementing the decision

DISADVANTAGES

- risks creating conflict in the church
- new information still to be written or collected could not be used to change or influence the implementation decision (including information about lifestyle)
- settlement will not be easy and individual gays and lesbians may experience rejection

- could lead to a patchwork pattern of implementation across the conferences; there is also the possibility of gay and lesbian candidates congregating in conferences ready to ordain and commission gays and lesbians
- some may consider the preparation time for implementation of the decision to be inadequate.

6.2 Second Option (recommended: same as first and third except that the date is 1986.)

6.3 Third Option (recommended: same as first and second except that the date is 1987.)

6.4 Fourth Option (not recommended: affirms report generally, but delays final decision)

1. The 30th General Council

- decides to accept the report as a definitive statement on the direction that the church should go;
- asks the conferences to study the report and recommends to the conferences endorsement of the Report at their 1985 annual meetings.

2. The 30th General Council takes the following steps to prepare for a decision at the 31st General Council:

A. Requests the Division of Mission in Canada:

- i. to develop an educational programme with a strong biblical and theological component to enable the church at all levels — pastoral charges, presbyteries, conferences and General Council — to study homosexuality in the context of human sexuality, and, in particular, to address the phenomenon of homophobia in church and society.
- ii. to continue working toward a comprehensive statement concerning appropriate lifestyle for all members (heterosexual and homosexual) of the church.
- iii. to provide means to ensure ongoing pastoral care for all those directly affected by this decision: those to be ordained and commissioned and their families: those within congregations disturbed by this decision.

B. Requests the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education and its networks:

- i. to establish a special committee, with some continuity with the former Task Group on the Ordination and Commissioning of Self-Declared Homosexual Persons: to receive the results of the conferences' decision-making; to establish, in consultation with the Division or its Executive, the criteria on which a final recommendation to the 31st General Council will be based;
- ii. to recommend a final decision to the 31st General Council;
- iii. to recognize the need for ministers to be equipped through continuing education programmes to provide pastoral care for all affected by this possible decision.

- iv. to work with the conferences at providing student internships for candidates who are self-declared homosexual persons.
- v. to assist the conferences as they work to provide settlement for those self-declared homosexual persons who may be ordained or commissioned.

ADVANTAGES

- would force the church to be realistic about the implications of a decision to ordain or commission
- would provide lead time to get policies and programmes into operation if a "yes" decision were then taken
- takes seriously the role of conferences in making and implementing a decision.

DISADVANTAGES

- option is too indefinite, leaving the church and homosexual persons in candidature process in limbo
- since the church would not know what it was going to do until the next General Council, not enough strong motivation for serious study would be provided
- unfair to encourage candidates if final answer were "no"
- a seeming waste of time for those setting up programmes if final answer were "no".

6.5 Fifth Option (not recommended: similar to 4th option, without set date for decision)

1. The General Council would affirm the direction of the Report but decide to delay on making a decision about ordaining/commissioning, and would undertake a major educational programme concerning homosexuality and homophobia.

ADVANTAGES

- primary advantage is the gift of time. With such a volatile and controversial issue there is real fear of polarization within the church
- time might allow for much pastoral outreach. There is an obvious and deep need for education on this issue of homosexuality. Perhaps after that occurs, a decision would become clearer
- time would also allow opportunity for more data and information to emerge on the subject of homosexuality.

DISADVANTAGES

- conferences need guidelines and clarification. They might perceive a General Council delay as an abdication of responsibility and therefore choose to act on their own.
- gay and lesbian people, particularly those already ordained or in the candidature process, would feel a deep pain and anger about living indefinitely with an ambivalence about their acceptance within the church.
- to delay a decision further would probably increase tension, allow wounds to fester and drain energy.

6.6 Sixth Option

1. General Council — approves principal conclusion that homosexual orientation in and of itself not a barrier and that on a limited basis (e.g. in one conference) gay and lesbian candidates would be eligible for ordination/commissioning. Again, a major programme of education and pastoral care would be launched within the United Church. After a period of evaluation, the church would come to a final decision regarding ordination/commissioning.

ADVANTAGES

- a way of gaining time so education can take place

- gays and lesbians can be experienced as people and stereotypes seen for what they are

DISADVANTAGES

- if some ordained/commissioned, no real grounds to deny ministry to others
- would put enormous pressure on those ordained/commissioned
- if the church decided "no", the position of those already ordained/commissioned would be in question
- assesses the church's readiness rather than the candidate's fitness.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

of the Division of Ministry Personnel & Education to the 30th General Council

- 7.0 In light of the 29th General Council's agreement "to make a clear statement on the admission of self-declared homosexuals to the Order of Ministry based on a carefully documented study of biblical and theological principles to guide all conferences of the church in this matter", and

in light of the 29th General Council's agreement "to reaffirm the current requirements and procedures for candidacy for Ordination and Commissioning to the Order of Ministry and to neither add to nor subtract from these requirements and procedures", and

in light of the Division's declared support for and appreciation of the Report "Sexual Orientation and Eligibility for the Order of Ministry",

The Annual Meeting of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education recommends to the 30th General Council

- 7.1 that the Division of Mission in Canada be mandated to prepare for the church educational programmes with strong biblical and theological components, which address the serious problem of homophobia, foster greater understanding of homosexuality and encourage acceptance of homosexuals as persons.

- 7.1.2 that the 30th General Council approve the Report's principal conclusion:

- that sexual orientation, in and of itself should not be a factor in determining membership in the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada, and

- that homosexual orientation, in and of itself should not be a factor in determining a person's eligibility for membership in the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada.

- 7.1.3. that the General Council approve one of options 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 in the Report. (see pages 18 and 19 in Report)

- 7.1.4. that the *Guidelines for the Conferences* (section 8.0) be commended to the conferences (and the presbyteries) for consideration and use.

- 7.2 At the Annual Meeting of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education the following actions were also approved:

1. that in preparation for the 30th General Council, the Report as amended, be published in the April issue of the *United Church Observer*.
2. that (in order to ensure that the whole church would be able to study and discuss the issue on the basis of accurate accounts and on the basis of the Report itself), the Report be kept confidential until the April *Observer* appears, except that the officers of the Division are authorized to release the Report if they, in consultation with the Division of Communication, think it is necessary.
3. that the Division's official spokespersons in matters related to the Report be the Chair, the Secretary, and Co-Deputy Secretaries of the Division.
4. that a copy of the Report and other resource papers be made available (one week prior to the official release date) to the following persons:
 - Presidents, Presidents-elect, and Executive Secretaries of the conferences

- Personnel Officers
- Conference Ministry Personnel and Education chairpersons
- All members attending the Annual General Meeting of the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education
- Members of the Task Group on the Ordination/Commissioning of Self-Declared Homosexual Persons

in order to prepare for the release date and to make plans for the study and discussion of the Report at meetings of the conferences and other appropriate units within the conferences.

5. that the conferences be requested to identify or create a resource team as soon as possible before the 30th General Council
 - to study the Report
 - to give support and direction to the conference, presbyteries, and pastoral charges as they study and discuss the Report.

(Such a resource team might include those identified in 4 plus members of the Task Group where available, the Division of Mission in Canada sexuality study resource people, members of AF-FIRM, etc.)

6. that the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education provide some financial assistance to the conferences to help defray costs for the resource teams before the 30th General Council.
7. that all interested groups and individuals within the church be invited and encouraged to study the Report (see educational resources section in Appendices) with a view to a full and informed discussion of the contents of the Report in the courts of the Church, and especially at the 30th General Council. Such groups and courts include:
 - Sessions and Official Boards (or equivalents) of Pastoral Charges
 - Presbyteries, especially Education and Students Committees, and Pastoral Relations Committees (or equivalents)
 - Conference Executives and Annual Meetings, especially Conference Ministry Personnel and Education units, including Interview Boards
Education and Students Committees
Settlement Committees
8. that the Division staff inform the church-related centres for theological education about the impending release of the Report and request these centres to schedule educational programmes to foster the study of the Report.

9. that the continuing education network be requested to assume responsibility for fostering educational programmes focussing on pastoral care for those affected by the Report and its recommendations.

10. that an *Advisory Group on Sexual Orientation and Eligibility for Ministry* be appointed to oversee the evolution of the Report and its recommendations both before and after the 30th General Council; and that its membership include representatives of the
 - pastoral relations and settlement/transfer network
 - candidature/Education and Students network
 - gay and lesbian members of the church
 - and appropriate Division of Ministry Personnel and Education staff members
 and that the Chair in consultation with Executive Staff have the power to appoint.

8.0 Guidelines for the Conferences

1. The Task Group on the Ordination/Commissioning of Self-Declared Homosexual Persons has concluded that homosexual orientation, in and of itself, should not be considered a barrier to entry into the Order of Ministry.
2. The same rigorous procedure should be used to test the fitness for ministry of each candidate, regardless of sexual orientation. The procedures are outlined in the Manual and in the Education and Student Convenor Handbook prepared by the national Division of Ministry Personnel and Education.
3. It is not appropriate for interview committees to ask candidates or intended candidates to disclose their sexual orientation.
4. If the matter of sexual orientation is introduced into an interview (or has been introduced in previous interviews) *by the candidate*, then the implications of sexual orientation for the candidate's functioning in ministry become factors in the discussion. This will include the pioneering role which gay and lesbian candidates will be required to play (e.g. placement difficulties, lack of acceptance from some people).
5. Questions about sexuality, self understanding, and lifestyle are appropriate for all candidates regardless of sexual orientation.

(British Columbia Conference has prepared an interview guide to provide interview committees with an enlarged framework within which to engage the sensitive issues of sexuality and sexual orientation. The guide is available upon request from the national Ministry Personnel and Education office, and conferences are encouraged to avail themselves of this resource.)

F. APPENDICES

9.0 The Specific Texts in Scripture

In the past, there was an automatic assumption that the scriptures totally condemned homosexuality, doing away with any need for further debate. As stated in the body of the Report, we do not believe the scriptures give a straightforward answer to the questions concerning the ordination and commissioning of self-declared homosexual persons. Nevertheless, there are several passages that do refer explicitly to homosexuality, and we recognize that they deserve serious attention. We refer the readers to the Bibliography section for further reading related to these passages.

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19, has traditionally been understood to be a condemnation of homosexual behaviour, but after studying the works of a number of biblical scholars we believe this is a misreading of the material. The reference to homosexuality is very oblique in this passage and it appears that the real sin being condemned is one of inhospitality. Some scholars believe that homosexual behaviour is at issue but nevertheless argue that the thrust of the story is condemnation of violence and gang rape (cf. the parallel story in Judges 19, where the culminating sin is the violent and murderous rape of the visitor's concubine). It is important to note that all the Old Testament and gospel references (Ezek. 16:49-50, Jer. 23:14, Lk. 10:10-12) to Sodom and Gomorrah focus on the issue of inhospitality or of violence to God's messengers. (And even 2 Peter 2:6-10 and Jude 1:7 do not contradict this understanding of Gen. 19, for although they clearly speak of sexual misconduct, it appears to be in reference again to violence, gang rape, or a lusting after angels.)

Passages from Deuteronomy (Deut. 23:17-18) and elsewhere (I Kings 14:22-24, 15:22, 22:46) may refer to homosexuality, but these passages are mainly concerned with cultic activities of Israel's neighbours. Indeed, it is not even clear whether the word "qadesh", which means male cultic prostitute (improperly translated by the King James Version as "sodomite") refers to homosexual or heterosexual activity.

The two passages from Leviticus (Lev. 18:22, 20:13-14) are the only places in the Old Testament which explicitly condemn homosexual acts between men. The question we face, however, is what weight to give these two verses from the Holiness Code, given that 2600 years have passed, and we are in a different cultural setting, and given the fact that we are people of the New Covenant. First, we must note that only anal intercourse is forbidden here, not other forms of homosexual activity. This quite possibly reflects the Israelite understanding of what it means to be

male. Thus, the prohibition may have more to do with Israel's gender scheme than with God's divine plan. Anal intercourse appeared to be an expression of humiliation and subjugation, treating a male as a female. More particularly of course, this portion of the law was designed to protect Israel's cultic purity. Since we have already rejected many other sections of this Holiness Code e.g. it was forbidden to have sexual intercourse during a woman's menstrual period, by what criteria do we maintain some aspects of this Code, yet reject others such as the injunction that anyone who curses their mother and/or father shall be put to death? Ultimately, we must ask ourselves to what extent are Christians bound by the Law of the Old Covenant.

The New Testament also has very little explicit reference to homosexuality, and it is really with the apostle Paul we have to deal, for there is "no word from the Lord" on this matter. It is true that in Matthew 19:3-19 Jesus speaks of the union of male and female, but he is not saying anything directly about homosexuality.

In two places (I Cor. 6:9 and I Tim. 1:10), there are lists of the "unrighteous (who) will not inherit the Kingdom of God". There has been debate over the meaning of the two words in question, "malakoi" and "arsenokoitai", (both occur in I Cor. 6:9, only one in I Tim. 1:10) and there is some disagreement as to whether the words refer specifically to homosexual behaviour. However, assuming the words do refer to the participants in anal intercourse, then we need to ask ourselves if the writer had any understanding of sexual orientation, whether the passage refers implicitly to other forms of homosexual activity, and why there is no reference to female homosexual activity. More seriously, we need to debate the authority we give to such general traditional all-inclusive "lists".

Finally, there is the passage from Romans (Rom. 1:26 ff). It is clear that the passage speaks unfavourably of homosexual actions for both men and women, but the meaning and context of the passage have been significantly debated. Some argue that Paul had no understanding of sexual orientation, and he was condemning heterosexual persons who were engaged in homosexual activity for "thrills". Others suggest that Paul regarded homosexual practice as but an example that may, but does not necessarily, reflect one's attempt to be independent of God.

"Further, others ... argue that one must take account of the theological ... and social ... contexts of Paul's remarks. These interpreters emphasize that

the main theme in Rom. 1:18-3:30 is that all persons, without exception, fall short of the glory of God, and must be utterly dependent upon God's grace (see Rom. 3:22-23). The reality and power of God's redemptive grace is then the subject of Rom. 3:21 through chapter 9. ... From this perspective, the homosexual behaviour described in Rom. 1:26-27 is just one example of what may happen when men and women turn their backs on God (see Rom. 1:21-23), and it does not mean to set homosexuals apart from others who are redeemed by God's grace. As for the social context, these interpreters argue that Paul, like most of his contemporaries, was presuming things about homosexual behaviour which can no longer be so readily presumed: the presumption that it is always a matter of one's conscious and deliberate choice, that it is the most extreme expression of heterosexual lust, and that it necessarily involves the exploitation of the sexual partner. Therefore their argument goes, neither Rom. 1:26-27 nor the other Pauline references should be taken as a general condemnation of what the modern world knows as 'homosexuality'."

(Homosexuality: In Search of a Christian Understanding, p. 10)

The Task Group found that the various interpretations of Romans 1:26ff. indicated that the passage did not read clearly as a straightforward condemnation of homosexuality, especially when homosexuality is understood as orientation.

The examination of specific biblical passages has left us without any clear resolution. We believe that in truth we are only looking at Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13-14, and a few verses from Pauline material. Even if the intent of the latter material were absolutely clear (and we do not believe that it is), it is very questionable whether we can make decisions about homosexuality on the basis of these passages. It is as if we were asking the Bible new questions, to which there simply are no straightforward answers. It seems to us that the light shed by scripture on this issue comes indirectly.

In the body of the Report, we spoke of the recurring biblical emphasis upon liberation, and of the evidence of the Spirit working in people's lives. We also recognize that the Creation stories in Genesis 1-3 are relevant to our discussions. Although there is no direct reference here to homosexuality, there is an attempt to explore the ordering of creation and the meaning of sexuality. For many in the church, this is the cornerstone of their understanding of human nature. Again, it is difficult to determine exactly what was meant, and it is always dangerous to transform the opening stories of creation into precise theological statements.

It is clear that the primary model of relationship presented in Genesis 1-3 is that of male and female joined together, but what needs to be addressed in the context of our discussion is the question of what is being said about the nature of human sexuality. The story of Creation in Genesis 1 presents the simultaneous creation of male and female, "and God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply.'" (Gen. 1:28) The command is to procreate, and some believe this to be the primary or at least a necessary purpose of the sexual relationship, even if at times this is only possible in a symbolic way. Thus homosexuality, because it does not result in biological reproduction, is by definition a violation of the meaning of sexuality.

The Task Group has a different perspective. We see the ability to procreate as gift and responsibility, but we would assert that the sexual relationship is not less whole and does not carry less meaning for heterosexual couples who cannot or choose not to have children. Statements issued by the United Church reflect this view. As early as the 1932 General Council, a report on "The Meaning and Responsibility of Christian Marriage", affirmed that the sexual relationship was not only for reproduction but was an expression of the covenant of marriage.

The same emphasis emerges in the second creation story in Genesis (Chap. 2) where the primary purpose of the relationship between Adam and Eve is companionship. The biblical text affirms that we human beings are creatures called to relationship, to mutuality, to community. The model presented by Adam and Eve is that of a man and woman joined together in partnership, with sexual expression being a part of and symbol for that relationship.

"For man (woman) however, the sexual apparatus which is in a general way identical with that of the animals has changed in its primary purpose. For man (woman) the sexual desires and acts have acquired the new possibility of expressing and sharing a total personal relationship, a union of life with life which is all-inclusive and all-enriching. Love is the meaning of human sexuality, and what in animals is the reproductive system, in man (woman) has become ... the connecting or unifying system."

(A Theological Approach to Understanding Sexuality, p. 440)

The Task Group does not believe that heterosexual union is the essential expression of human wholeness. There are not "two different kinds of personality which exist by nature in males and females and which are each partial expressions of some larger whole." (*Homosexuality and Ethics*, p. 195) If this were true, then single persons would have to be considered less than fully human, less whole than married persons. We don't believe this.

The life and ministry of Jesus demonstrated what it

means to be a full human being made in the image of God. The essential mark is total self-giving love to the other. There is no genuine humanity apart from relationship and community, but there is more than one way to symbolize and express this reality that is pleasing to God and in keeping with God's intention for humanity.

The Task Force believes that the essential goodness of the sexual relationship is not rooted in procreation or gender complementarity, but rather in the nature of the relationship which is seeking sexual expression. Is this a relationship that provides opportunity for giving and receiving love? Is it tender, caring, responsible, and non-exploitative?

Does the relationship involve commitment, trust and respect, as well as ongoing and responsible communion with the other? This set of questions forms the criteria by which the goodness of a sexual relationship is judged and by which all relationships are assessed. We believe that this is truly in keeping with the scriptural witness.

9.1 Selected Bibliography

Unless a specific address is provided, the items* may be purchased or ordered through CANEC. Others may be borrowed from theological school, university or public libraries.

9.1.1 Supportive of the Task Group Report

1. Advisory Council on Church & Society, United Presbyterian Church U.S.A., *The Church and Homosexuality*. Majority Report to 190th General Assembly, 1978.
2. AFFIRM — Gays and Lesbians in The United Church of Canada: several *Briefs* 1983 (see address in Section 9.2 "Educational Approaches.")
- *3. Batchelor, Edward Jr.: *Homosexuality and Ethics*, New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1980.
4. Blair, Ralph: *Ex-Gay*, N.Y., H.C.C.C., Inc. 1982.
- *5. Boswell, John: *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
6. *Christianity and Crisis*. "A Special Issue on Homosexuality". Vol. 37, Nos. 9 & 10. May 30 & June 13, 1977.
7. Commission on Women in Ministry (COWIM), *Resource Packet on Gay Issues & Ministry*. National Council of Churches.
8. *Engage/Social Action*. "Homosexuality: A Re-examination". No. 60. March, 1980. Order from Engage/Social Action, 100 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC. 20002. Order No. E2060 75c U.S. each.
9. General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples

- of Christ): *Homosexuality and the Church, a study document*, 1977.
10. Harrison, Beverly W.: "Misogyny and Homophobia: The Unexplored Connection" in *Integrity Forum*, Lent 1981. pp. 7ff.
 11. Heron, A. (ed) "Towards a Christian View of Sex", in the *British Quaker Report*. London: Friends Service Committee, 1963.
 12. *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*. "Homophobia and Education". Vol. 14, Nos. 3 & 4, 1983. Order from Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc., 1841 Broadway, N.Y. 10023, U.S.A. Enclose \$3.50 U.S.
 - *13. Nelson, James: *Embodiment: An approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology*, Augsburg Press, 1979.
 14. Office for Church Life and Leadership, United Church of Christ: *Study Guide on Ordination & Homosexuality*, 1983.
 15. Pennington, Sylvia: *But Lord, They're Gay*, Lambda Christian Fellowship.
 16. Pittenger, N.: "A Theological Approach to Understanding Homosexuality" in *Religion in Life*, Vol. 43, No. 4, Winter 1974.
 - *17. Scanzoni, L. & Mollenkott, V.: *Is the Homosexual My Neighbour?* Harper & Row, 1978.
 - *18. Scroggs, Robin: *Homosexuality in the New Testament*.
 - *19. Smith, Leon (ed): *Homosexuality: In Search of a Christian Understanding*, Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1981.
 - *20. Weinberg, George: *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*. New York: St. Martin's Press, (1972) 1983 ed.
 21. Wink, Walter: "Biblical Perspectives on Homosexuality" in *The Christian Century*, Nov. 7, 1979. pp. 1082ff.

9.1.2 Not-Supportive of the Task Group Report

1. Atkinson, David: *Homosexuals in the Christian Fellowship*, Grand Rapids: Ferdmans, 1979.
- *2. Barth, Karl: *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. III/4. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961.
3. Bradford, B., et al: *Healing for the Homosexual*, Oklahoma City, Presbyterian Charismatic Communion Inc., 1978. Order from: P.C.C. 2245 N.W. 38th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73112, U.S.A. Enclose \$1.00 U.S.
4. Kirk, Jerry R.: *The Homosexual Crisis in the Mainline Church*. Nashville: Thos. Nelson & Sons, 1978.
5. Lovelace, Richard F.: *Homosexuality and the Church*. Old Tappan, NJ., Fleming H. Revell Co., 1978.

- *6. Payne, Leanne: *The Broken Image, Restoring Personal Wholeness through Healing Prayer*. Westchester, Ill., Cornerstone Books, 1981.
7. *Policy Statement & Recommendations of the 190th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A.*, New York: Office of the General Assembly U.P.C. U.S.A., 1978.
8. Shears, Frank: "Out of Gayness — Into Wholeness: the Frank Shears Story", in the *Small Voice*, Vol. 2, 1983. pp. 36-37.
9. Sims, Bennett J.: *Sex and Homosexuality: a pastoral statement*. Atlanta, Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. 1977. Order from: Communications Dept., Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta, 2744 Peachtree Rd., N.W., Atlanta, GA. 30305, U.S.A. (price not indicated)
- *10. Thielicke, Helmut: *The Ethics of Sex*, Attic Press.
- Behaviour in the Human Female*, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1953.
- *13. *Lordship of Jesus Report*, Record of Proceedings, 27th General Council, United Church of Canada, 1977.
14. Mills, Howard M.: *Ordination in The United Church of Canada*, Toronto: Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, 1983 (MPE Paper No 3).
15. Pattison, E. Mansell and Pattison, Myrna Loy: "Ex-Gay's: Religiously Mediated Change in Homosexuals" in *American Journal of Psychiatry* 137:12. Dec. 1980 pp. 1553ff.
16. *Project: Ministry Report*, Record of Proceedings, 28th General Council, 1980.
17. *Report of the Task Force on Ministry*, Record of Proceedings, 27th General Council, United Church of Canada, 1977.
18. Scanzoni, Letha Dawson: "Can Homosexuals Change: Understanding the Nature of Homosexual Orientation", in *The Other Side*, issue 48, Jan. 1984, pp.12-15, and "Putting a Face on Homosexuality", in *The Other Side*, Feb. 1984. pp. 8-10, 48.
19. Tripp, C.A.: *The Homosexual Matrix*, Signet Books, New American Library, 1975.

9.1.3 Other

- *1. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith & Order Paper 111, Geneva: W.C.C., 1982.
2. Barnhouse, Ruth Tiffany: *Homosexuality: A Symbolic Confusion*, New York: Seabury Press, 1977.
- *3. Bell, A., Weinberg, M., Hammersmith, S.: *Sexual Preference: Its Development in Men and Women*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.
4. Bullough, Vern: *A History of Homosexuality*. New American Library, 1979.
5. Cahill, Lisa S.: "Sexual Issues in Christian Theological Ethics: A Review of Recent Studies" in *Religious Studies Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Jan. 1978. p. 9.
6. *The Christian Century* various items on homosexuality in the July to December, 1983 editions: pp. 672, 704, 789, 861, 981, 1030, 1099, 1126, 1165, 1177, 1182.
7. Churchill, Wainright: *Homosexual Behaviour Among Males: A Cross Cultural & Cross Species Investigation*, New York: Hawthorn Book, 1967.
- *8. Coleman, James: *Abnormal Psychology & Modern Life*. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1984 (ed.).
- *9. Goergen, Donald: *The Sexual Celibate*, New York: Image Books, 1979.
10. Goody Koontz, Harry G.: *The Minister in the Reformed Tradition*, Richmond, VA.: John Knox Press, 1963.
11. Johnson, Robert Clyde (ed): *The Church and Its Changing Ministry*. Office of the General Assembly, U.P.C. U.S.A.
12. Kinsey, Alfred et al: *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948. *Sexual*

9.2 Educational Approaches

A. The Experience of the Task Group

As Task Group members we found ourselves individually and collectively engaged in a significant amount of reading, listening, searching, and questioning. We believe that no matter what decision the church makes regarding the commissioning and ordination of self-declared homosexuals, it is essential that the members of the United Church engage themselves in serious study and learning about human sexuality and sexual orientation, in order to seek a fuller understanding of God's intention for humanity.

Having undergone our own search and study individually, as a group, and as congregational leaders, we would like to outline the important elements of that learning experience in the hope that our learning will be useful to others.

1. To help persons better understand what it is to be a homosexual person, it is very important to spend time listening to the life stories of gay and lesbian people. They will talk about their faith and their faithfulness, their struggles to accept themselves, their longing to live with integrity, and their longing to experience acceptance within the Christian community. In situations where gay persons are not available to meet with a study group, there are resources which will provide some of the elements of personal story-telling. The

- filmstrip "The Hidden Minority" and the film "The Word is Out" are two such resources. (See number 3 under Resources).
2. It is vital that each of us have opportunity to share our own fears, hopes, questions, and uncertainties about sexual orientation and our relationships with persons of a different orientation. Any study must provide opportunity for these to be named. Clearly, it is important to examine one's own attitude toward sexuality, and to be open to new knowledge from the sciences. Our attitudes toward others can be informed by these new insights.
 3. Information available from the medical and social sciences needs to be examined.
 4. Theological and biblical study needs to be done thoroughly with emphasis on the total biblical witness and not just on isolated passages.
 5. We need to address the homophobia which exists within our church, and which is of great concern to all in our church with whom we consulted regardless of their position on the ordination/commissioning question.
 6. The courts of the church e.g. sessions, presbyteries, presbyterials need to develop effective ways of dealing with the strong feelings that this report may evoke. People need to have the opportunity to express themselves; at the same time, it is important to help people to focus on the issue itself rather than on personalities or unresolved conflicts related to other issues.

B. Resources available for a Study Group

1. The Report, its bibliography and study guide.
2. AFFIRM. Information about speakers and about other resources is available through: AFFIRM, Gays and Lesbians in The United Church of Canada.

C.P. 1866	P.O. Box 46586
Succursale la Cite	Station G
Montreal, P.Q.	Vancouver, B.C.
H3B 3L4	V6R 4G8
3. Audio-visuals: "The Hidden Minority" (filmstrip available through AVEL). "The Word is Out" (film available from New Yorker Films, 16 W. 61 St. New York, 10023). Check also with your local film library.
4. Issue sheet No. 27, especially the bibliography and human resources listings (available from Research and Resources, Division of Mission in Canada, 85 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8).
5. The United Church Observer: April, 1984.
6. "In God's Image ..." the study on human sexuality presented by the Division of Mission in Canada to the 28th General Council.
7. Metropolitan Community Churches which are located in Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver. (Check your telephone book for addresses and phone numbers).
8. "Dealing With Differences," *Exchange* magazine, Spring, 1981. Check with your church library, minister, CE Chairperson, or UCW president to see if there is still a copy available.

9.3 Studying This Report

The issue of ordaining and commissioning self-declared homosexual persons in The United Church of Canada is a complex one. The Task Group set up by the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education spent many days and considerable study and discussion to reach their conclusions. They realize that their recommendations will not be easy ones for the church. At the same time, they believe that our understanding of God and our concept of Christian ministry leave us with little choice but to assert that sexual orientation in and of itself should not form the basis for admittance to, or exclusion from, the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada.

The Task Group has made some suggestions for study of the issue, and has included a list of books and other resources. The report constantly emphasizes the value of meeting with gays and lesbians and hearing their stories. Do this if it is at all possible. Sometimes our barriers are broken only with face to face meeting.

You may choose to read the report in its entirety or in sections as outlined in the table of contents. You will probably want to discuss the issues and their implications with other people. Here are some ways you might look at particular sections of the Report and further your understanding.

(a) Our Attitudes

Look at number 2 in the Report and the positions the Task Group found within the United Church. Where do you fit in? Have you thought about your position? How did you get there?

Where are our attitudes about homosexual persons formed? How are gays and lesbians portrayed in your newspaper? in the movies you see? in the television you watch? Do you know any gay or lesbian people? Are they much different from other people you know?

The Society of Friends has said that homosexuality might be compared to being left handed (see number 3.3). Left handed people did not choose to be that way; they are a minority in society and are often pressured to change to the "normal" right handed state. How do you react to that analogy? Ask a left handed person about his or her experiences. Do they fit the above description? Might a homosexual person feel the same, but to a much greater degree?

(b) Just the Facts, Please

Section 3 examines experiences of homosexual persons from a biblical and theological point of view. The infor-

mation in this section may help you understand homosexual persons a little more. Read the whole section and then each part again in detail.

3.2 deals with the kind of oppression faced by homosexual persons in our society. Did you know:

- that a quarter to a half million homosexual persons were killed in the Nazi death camps?
- that the term "faggot" comes from the Middle Ages when homosexual persons were burned at the stake?

3.3 looks at the question of choice and change. Did you know:

- that although the causes of sexual orientation are not fully known, it is now generally accepted that it is rarely possible for homosexuals to change their orientation?
- that many individuals have spent a good deal of time and money trying to change their orientation and have not found it possible?
- that there may be a range of sexual orientation and that some people may be bisexual?

3.4 examines the popular assumption that in some quarters, homosexuality is considered a form of mental illness. Did you know:

- that modern research recognizes that past medical assessment of homosexuals as ill is erroneous?
- that the American Psychiatric Association no longer lists homosexuality as a disease?
- that the Task Group met gays and lesbians who were committed members of the United Church, leading rich and whole lives, faithful Christians who celebrated their relationship with God?

How do you react to the facts and the theological reflection found in section 3? Did you learn anything that surprised you, or confirmed what you already knew? Would you agree with the conclusions of the Task Group that there are no biblical, theological, moral, or health arguments to support the exclusion of gays and lesbians from the Order of Ministry of The United Church of Canada? Why or why not?

(c) The Bible Says

In sections 3.1 and 3.2, the Task Group says that they employed three approaches to Bible study: analysis of the actual texts; an appreciation of the impact of time and context on the passages; and an appreciation of the Bible as a

whole with its great themes of creation, liberation, etc.

Section 3.2 says something about the work done by the Task Group on specific texts regarding homosexuality. You may be surprised by some of their findings. If you wish to pursue the particular texts, read your Bible along with the analysis found in the Appendix 9.0.

On the other hand, your group may wish to discuss some of the great biblical themes using understandings of homosexual persons. Read the story of the Exodus (Exodus, Deuteronomy 6: 4-25) and then the last part of section 3.2 to see how this story of oppression and liberation speaks to gay and lesbian members of the United Church. Read the story of the Fall of Creation (Genesis 3) and then the aspects of the story as they are understood by homosexual persons (in the latter part of section 3.3; *The God Who Accepts: The Question of Choice and Change*; also in the Appendix 9.0).

What did you learn from your studies of the biblical passages or themes? Were the insights new to you? Did they affect your understanding of homosexuality? In what way(s)?

(d) Our Understanding of Ministry

Read section D, both the description of ordination and commissioning in 5 and the options for the church in 6. Consider the role your minister plays in your church. How would you describe what he/she does? Would your minister's ability to function be radically changed if he or she were of homosexual orientation? In what way(s)? Why?

Read the options the Report outlines for the United Church. Think of the implications of each one for your congregation, your presbytery, your conference. What would you choose? Would your choice be different five years from now? What might make it change or stay the same?

Prepare a letter to go to the Ministry Personnel and Education office (85 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8) outlining the option you would choose. Be sure to include some reasons which have been founded on careful thought, prayer, theological, and biblical thinking, and if at all possible, honest encounter with homosexual persons.

Prepared by
The Division of Ministry Personnel and Education
The United Church of Canada
1984