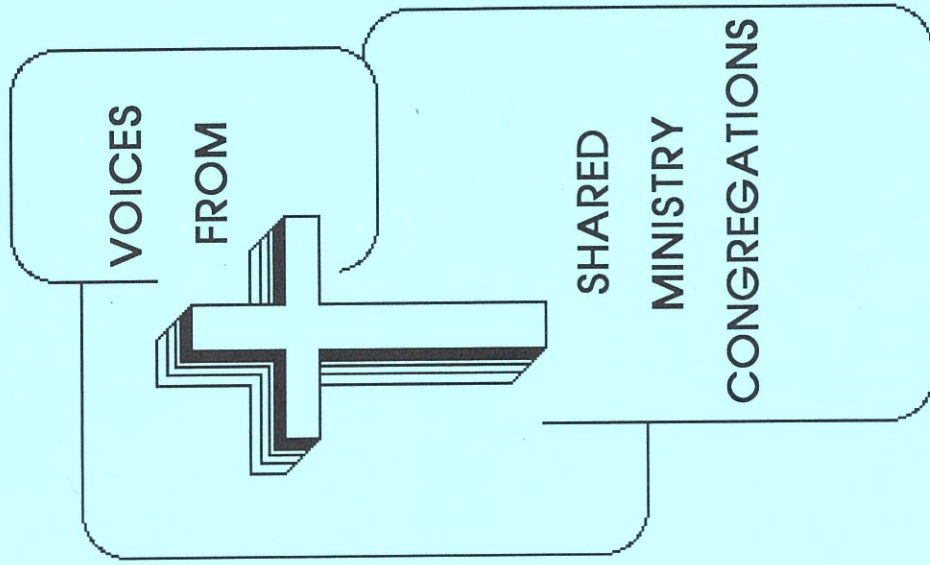


A LIVELY OPTION



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A Project of the
Inter-Church/Inter-Faith Relations Committee,
B.C. Conference,
The United Church of Canada

**A Project of the Inter-Church & Inter-
Faith Relations Committee**

B.C. Conference

The United Church of Canada

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LIVELY

OPTION:

**VOICES FROM SHARED
MINISTRY
CONGREGATIONS**

**A PROJECT OF THE
INTER-CHURCH/INTER-FAITH
RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

B.C. CONFERENCE

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

PREFACE

In the last few years we have seen a renewed interest in Shared Ministry - a ministry in which two or more denominations work together. In many cases it is a way of ministering more effectively to congregations who otherwise would be struggling to survive as a single denomination congregation.

Many people involved in a Shared Ministry congregation have been enriched by their worship and life together with Christians of other denominations. Communicating the richness of such an experience is often difficult to do. But, just as stories or illustrations can "bring alive" an address or talk, we hope that the stories and reflections contained in this book will bring to life for you these special ministries.

It is our hope, as well, that some of the struggling and financially marginal congregations across our country will see Shared Ministry as a "lively option" for them.

My thanks to those who have contributed stories and reflections, making possible this publication. I am grateful to members of the Inter-Church & Inter-Faith Relations Committee of British Columbia Conference for their on-going support, guidance, and encouragement of this project. And a special word of thanks to my son, Michael, whose computer knowledge and expertise enabled us to prepare the material "camera ready", thus reducing the cost of printing this book.

G. Harvie Barker, Editor
Inter-Church & Inter-Faith Committee
British Columbia Conference
The United Church of Canada

WITH RENEWED DETERMINATION

Unity-Meridian Pastoral Charge

by Susan Conly

An elderly gentleman at a particularly crucial meeting at the time, asked to lead the opening devotions We went back to the table with renewed determination.

"The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, ..., drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful."

The ancient words from the Book of Common Prayer spoken this morning by the Rev. Paul Bachmann, incumbent at Unity's St. John's Anglican Church. Those gathered at the Lord's Table fill to overflowing the space across the front of the church; we join hands and together pray: "Our Father who art in heaven...Forever and ever. Amen."

I look at the persons in this circle around the Lord's Table - Anglican, United, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and quite a few 'no-name' brands.

In memory I see this same congregation, 23 years ago almost to the day, gathered here in this same place, an anxious, tentative group, possibly half the number here today, participating in a communion service. Trying to accommodate all preferences, the communion tray that morning offered individual cups of wine on one side, individual cups of grape juice on the other side, and the common cup with wine in the centre of the tray. I easily recall the focus not being on the worship at the Lord's Table, but on

whose dogma/creed might we be offending. That was March, 1970.

This uneasy mix was the fledgling union of the Anglican and the United Church congregations in the village of Evesham, Saskatchewan. An integrated form of worship that had evolved out of months of talking, listening, and subtly ignoring. But we had attained our goal - we had kept a church in the village and community of Evesham.

The initial meeting, May 1969, focused on what the Macklin United Pastoral Charge had known for some time. Dwindling population, dwindling finances projected a depressing outlook for the futures of both the United and the Anglican congregations within that area - Macklin, Evesham, and Senlac. Good representation from all congregations concerned re-emphasized the need to move as quickly as possible toward one minister, and integrated congregations. During the dialogue, Battleford Presbytery and the Bishop of Saskatoon were kept in constant communication by phone, letter or in person. Despite all the initial fervor in the world, this amalgamation, by its very nature, could not be an instant "fait accompli" as many had hoped. So much accommodating had to be done.

The Bishop constantly admonishing "that all things be done in decent order and with discipline"; a much younger United Church minister's enthusiasm over social concerns: to him, structure and tradition were quite irrelevant; his constant urging to concessions to the increasingly popular contemporary modes of worship. How to accommodate and balance? Instinctively some of our United Church members realized that the amalgamation would be enriched by the great liturgical traditions of the Anglican Church.

Traditions of both denominations had not only to be respected but preserved where possible. In the reconciling of these divergent viewpoints, we were determined not to come to the end of all this effort with nothing but an insipid interdenominational amalgam.

Long, tedious, late-into-the-night meetings often showed little progress. I recall one bogging-down period when the greatest desire seemed to be to forget the whole thing; let each family go east, west, south, wherever, to the church of their choice in other communities and simply close the Evesham building. An elderly gentleman at a particularly crucial meeting at the time, asked to lead the opening devotions. He read from Deuteronomy 30. I recall his very short meditation, dramatically emphasized by an unexpected knuckle-thumping on the table, "...today I am giving you a choice between life and death; CHOOSE LIFE, love the Lord your God AND BE FAITHFUL." That knuckle thump, the silence that followed, is still a vivid memory - he made his point. We went back to the table with renewed determination.

But by February 1970, the Macklin United congregation had opted out, choosing to be part of the Coronation Presbytery of the Alberta Conference. This meant the end of the 45 year old Macklin United Pastoral Charge, a sad but severe jolt to many who somehow had not foreseen this as the inevitable result of not cooperating in shared ministries. By the middle of March 1970, Senlac United had chosen to become part of the Unity Pastoral Charge. This changed the scenario. Macklin Anglicans had a resident minister, Evesham was still struggling with combining congregations, and Senlac Anglican congregation was now on its own. Less encumbered now, we moved more freely into a concentrated mode where determination and a sense of co-operation were high. We had been warned by the Bishop and by

Presbytery that on the national level the Anglican Church and the United Church had six commissions working on various aspects of Union and it was desirable that "in our local arrangements we should neither prejudice nor outstrip the results of their deliberations." We must wait for direction.

Within a few weeks' time, the Conference at Niagara, 1970, made known the results of their deliberations: "there would be no Union".

Maybe so at the national level, but we at Evesham had struggled too long and too hard to even consider such an ultimatum. From that moment on, with new impetus, we put the finishing touches to our "Proposal for Cooperation between the Macklin Anglican Parish and the Evesham Community Church". We presented it to Presbytery, to the Bishop; we declared our intention to move immediately to a shared-ministry.

Our fledgling union was born that week, March 26, 1970.

The Rev. David Brown, Macklin Anglican resident minister, and those other Anglican ministers that followed during the next thirteen years, were our strength. Always accommodating, always accepting of this oddball form of service that intervened between their other two orderly services from the Book of Common Prayer, one at Macklin and the other at Senlac. The Bishop chose his priest for Macklin with care and concern in this respect. Only one interesting exception comes to mind. There was to be a change of ministers. A priest being considered for Macklin took the morning service at Evesham. After the service we waited in the lower hall of the church to share lunch and welcome him. Eventually he appeared on the stairway, but

instead of asking the blessing, he said sadly, but with conviction, "You are neither fish nor fowl, I simply cannot condone this". And he left without further word - or sandwich.

In his stead came the Rev. Don Wootten under whose ministry we became a strong and confident church in the community. Our original "Order of Service" pamphlet included canticles, responses, and other parts of the service that included congregational participation. Later, additional hymns were added in a section at the back. So any variation that the minister wished for a particular service was at hand without a great shuffling of prayer book/hymn book/service book, etc.

In 1977, further erosion in church attendance brought discussion of shared ministries to the fore again - this time from the Unity United Pastoral Charge to the east of us. Tentative suggestions to reach out and include Evesham Community Church and a similar shared-ministry at Senlac were shelved until 1983, when the Macklin Anglican Church closed. This left Evesham Community Church and the Senlac Anglicans without a minister. Unity United Pastoral Charge began consultations with Senlac and Evesham. A proposed Constitution for the Unity-Meridian Pastoral Charge was drawn up to set out the structure of the Parish Council, the election of Presbytery and Synod delegates (Evesham and Senlac Anglicans), the financing of shareable and non-shareable costs, etc.

Since July 1983, the Evesham Community Church has been part of this three- (during the summer, four) point Unity-Meridian Pastoral Charge with two ministers. The Revs. Rose and George Ward have been our ministers in the Charge since 1987. At Evesham we still follow our original 1970 order of service.

Communion follows the United church order, except for those Sundays when the Anglican priest from Unity is our guest minister or at the annual visit of the Bishop from Saskatoon when the order from the Book of Common Prayer is followed. There is full attendance and full participation at each order of Communion service. Time has gentled and smoothed any few abrasive edges, an easing facilitated by our unwavering focus on working together, and to worship God rather than a set of creeds.

Our Evesham Community Church services are joyful, faith full times of worship that have evolved over the last 23 years.

As this Communion Service today, March 21, 1993, from the Book of Common Prayer draws to a close, we join hands and voices praying: "Our Father..."; as we mingle as one large family circling the Communion Table we are aware of the music of guitar and harp blending with the children's voices as their service from the Sunday School rooms also draws to a close. It has been a good morning.

It has been a good 23 years!

Susan Conly is from Macklin, Saskatchewan, and is a member of the Evesham Community Church.

IMPULSE TOWARDS UNITY HAS EARLY BEGINNINGS

Portneuf Pastoral Charge

by Amy J. Kupecz

What a long way we have come in 150 years - maybe the next 150 years will be equally interesting.

In the year 1857, fifty-five members of a sizable Scottish community petitioned "the Reverend Presbytery of Montreal" to recognize them as a congregation, and at least to send them someone to dispense the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, "as few of your petitioners have had the privilege of approaching the Lord's Table in this land".

Even this far back, an impulse towards unity can be detected among the English-speaking Protestants of the area. A small group of Methodists was ministered to from Trois Rivieres, and the Anglican Community was well established since 1832. The Methodists were gradually absorbed into the larger groups, and in 1884 the people in Portneuf grouped together to build a church - a small, attractive white clapboard building in the "Canadian Gothic" tradition. Individuals of all persuasions donated land, material, and labour to the effort, and in 1888 the building was ready for consecration. Here, of course, they ran into a snag - the Anglican Bishop of Quebec consecrated the church for the use of Anglicans only, as was correct at the time, and the Presbyterians retired to the schoolhouse-cum-meeting house for the next 56 years. Of the Methodists we hear no more.

Over the years the Presbyterians tried several times to be recognized as a congregation rating a resident minister, but it remained a Mission served by student ministers, first from Morrin College in Quebec City, and then from The Presbyterian College in Montreal, until 1925.

Union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches was looked upon with favour locally, as was shown by the first set of ballots, prior to 1917 (the known date of death of one of the signators). There was only one dissenter. The second set was unanimous. Portneuf Presbyterians had made up their minds long before Union was actually accomplished in 1925. We continued to be served by student ministers from Montreal until 1939. In that year we became one of a five-point charge with Valcartier, Stoneham, Loretteville, and Donnacona - with a resident minister at last, but domiciled in Valcartier.

The next milestone in our history was an agreement between the two congregations in Portneuf, Anglican and United, to join together in the reconditioning and maintenance of the Church of St. John the Evangelist. This agreement was signed in 1944 by the Lord Bishop of Quebec and by the Chairman of Quebec-Sherbrooke Presbytery. In the same file there is a letter signed "Phillip, Quebec" in which Bishop Carrington graciously gives permission to the United Church to hold regular Sunday Services in it twice a month and to allow its use for weddings, funerals and other occasional services as required, along lines which would be agreeable to all the parties interested in such cooperation".

In 1949 a Sunday School, which had waxed and waned over the years, was properly organized, held in homes, and led by both Anglican and United Church teachers. Holding classes in the

church was not very satisfactory, so they tried holding them on Wednesdays in the Portneuf English schoolhouse after regular classes. However, when the Anglican rectory was renovated, they were invited to use the three rooms in the basement. In 1968 it became the privilege of a United Church teacher to prepare the senior class for confirmation; and on April 13, 1969 there was held for the first time in this parish or pastorate a combined Confirmation Service. His Grace Bishop Brown of Quebec and Rev. J.C. van der Spuy of the United Church of Canada received the candidates - eleven Anglican and four United Church members. In 1973 there were ten candidates, all received into both the Anglican and United Churches. Bishop Matthews of Quebec and Rev. Gordon Rajotte officiated.

In this same year, Rev. Edward Vaughan, who was the Anglican priest in Portneuf and Trois Rivières, was licensed and inducted as the United Church minister for Portneuf, Portneuf having opted out of the Valcartier charge and realigned itself, with the permission of Presbytery, with the Trois Rivières United Church (St. Andrew's). St. Andrew's United had become a Shared Ministry with St. James Anglican church, and now we had also embarked on the Shared Ministry program. The service of Induction was presided over by Bishop Matthews of Quebec and by the Rev. Gary Stokes, Chairman of Quebec-Sherbrooke Presbytery. It was a joyful occasion, marking the true integration of our communities. For twelve years the Rev. Canon Vaughan led us through the intricacies of Shared Ministry at its best, and left us a thoroughly integrated and happy community.

Shortly after Rev. Vaughan left the Trois Rivières area, we in Portneuf separated from that parish/charge and have since become a parish/charge on our own, with until recently the Rev. Michael

Hare as our supervising minister. Mr. Hare has had much experience in Shared Ministry, in the Eastern Region of Quebec-Sherbrooke Presbytery, and so has been particularly helpful to our new minister, the Rev. Marcel Dumont.

Our members have dwindled in numbers over the past few years, many having died, and others having moved away, but our church has come to mean more and more to us, being a symbol of solidarity in a wavering world. We will not be easily divided or dislodged while our sense of unity and fellowship continues. Now we have a new challenge to our ability to absorb change. We have a Francophone minister, Rev. Dumont, who is trying valiantly and increasingly successfully to give us services in the English language. Those of us who are not bilingual appreciate his efforts on our behalf, and those of us who are to some degree must admire his fluency, and wish we could do as well in French. With love and patience we are starting out on what should be a wonderful relationship. What a long way we have come in 150 years - maybe the next 150 years will be equally interesting!

There are two annual events which give us great satisfaction, both of them enriching our faith and life together. One of these is the World Day of Prayer Service, which we put together in unison with the various units of the local French Roman Catholic community; and the other is an Outdoor Breakfast and Ecumenical Communion Service - to which we invite the members of the neighbouring parishes and charges, as well as our French Roman Catholic friends.

Amy J. Kupez is Clerk of Session of Portneuf United Church of this Shared Ministry.

FRIENDSHIPS ESTABLISHED PREVENT POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES

Windermere Valley Pastoral Charge

by Mary K. Laird

...I think the friendships that have been cemented over the years ...will make it possible for any future problems to be ironed out...

I am sitting here thinking of what it has meant to me personally - as well as for our congregation - to be part of a shared ministry of Anglican and United church people. I was one of the Anglican members who served on the Committee which worked on one union. About that time there was a national movement to unite the Anglican and United Churches of Canada. I was disappointed when this fell through.

The main reason for one uniting in this area was purely financial. Neither church could afford a full time minister, and it was arranged that we would alternate, in periods of about five years, between a United and an Anglican church minister and that services would be held in each church on alternate Sundays.

I am sure that, to an outsider, it must seem strange that we should still keep both church buildings; but both congregations had worked hard to keep up their churches and had a deep appreciation for them. There were many members of both congregations who felt it was difficult enough to share a minister, let alone a church.

As with any re-organization, it has taken time to heal wounds and work things out to everyone's satisfaction.

To my mind it has been a great benefit to the community and to both churches. We have larger congregations and a lot of friendship between them. We have a joint council which handles all the workings of the churches, but the finances and upkeep of each church is kept separate. So we have a chairman alternating between United and Anglican and two financial secretaries, each one keeping the books for his/her church.

We still have an A.C.W. and a U.C.W. who work for their respective churches. Each group is generously supported by the other in any fund-raising effort. And the two congregations enjoy a coffee hour after church two Sundays a month. We also have a joint choir which sings in each church and adds so much to our worship experience. The organist also plays for all services.

I think you will understand from the above that I have found our union to have been a great advantage to both congregations, and I only hope that it will continue for many years. There have been difficulties to overcome, and there always will be; but I think the friendships that have been cemented over the years and the regard of each congregation for the other will make it possible for any future problems to be ironed out to everyone's satisfaction.

I am very happy to belong to this union; and for a small rural community it is workable and helps people to work together.

Mary K. Laird is a member of the Windermere Valley Pastoral Charge and lives in Invermere, B.C.

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ADVANTAGES OF SHARED MINISTRY

Windermere Valley Pastoral Charge

gathered by: Jaryl McIsaac

I feel our shared ministry has enriched our community by uniting us in body and spirit.

After 27 plus years, we are still wanting to be a shared ministry. Our Order of Service reflects both Anglican and United church elements, rather than alternating liturgies between the two traditions. ... Some pluses to sharing: a 16 member "mixed" choir"; fellowship events that are always successful because there are enough families to participate; sharing in community outreach projects (monthly service at the hospital, hosting ecumenical events...); a successful Sunday School because enough teachers and more youngsters than if done separately; cost sharing and having to maintain only one manse. ... I feel our shared ministry has enriched our community by uniting us in body and spirit. Many of us say we accept the differences in our services as immaterial and we appreciate that we are all working toward the same goal. In a small community such as ours, a divided loyalty to two or more churches makes for difficulties. We gain financially and socially by combining our pastor, our services, and in some aspects our expenses. To separate now would be a step backward. In time, I hope we will have one building, thereby strengthening our shared ministry.

The above comments were gathered by Jaryl McIsaac, member of the Windermere Valley Pastoral Charge.

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SHARED MINISTRY PLANNED WHILE TOWN BEING CONSTRUCTED

Pinawa Christian Fellowship
by Dr. John Guthrie

...People reasoned that since they would be living and working together, why not worship together...

1. On WORKING TOGETHER.....ENRICHING:

* When the Presbyterian presbytery erected a Presbyterian congregation within the PCF and instructed it that it must be a component of the PCF;

* When the Bishop of Keewatin (during a PCF worship service) consecrated a member of the congregation to be a Lay Reader of the Anglican Church and invited the PCF's minister and members of other denominations that were ordained elders, to join him in "laying on hands";

* The willingness to share, and to compromise while maintaining principle;

* In one sense the PCF is like the army. We hail from various denominations viz., regiments and corps, but we belong to only ONE army - the army of Jesus Christ. PCF is a spiritually enriching congregation. We remain together because we want to be together, not because of any legal requirement.

2. ...MORE FULFILLING THAN ONE DENOMINATION?

I could not say whether or not the PCF is more fulfilling than a

single - denomination church. Rather, it perhaps offers a more varied perspective on the life of faith. Certainly the relative freedom from "head office edicts" is a welcome feature. The five mainline denominations which recognize the P.C.F., however, are very supportive. They are there when we need advice or resources but they don't intrude. We would not want to be without them.

3. TIMES... TO LAUGH... TOGETHER!

They are legion! One in particular, I remember, happened in the early days. The Bishop of Keewatin was participating in a worship service at which he confirmed Anglican candidates and celebrated communion. It was essential that he depart Pinawa at the conclusion of the service since he had to drive some distance to conduct another confirmation service. The PCF worships in one of the local schools. There was considerable consternation when it was discovered that the classroom where he had left his jacket and outer garments (it was wintertime) had been locked, and the only person with a key had already left for parts unknown. Fortunately, there is no shortage of engineers and skilled tradesmen in Pinawa. Access was obtained by removing the classroom door from its frame.

4. HOW CAME THE PCF INTO BEING?

The majority of the people at the Chalk River (Ontario) laboratories assigned to be the nucleus of the Whiteshell laboratories, were Westerners. During the planning stage for the town of Pinawa, those people reasoned that since they would be living and working together, why not worship together: as a multi-denomination corporate congregation maintaining strong

ties with the parent (or founding) denominations. Non-Chalk River people who joined the Whiteshell staff in 1963/64 enthusiastically supported the idea and so the PCF was formed. From the beginning the PCF has been laity led and driven. The five denominations which officially recognize the PCF continue to be generous with their assistance, advice and support.

There have been many joys over the years since the beginning of the PCF. Most significant to me is the sharing among us of the liturgy and faith insights. The great pain experienced (to my mind) was when one of the original six founding denominations withdrew from the PCF and went its own way.

Note: The Pinawa Christian Fellowship is a multi-denominational congregation recognized by the Anglican, Baptist (BUWC), Mennonite (GCMC), Presbyterian, and United Churches.

Anecdotes and thoughts written by a founding member of the Pinawa Christian Fellowship, Dr. John Guihrie.

CHURCHES FOLLOW LEAD OF SCHOOLS

Upper Musquodoboit Pastoral Charge

submitted by Wanda Smith and Donald Hutchinson

...the school systems had been amalgamated to bring everyone together in the high school education system. This worked well, so why not try this same approach with the churches of our area?

We are writing from the Upper Musquodoboit Pastoral Charge in Nova Scotia. Our charge is comprised of two United churches and one Presbyterian church. In the late 1960's, the life styles of the people of our area had changed, so that the church was no longer the centre of the community. Ten years earlier, the school systems had been amalgamated to bring everyone together in the high school education system. This worked well, so why not try this same approach with the churches of our area? With the dwindling number of church supporting people, it was no longer financially feasible for the United or Presbyterian church to be wholly independent of the other.

The Presbyterian church at Dean was at that time a part of a Pastoral Charge which was 35 miles away. Dean did not have a manse of its own, and the minister lived in the other part of the Charge. This was an inconvenience in itself geographically, as well as the fact that they were in two different worlds socially. Dean was a sparsley populated rural area, while the Elmsdale-Hardwood Lands area was more of an urban-type community, being not far from the city of Halifax.

Taking this all into consideration, the church leaders of Dean and the Upper Musquodoboit area felt that we should try an association with the people who were our geographical neighbors. Upper Musquodoboit also had a manse which would have the minister located in a more central part of the whole charge. They also realized that this kind of working together would help to ease the burden financially for all concerned.

After some consideration, it was decided to financially divide the contribution to the Pastoral Charge by the number of church members represented from each of the three churches. The United Church at Upper Musquodoboit had the largest portion as it was the largest church. The next highest percentage then went to Dean and then to Higginsville, the smallest church. This system seemed to work well, and that is the arrangement still followed today.

Even though this association came into being for practical purposes, the cooperation and feeling of comradeship has grown over the past 30 years. The spiritual leadership given to us has helped to make this a success, but we also feel that it is God's hand working through the people to do God's will.

Submitted by members of the Upper Musquodoboit Pastoral Charge, Wanda Smith and Donald Hutchinson.

TRAGEDIES, ILLNESS, AND DISAPPOINTMENTS DRAW PEOPLE TOGETHER

St. Peter's Ecumenical Church

by Heather Labrie

St. Peter's Ecumenical Church has developed through the years amid trials and tribulations, love and prayers.

When I first arrived in the town of Slave Lake 27 years ago, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. As a young woman of eighteen I had never been this far from home. The area surrounding the city of Guelph, Ontario, where I was raised, was nothing like the community before me.

The main street of Slave Lake was a sea of mud when I arrived in the fall of 1964 to work in St. John's Anglican Residential School in Wabasca. The town was a "boom town" relying then, as it does now, on petroleum, lumber, and government employment. It is situated on the southeast end of Lesser Slave Lake, 260 kilometers north of Edmonton, Alberta.

The year I arrived the population barely exceeded 400; it is now approximately 5500. One hundred of those people are senior citizens, slightly more than 1,000 are over the age of 39, and the rest are younger. The average age of our citizens is twenty-five.

Slave Lake is also a very transient community: twenty-five percent

of our population lives in town less than a year. We suffer from the typical problems of a young, growing, resource community: drug and alcohol abuse, family break-ups or violence, and many single parent families. These factors have greatly affected the growth of our religious communities within the town. St. Peter's Ecumenical Church has developed through the years amid trials and tribulations, love and prayers.

We began our life as a "mission" community with many United and Anglican students, lay ministers and clergy visiting us. The small Anglican Church building that had been erected in 1935 was sold in 1975. When the Reverend George Young came to Slave Lake that year to minister to the Anglicans, he held services in St. Peter Celestin Roman Catholic Church. This was our first taste of ecumenism, a shared building, and we thanked God for it.

Around this time, the United congregation was worshipping in the elementary school with lay minister Dave Sommor. When he was transferred, there was no replacement and the United people joined the Anglicans to hold combined services. This was a happy move for both denominations. Now instead of having two congregations of two to five people a Sunday, there was one congregation with ten to twenty people each week.

Meanwhile, a small Lutheran group in town had been served by L.A.M.P. (Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots). In 1974, Helmut Boehm, a counselor with the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission working in Slave Lake, was called through L.A.M.P. and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod to serve as resident lay minister. In 1976, he stepped down from his role and encouraged his congregation to join in cooperation with the Anglicans. For the next ten years a Lutheran pastor drove or

flew in each month to conduct a Lutheran worship service for the mixed congregation.

We had now entered the "preschool" stage of our sharing. We were very possessive of our individual denominational backgrounds, but enjoyed the fellowship and stewardship of each other. It was time for growing, but to nurture that growth we needed a place to call home. In 1981 a larger church was built and dedicated by Anglican Bishop Fred Crabb. He was assisted during the service by representatives of the United and Lutheran churches. A church tri-board was elected. Each denomination had a board which met separately and then brought their concerns to a joint meeting. This worked for a time but it lacked the strength of good communication.

In 1982 the Reverend George Young retired and the Reverend Alec Smith, a United Church minister, came from Newfoundland. Alec was not a very big man but what he lacked in stature he made up for in energy and humour. He helped us to grow by enabling us to see our denominational similarities and appreciate our differences.

During these "teenage" years we found we suffered the pangs of not being accepted by our "peers" and "parents". We were definitely a problem for our respective judicatories. How can three denominations be one congregation? How do you organize one budget and give to all three? And the statistical forms must definitely be filled out on time.

Help came in the form of two wonderful bishops, Anglican Bishop Gary Woolsey of the Diocese of Athabasca and Lutheran Bishop Bob Jacobsen, Alberta and the Territories of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Both of these men saw ecumenism positively, worked together, and led us step by step through many of our troubled times. In November 1987, Anglican Priest Canon Phyllis Lock became the Pastor/Priest of our congregation; Pastor Vincent Eriksson was interim pastor from early 1990 to spring 1991; and in June 1991, Lutheran Pastor Allen Jorgenson was installed as our clergy. Today we are now entering adolescence in our ecumenical life. We have achieved some maturity and are feeling good about ourselves.

If you visit our parish now, this is what you would find. Our regular Sunday services rotate through the Anglican, Lutheran, and United orders of service. The sacrament of Holy Communion is held at least once a month following the rite of the resident clergy. If s/he has been authorized, a second communion service may be conducted according to one of the other rites. If necessary, visiting clergy are brought in to ensure that members of the other two denominations receive according to the practices of their own traditions. It is not uncommon to see people who previously would only attend their own denominational service, standing or kneeling to partake in the sacrament together.

St. Peter's has a vibrant Sunday School with 60 children enrolled. The format used follows the lectionary of the Anglican/United Church "Whole People of God" program. Presently, we are finding that we are bursting at the seams and will have to find a remedy for our lack of space soon.

One of our greatest ecumenical joys has been our joint Confirmation service. We have now celebrated four together, in which both bishops and a representative of Yellowhead Presbytery took part.

The most supportive aid to shared ministry in our region is the annual Shared Ministry Conference held in Grande Prairie each January. For the past six years the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity meant a time for delegates or interested parties to share and support each other. The event is held in a host church on a rotation basis involving Anglican, Lutheran, United and Presbyterian people.

From these events we have developed a joint statistical form which has been approved by all our participating denominations. This has lessened the load to some extent. We have also organized a guideline for the pastoral call process in a shared ministry situation. This was used by St. Peter's board and found to be very useful.

Our ecumenical life in St. Peter's has not been an easy one. We have dealt with tragedies, illness and disappointments. These things were hard to bear, but we were able to draw on each other and from this we have developed our strength. Our congregation is large enough to separate denominationally and although it might have been a choice at one time, it is no longer. We have kept our own denominational identities yet understand the Christian unity of all. Sharing is the hub of our life together. We believe ecumenism is alive and will be a positive future for our churches.

Heather Labrie has lived in the two Shared Ministry situations in the Diocese of Athabaska (Manning and Slave Lake). She was appointed to the Interchurch & Interfaith Relations Committee of the Anglican Church of Canada and is a member of the Regional and National Steering Committee for the Shared Ministry Conferences.

GOODWILL TO ACCEPT CHANGES AND WORK TOGETHER

Trinity United Church, Shawinigan, Quebec.

submitted by Mrs. Dorothy Jomini

We all work together, whether it be for services or receptions.

This is a story of two communities, Shawinigan and Grand'Mere which are about ten miles apart. Each community had very active United and Anglican churches, each with their own minister. In the 1960's, however, the English population diminished considerably - with plant closings and transfers to other places. At that time, it was decided to have one Minister for each community, each covering his/her own denomination with services alternating annually at 9:30 and 11 a.m. Eventually it was decided this was not practical, so the change was made to have only one Minister providing worship leadership to a combined congregation - one Sunday, United, and the next, Anglican - in their own churches with the same time schedule.

We were so fortunate to have the Rev. Mervyn Awcock, an Anglican, to be our first minister in this arrangement. It was not easy for him, I know, but he did everything patiently and tactfully to keep the peace between the congregations. Gradually, little changes were made on both sides, so that the Anglican service was a little less Anglican and the United a little more Anglican. The wonderful part was that there was great cooperation despite some misgivings, and soon no one cared which service they were attending. We were at church to worship together, and in so

doing we all became closer and more sharing. The choirs were joined together and our joint leadership was inspiring to all.

The next step saw the United Church in Grand'Mere closing, and our membership was moved to Trinity United in Shawinigan. Nevertheless, the Anglican church in Grand'Mere accepted us and the symbols of our faith, and made us so welcome that one Sunday was a United Service and the next Anglican. Then the Anglican church in Shawinigan closed and they moved into Trinity, becoming Trinity-St. John's - and we truly became a shared ministry. One summer after Rev. Awcock left we did not have a Minister, and it was arranged to have only one Service a Sunday, alternating between Shawinigan and Grand'Mere. It worked so well that we have continued that way, travelling back and forth - two communities, three congregations, worshipping together in one Service.

We have had difficulties finding Ministers who would accept this Shared Ministry but lay people have taken over when needed. I think at first the Anglicans found it a little difficult to accept the first United Church Minister as theirs also, but we have been truly blessed with three who were greatly admired - for their sermons especially - and appreciated by all. We all work together, whether it be for services or receptions. At the present time, we have a French-speaking Roman Catholic as our organist, and he fits in perfectly - and joins us for either United or Anglican Communion. We did have a United Church Women's group which had a United President, an English Catholic Vice-President, an Anglican Secretary, and a French Catholic as Program Convenor - and we all met and enjoyed each other in the Anglican church. We have a yearly ecumenical Service with the local Catholic church and we share with other Protestant Shared Ministry congregations - a

Breakfast at Portneuf, a picnic in Shawinigan-Grand'Mère, and a Thanksgiving Service and luncheon in Three Rivers (Trois Rivières). It has been so helpful to know that we few are not alone in shared ministry. I think the youngest in our congregation are above 55 - our children all went off to universities and never came back, as the industries here are all operating in French. Every year our numbers dwindle, and now we are looking into the feasibility of closing Trinity-St. John's in Shawinigan, and moving into the Anglican church here - but retaining our own identity. In this way we hope that we will be able financially to keep a Protestant church in this community, as long as possible. One of our joys is the annual Christmas Candlelight Service held in St. Stephen's here. It is a beautiful church, made more so by special decorations and candlelabra on each pew. It really brings to all the joy and meaning of Christmas, and families come home early especially for this service. With us, in congregation and choir, are our Roman Catholic friends who contribute to the service in many ways, supporting us in our traditions. The local Catholic Priest attends, and some lessons, prayers, and hymns are in the French language. We could not continue to have this lovely service without their help.

How does shared ministry work? Beautifully, if people have the goodwill to accept changes, and work together. At one of our first combined meetings, after a long evening of discussion, the Bishop of Quebec finally said: "Enough talk - just do it!" - and we have, and are so thankful. Of course it is painful to give up your Church, but the joys of worshipping together in this small English community are more important.

Last Christmas Eve, the United church people were to have the Communion Service in Grand'Mère. Unfortunately we were all

away; and so our Anglican friends arranged the Communion Table for us - and all who partook were Anglicans - and not a word was said. THAT is shared ministry.

This story was submitted by Mrs. Dorothy Jomini, Clerk of Session, Trinity United Church, Shawinigan, Quebec.

to value the special relationship they enjoyed with those of a different tradition.

UNITED CHURCH MEMBER CONFIRMED BY ANGLICAN BISHOP

Lyan Lake (Manitoba) Shared Ministry

by Harvie Barker

...the Bishop's gesture symbolized...the unity which members of the two denominations were seeking to reflect in their life together.

In 1982, I visited several shared ministry congregations in Northern Manitoba as part of a research project. I recall a conversation I had with one of the United Church members of the shared ministry in Lynn Lake.

She told me, with some emotion, about a very special Joint Confirmation Service at which her child, a teenager at the time, was confirmed. The weather before and on the day of the service was quite wintry, making it difficult for out of town guests and participants to arrive. The Bishop of Brandon Diocese (Anglican) had arrived safely, but the United Church presbytery participants were unable to arrive. The Service of Confirmation proceeded, and the Bishop confirmed all the Anglican and United Church candidates. Even though the child was confirmed as a member of the United Church within the shared ministry congregation, the woman was deeply moved. To her, the Bishop's gesture symbolized, at a deeper level, the unity which members of the two denominations were seeking to reflect in their life and work together.

The event helped her - and other members of the shared ministry -

Harvie Barker ministered to two Shared Ministry congregations (in Northern Quebec and Manitoba) and was a member of three national committees/task forces related to shared ministry work.

LEADERSHIP OF MINISTER CRUCIAL IN SHARED MINISTRY

Shuswap Lakes (B.C.) Shared Ministry

by Hubert M. Butcher

*...one whose hidden agenda...may be to mould the other
denomination to a preconceived way of thinking can be
disastrous.*

St. Mary's Church, Sorrento, St. David's Church, Celista, and St. Andrew's/All Saints' Church, Chase, have been served by a shared ministry for some nineteen years. St. Mary's and St. David's were originally Anglican; St. Andrew's was United Church; and All Saints' burned down and is represented by a small chapel in the Parish office, which is also in Chase. We welcome people of all denominations or of none, and the buildings of St. Mary's and St. David's are used also by the Roman Catholic congregations.

We have known wonderful times together and difficult ones. We find that the best way for us is to alternate between the United and Anglican traditions in our weekly worship. In this way, we sometimes worship according to the method by which we were raised, but we also learn other ways from other Christians. Trying to combine the two traditions in a melting pot seems to satisfy neither. We alternate also in the appointment of a minister - for a four or five year term. It is probably true that a minister can make or break any congregation; it is doubly so when folk of different traditions agree to share their clergy. A sensitive and

sympathetic pastor does a great deal to open our eyes to the treasures in another tradition; one whose hidden agenda (maybe unknown even to him or her) may be to mould the other denomination to a preconceived way of thinking can be disastrous.

To quote the Rev. Enid Finn, who on several occasions has led the combined parish in the interval between regular appointments: "Let us remember that we are united on the basis of a common faith and a common identity as Christians, not letting our pride in our heritage sabotage our wish to be a UNITING church. Respecting in love the convictions of others, we trust the Holy Spirit to lead us into new understanding within the fellowship of our faith - the faith which is expressed through our worship of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May God continue to bless and help us to grow in this unity and love."

*Hubert M. Butcher is a member of the Shuswap Lakes Parish
and resides in Sorrento, B.C.*

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

The United-Presbyterian Pastoral Charge of St. Ann's

by Sharon MacDonald

The Covenanting Service is over but the work of the congregations is just beginning....

A special Covenanting Service was held Wednesday evening, May 5, 1993, in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, North River Bridge - Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

The service celebrated the official union of two denominations: North River, North Shore, and Englishtown Pastoral Charge of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and St. Ann's Pastoral Charge of The United Church of Canada. The congregations, 7 in all, will work together under the name "The United-Presbyterian Pastoral Charge of St. Ann's". They will have a Baptist, the Rev. Robert T. Reid, serving as their full-time minister.

There are four Presbyterian and three United churches involved in this arrangement. About one year ago, these congregations seriously began exploring the possibility of union. Three years ago both charges found themselves without their own minister and also faced a short supply of other ministers willing to serve a three-point charge. They then began sharing the benefit of a minister (Rev. Reid) for Sunday worship about two years ago, alternating between the various church buildings. The joint arrangement between them worked well and led to the actual union on a permanent basis.

An agreement, or Covenant, between the two Charges was prepared by a committee of chosen Session members of the local churches and their Interim Moderators - the Rev. Murdock MacRae (Presbyterian) and the Rev. Thomas Whent (United). The document was presented to, and voted on, by the congregations and then presented to both Presbyteries for their approval and acceptance.

The service was well attended by members, adherents, and Session members from both Pastoral Charges, as well as by members from both Presbyteries. The Act of Covenanting was presided over by the Rev. Ian G. MacLeod and the Rev. Allan MacIntosh, Clerks of their respective Presbyteries. The Covenant document was signed by the Rev. Ritchie Robinson (Moderator of Cape Breton Presbytery, Presbyterian) and the Rev. Carolyn MacLeod (Chairperson of Sydney Presbytery, United Church), along with the Clerks of both Sessions, Merrill MacInnis and Murdock MacDonald.

The Celebration of the Lord's Table was disbursed by the Elders of both Charges. Following the Benediction by the Rev. Robert Reid, all were invited to share a time of fellowship while also enjoying a lunch prepared by the Church ladies.

This was a momentous occasion for Christ's people and for the history of the Presbyterian and United Churches, not only in this area but throughout Cape Breton. The service set a precedent for other congregations who may consider uniting with another denomination in the future.

The Covenanting Service is over but the work of the congregations is just beginning, as it is shown to us in Ephesians 4: 3-6:

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all."

Congratulations to The United-Presbyterian Pastoral Charge of St. Ann's!

This edited article was written by Sharon MacDonald for The Victoria Standard Journal, and submitted by Rev. Robert T Reid.

SHARED MINISTRY ARRANGEMENTS MAY CHANGE IN FUTURE

St. Andrew's United Church, Trois Rivieres, Quebec
by Marie Skramstad

..it does take openness, willingness to learn, and tolerance to understand differences.

St. Andrew's United Church, Trois Rivieres, Quebec, is presently in a Shared Ministry with St. James Anglican Church, also of Trois Rivieres. How did this ministry come about?

First, a very brief chronology of the parish of St. Andrew's. In 1923, a Methodist congregation was established in Trois Rivieres by the Rev. Henry Pope. A church was constructed at 300 Bonaventure Street the same year. This building still exists, but not as a house of worship. In 1844, a Presbyterian congregation in Trois Rivieres was recognized by Montreal Presbytery. The Rev. James Thom conducted the first service on August 10, the same year, in the Methodist Church (the first sharing). In May 1856, a Presbyterian Church, built on the corner of Hart and Radison Streets, was dedicated. The name of St. Andrew was adopted somewhat later. Both churches were spared in the great fire of 1908 that destroyed most of the commercial part of the city. The historic St. James Anglican Church, which is located in the Old Town, was also spared. In 1925, with the formation of The United Church of Canada, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was

selected as the place of worship for the United Church. Membership of the two congregations at the time consisted of 220 Presbyterians and 33 Methodists.

In 1965, St. Andrew's church property on Hart Street was expropriated by the city for construction of a new City Hall and Cultural Centre. A new and modern church was built on Nere-Beauchemin Street. It was dedicated on September 9, 1967. Ten years later (in September, 1977), the Shared Ministry with St. James Anglican Church began. The Rev. Charles Pelletier (minister of St. Andrew's Church from 1965) retired in 1977. No United Church minister was available to replace him. Following agreement between Presbytery and Diocese, the Rev. Edward Vaughan, the Anglican priest serving St. James Anglican Church, began ministering to the United church people as well. At first, he preached two services a Sunday, one in each church. This arrangement turned out to be too demanding, so it was decided to hold one service each Sunday, but alternating between the two churches. Some parishioners attended the services in both churches. The minister was also going to Portneuf (some 60 kilometers away) once a month to look after the United and Anglican congregation there (Note: see Portneuf story).

Due to decreasing numbers of English inhabitants in Trois Rivieres, which affected membership and financial support for two buildings, a decision was made to close one of them. After congregational surveys and discussions, it fell to the St. Andrew's people to move from their building. The church was then rented to several French religious denominations until 1988 when the decision was made to sell the church building and property. It is now a secretarial school. St. Andrew's stained glass memorial windows were left in the building, and are greatly appreciated by

the administration of the school (and hopefully the students, too).

July 1, 1980 was the beginning of alternate worship services (joint attendance) solely at St. James Anglican Church, a beautiful old church built in 1754 by the Recollet order, and handed over to the Church of England after the British conquest of Canada in 1760. The first Anglican incumbent of Trois Rivieres, the Rev. L.J.B. Veyssiere, took up his duties in September, 1768. The parish was served by Anglican priests until 1990, when a United Church minister, selected by both local congregations, was granted the authority by the Bishop in Quebec City to perform the duties of an Anglican priest as well.

The transition to a Shared Ministry has not always been easy. Traditions are hard to give up, especially when their importance is not always understood by everyone. Education toward the move to shared ministry was not thorough. Misunderstandings were not always dealt with right away. Due to a lack of good will or flexibility, a number of parishioners from both congregations stopped attending church. In addition, membership dropped through deaths and people moving away, with few candidates for membership moving here. The U.C.W. had to close its books at about the same time that the Sunday School (which had been Shared as well) ceased to exist. The United Church Women are now a part of the St. James' Ladies Guild.

At present then, our Shared Ministry consists of two congregations (United and Anglican), sharing one church and manse that are owned by the Anglican Church with operating costs and repairs shared by both congregations. There are alternate services on Sundays, attended by people from both congregations.

There is one joint choir (small, but enthusiastic), two organists (both Roman Catholic!), and coffee is served after the service to give an opportunity for people to socialize. The sole women's group sponsors two very successful tea/bazaars a year - a big job for so few people.

There are three governing groups, each with their own secretary, treasurer, and set of financial books: a) the United Church Official Board, b) the Anglican Board of Management, and c) a Shared Ministry Council composed of three members elected from each congregation and the minister (who is presently acting as chairperson). In order to minimize meeting time, these groups meet every second month - a) and b) one month and c) the next month. Emergency meetings can take place, if needed. This move toward conservation of time came about after our minister began to look after Anglican and United congregations in Shawinigan and Grand'Mere (see Maurice Valley Story).

What can this Shared Ministry become? It is difficult to say specifically. The first and biggest task will be to keep the churches open. Hopefully, in Trois Rivieres, this will bring about an expanded role for the Shared Ministry Council, greater cooperation in all decision making, and even fewer committees and meetings. There is also an opportunity for greater lay leadership and involvement while we will be without a minister. There is some talk about greater cooperation between the laity in Trois Rivieres and in Shawinigan/Grand Mere, especially when it comes to the worship service. One person can take the service in the two locations one Sunday, and another person (from the other community) can take the services the next Sunday. Maybe the laity, less accustomed to preparing sermons than the clergy, will survive the absence of a minister better with this kind of cooperation!

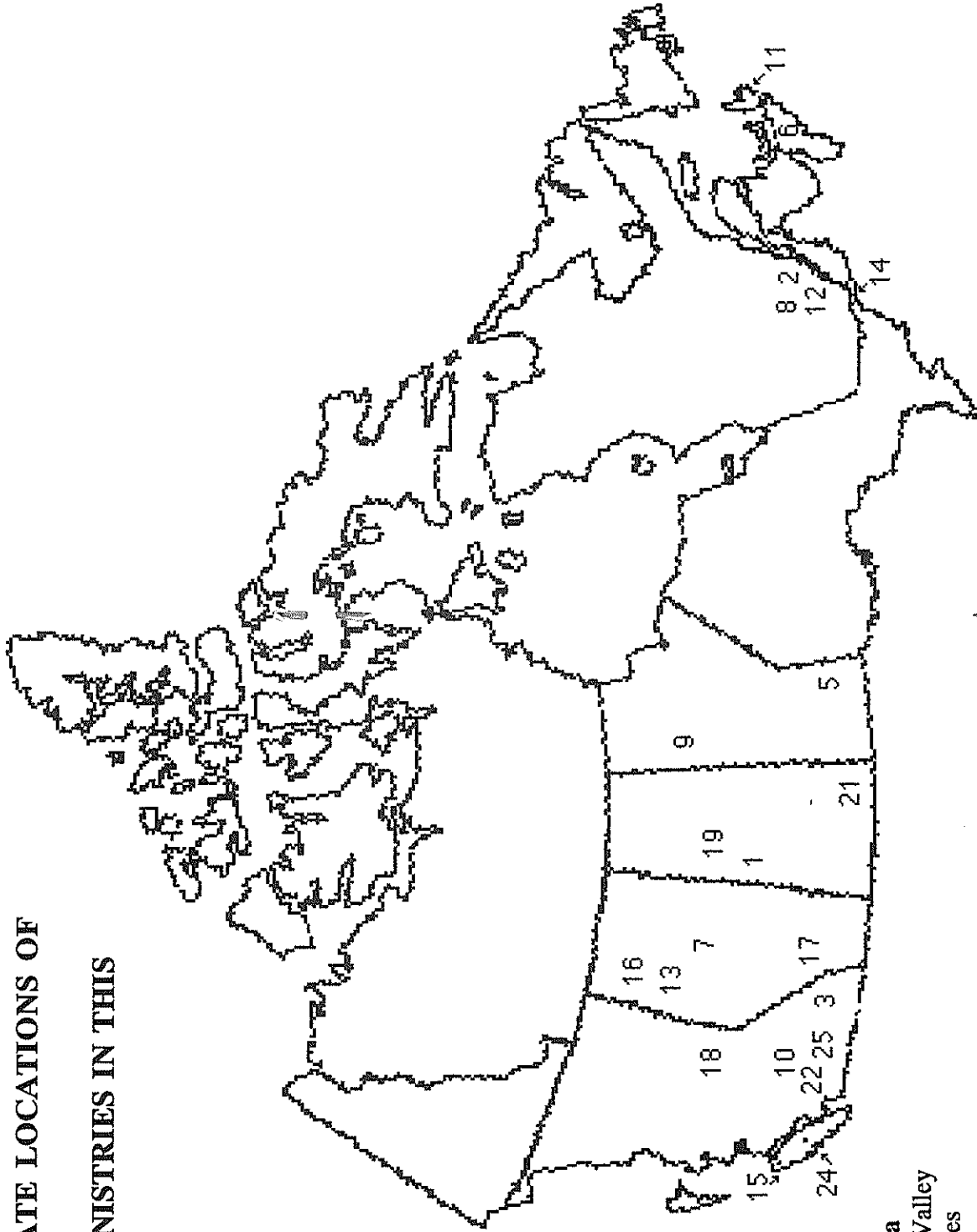
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Shared Ministries (from 1992 Year Book and Directory)

CONFERENCE & Presbytery	Pastoral Charge
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR	
West District	Churchill Falls
West District	Labrador City: Carol
MARITIME	
Halifax	Elmsdale
St. Stephen	McAdam (Vanceboro, Maine)
South Shore	LaHave-New Dublin
Truro	Upper Musquodoboit
Valley	Baxter's Harbour-Scott's Bay
Sydney	St. Ann's
MONTREAL & OTTAWA	
Montreal	Valleyfield
Quebec-Sherbrooke	Harrington Harbour
Quebec-Sherbrooke	Inverness-St. Andrew's
Quebec-Sherbrooke	Metis Beach
Quebec-Sherbrooke	Portneuf
Quebec-Sherbrooke	Saugenay-Lac-St.Jean
Quebec-Sherbrooke	Sept Iles: St. Andrew's
Quebec-Sherbrooke	St.Maurice (Grand'Mere)
Quebec-Sherbrooke	Trois Rivieres
BAY OF QUINTE	
Renfrew	Deep River: Community
TORONTO	
Toronto - Don Valley	Hillcrest
HAMILTON	
Hamilton	Calvin-Grace
MANITOU	
Cochrane	Hearst
Temiskaming	Noranda-Rouyn
Temiskaming	Val d'Or
LONDON	
Essex	St. James: Windsor
Huron-Perth	Whitechurch
MANITOBA & N.W.ONTARIO	
Cambrian	Ear Falls
Cambrian	Ignace: Emmanuel
Cambrian	Terrace Bay: Community
Northland	Leaf Rapids: Cross of Faith

APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF

SHARED MINISTRIES IN THIS

BOOKLET



British Columbia

- 3 Windermere Valley
- 10 Shuswap Lakes
- 15 Port Hardy
- 18 Tumbler Ridge
- 22 Logan Lake
- 24 Gold River
- 25 Naramata

Alberta

- 7 Slave Lake
- 13 Manning-Deadwood
- 16 High Level
- 17 Calgary
- 1 Unity-Meridian
- 19 Turtle River
- 21 International

Saskatchewan

- 5 Pinawa
- 9 Lynn Lake

Manitoba

- 12 Trois Rivieres
- 14 Beauharnois - Valleyfield

Quebec

- 2 Portneuf
- 8 Maurice Valley
- 12 Trois Rivieres

Nova Scotia

- 6 Upper Musquodoboit
- 11 St. Ann's, Cape Breton

MANITOBA & N.W. ONTARIO (Con'd)

Northland
Northland
Northland
Selkirk
Winnipeg
SASKATCHEWAN
Battleford
Battleford
Prince Albert
Souris Valley
ALBERTA & NORTHWEST
Edmonton
Northern Lights
Northern Lights
Northern Lights
Northern Lights
Northern Lights
Northern Lights
Northern Lights
Yellowhead
Calgary

Lynn Lake
Snow Lake
Winnipegosis
Pinawa (5 denominations)
Young-All Saints
Turtle River Parish
Unity-Meridian
Porcupine Plain
International

ALBERTA & NORTHWEST

Norman Wells
Hay River: Grace
Chetwynd: Zion
Faro: Church of the Apostles
High Level: Ecumenical
Hudson Hope: St. Peter's
Manning-Deadwood
Tumbler Ridge: St. Paul's
Slave Lake
Campbell-Stone

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Cariboo
Cariboo
Cariboo
Comox-Nanaimo
Comox-Nanaimo
Comox-Nanaimo
Comox-Nanaimo
Kamloops-Okanagan
Kamloops-Okanagan
Kamloops-Okanagan
Kamloops-Okanagan
Kamloops-Okanagan
Kootenay
MacKenzie
Robson Valley
Smithers
Gold River
Long Beach
Port Hardy
Port McNeill
Keremeos
Logan Lake
Princeton
Shuswap Lakes
Windermere Valley

NOTE: The above list does not include Shared Ministries where churches, other than the United Church of Canada, are involved (e.g. an Anglican/Presbyterian Shared Ministry).

At the present time the Anglican/United congregations in Portneuf have a wonderful breakfast and outdoor communion service in June, to which Trois Rivieres, Shawinigan, and Grand'Mere are invited. Shawinigan/Grand'Mere have a picnic in July, to which Portneuf and Trois Rivieres are invited. Trois Rivieres invites the others to celebrate a Harvest Day Eucharist in September or October. What a thrill it is to fill the air with song because of the combined numbers. Who knows, maybe we will have to find more reasons "to party" together!

Personally, I am in favor of shared ministries. I have attended many different churches in my day, and I found that there was always something interesting to learn about local traditions and habits. But, it does take openness, willingness to learn, and tolerance to understand differences. People just have to remember why we are in church in the first place. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son... so that all might be saved."

Written for St. Andrew's Pastoral Charge by Marie Skramstad de Forest, Trois Rivieres, Quebec.

LEARNING ABOUT OURSELVES FROM OTHERS

Manning-Deadwood (Alberta) Pastoral Charge

by Rev. Will Sparks

*I thought I might learn what made those Anglicans tick.
Little did I know I was about to discover what made me
and my United Church friends tick.*

I was surprised and delighted when I discovered that my year long internship in the M. Div. program at St. Andrew's College (Saskatoon) would be in the Anglican/United shared ministry of Manning-Deadwood Pastoral Charge in northern Alberta. One of the great attractions for me was the opportunity to immerse myself in the workings of another denomination. I thought I might learn what made those Anglicans tick. Little did I know I was about to discover what made me and my United Church friends tick.

In the first few weeks of my internship, my Anglican colleagues and I gathered for our weekly meeting. We were planning for the Covenanting Service marking the beginning of my ministry among the folks of Manning and Deadwood. Being eager and efficient, they wanted to set a date for the service and plan it on the spot. I however would not plan without the input of congregation members. "How very United Church of you!" was their response. And they were right.

Three weeks later I went to the Diocesan clergy conference in Slave Lake at which I met the Anglican clergy from the entire

Diocese of Athabaska. Quoting from my journal of October 4th, "....it was sort of total immersion into the Anglican way. We have been doing four prayer services a day straight out of the BAS (*Book of Alternative Services*) and the BCP (*Book of Common Prayer*)! That is a discipline that I am not really used to, and it points, I think, to a basic element of the Anglican Church: the centrality of liturgy in the Anglican tradition....I think that in the Anglican Church, theology is expressed...through the prayer books."

In my limited experience, being in shared ministry involved a willingness to trust, risk, make mistakes and learn. What I discovered is that shared ministry provides a wonderful opportunity to learn not only who "they" are, but who "we" are. If we have eyes to see, folks from another denomination can hold up a mirror and point out "how very United Church" we are, and we can do the same for them.

I am now in a small United Church pastoral charge in the Kootenays. This is not a shared ministry. It has been said that the fact that I was not settled in a shared ministry is a sign that my internship was a failure. I was trained for shared ministry and my training was wasted. I could not disagree more. My experience in the Manning-Deadwood ecumenical Pastoral Charge was filled with grace, and learning. My United Church friends taught me how to laugh our way through the struggles of denominational difference, and my Anglican friends taught me, ironically, what is valuable about the United Church.

Rev. Will Sparks served as Student Intern on the Manning-Deadwood Pastoral Charge, and is presently minister of the Arrow Lakes (B.C.) Pastoral Charge.

DWINDLING NUMBERS AND FINANCES LEAD TO UNION

The Beauharnois-Valleyfield (Québec) Pastoral Charge

submitted by Ethel Coleman

It has been a journey of faith and a lot of give and take by many individuals who are dedicated to the cause.

The Beauharnois-Valleyfield Pastoral Charge was not brought into being overnight. For several years, the Presbyterian and United Church congregations in Valleyfield had worshipped together during the summer months in order to give the respective pastors an annual vacation. However, for many years each congregation was a thriving entity, serving different sections of the community.

Then in the 1970's when the so called "Quiet Revolution" happened in the province of Quebec, both churches suffered a loss of young, energetic members as the family bread winner followed employment to others parts of Canada and abroad. These people took with them not only their skills and expertise but also their children - our future congregation. Both churches then faced dwindling attendance, and under-used buildings, with fewer people to share the financial burden of maintaining the premises.

Tentative steps were taken to have us worship together, but many objections were raised, some of which were rooted in discussions that had taken place in 1925 at the time of the formation of The United Church of Canada. However, in the late '70's a committee was formed to study the possibility of St. Edward's Presbyterian,

Beauharnois, Valleyfield Presbyterian, and Valleyfield United Churches joining together to form a Pastoral Charge. After several meetings, numerous phone calls, and much head-scratching, it was decided to seek the approval of the respective presbyteries; and finally the date of July 1, 1981 was set to commence our joint services with one pastor serving.

For some time the Valleyfield folks alternated between the church buildings, using each one on a six-month basis; and this caused considerable confusion. The United Church congregation had been receiving since 1982 a grant from the "Finance and Extension Board" to ease the financial burden. In 1985 this grant was withdrawn because of more urgent commitments. Then the United Church decided to attempt to sell their building (heart-wrenching decision). In June, 1985 this was accomplished when the French-speaking Pentacostal congregation purchased the building with the proviso that we could still worship there, providing it did not conflict with their times of worship. Also, we could use the sanctuary for weddings, funerals, etc., if convenient for the new owners and if requested well in advance by our members (this was for a period of five years). Within a short time it was decided all services would be held in the Presbyterian building, whose congregation kindly extended a welcoming hand.

Initially we were to alternate between a minister of the United Church and a Presbyterian minister. Due to many factors, this has not worked out; but we have been blessed in having dedicated persons minister to us. For the most part they have been students who have moved on upon ordination, but all have expressed gratitude for the time spent in our midst. The manse in Beauharnois has been the residence and is kept in excellent condition by the Beauharnois congregation.

It has been, and continues to be, a growing process, not always without growing pains. The service at Beauharnois is at 9:30 A.M., the one at Valleyfield at 11:00 A.M. which causes the pastor, on occasion, to receive the odd traffic citation as it is approximately a 20 minute drive.

Our members are dwindling and aging, and a baptism is a rarity. We are at present being ably served by Byron (Barney) Grace who is entering his final year of studies at The Presbyterian College, Montreal. We are enjoying his stay with us as well as his family who occupy the manse.

Financially we share the minister's expense - U.C. 50%, Valleyfield Presbyterian 19%, and Beauharnois 31%. Other expenses, such as heating, are also shared. The proceeds from the sale of the United Church building enables us to meet this obligation, and we have repaid the amount loaned by the Finance and Extension Board. Also, we are able to assist a former member of the congregation now studying at the Atlantic School of Theology.

It has been a journey of faith and a lot of give and take by many individuals who are dedicated to the cause. No one wears a mark on the forehead to indicate his/her original denomination. We have become a community of believers.

This article was submitted by Ethel Coleman, Clerk of Session of the Valleyfield United Church congregation of this Shared Ministry.

FAITH, PRAYER, AND WORK FOR JUSTICE DESCRIBE THIS SHARED

MINISTRY

St. Columba's Port Hardy B.C.

by Bill Laurie

We are aptly named: for the life, ethos or spirituality of our congregation is in the spirit of this saint.

Port Hardy is a town of 5,000 at the northern tip of Vancouver Island. Its economy relies on mining, fishing and logging. Tourism is gradually increasing.

St. Columba's congregation became a shared ministry of the Anglican and United Churches in 1971. Prior to this official recognition, there was a long history of ecumenism under the umbrella ministry of the Anglican Church. The name for the congregation was suggested by Canon Heber Green who travelled the central coast of B.C. on fish boats and freighters. We are aptly named: for the life, ethos or spirituality of our congregation is in the spirit of this saint. Columba was the founder of the Iona community in the sixth century CE. The present day Iona community has the celtic balance between constant prayer, evangelism and social justice.

St. Columba's Church in Port Hardy also carries that spirit. This is best exemplified by vignettes of several events in the late 1980's. The first of these was a study and prayer vigil using the "Ten Days for World Development" theme of that year centered on world hunger. There were 8 or 9 involved from the Anglican,

United, Mennonite and Roman Catholic traditions. During the silent prayer part of the day the furnace, as it often did, stopped. One of the participants, who had the coldest hour, said that the experience has given her an "ah-ha" moment of deeper solidarity with the poor and hungry who are often cold.

The next year, a one-day Retreat was held - led jointly by the Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Rick Paulin, and the United Church minister at St. Columba's, Rev. Bill Laurie. Again people from several Christian traditions planned and participated in the theme for the day, which integrated daily prayer and action for justice.

In the Fall of 1990, when Canadian U.N. troops were called into the "Gulf War", Bishop Shepherd invited all the parishes on Vancouver Island to hold a 24-hour vigil for Peace on the first Saturday in Advent. The support was astounding as, once again, we were joined by our Roman Catholic, Mennonite, Lutheran, Baptist, and Pentecostal friends. People gathered in the sanctuary for silent prayer which was marked on the hour with a short liturgy and the lighting of another candle. We made sure that one person was always present, and many others came for as much time as they could. We found this vigil to be so important that it automatically became a monthly event, although less ambitious in length - only 8 hours. We know the ways we were able to be instruments of peace in our daily personal action from our prayer; and we know we've made a difference in helping God's shalom grow in Kuwait, South Africa and Ethiopia/Eritrea.

The spirit of ecumenism is at work in St. Columba's where faith, prayer and work for justice moves us to maturity in Christ.

Bill Laurie, a former minister at St. Columba's Church, now ministers in Westbank, B.C., and is a member of the Conference Inter-church/Inter-faith Committee.

GOODWILL IN SHARED MINISTRY

High Level (Alberta) Ecumenical

by David Wood

...the goodwill of people from each denomination seemed to always overcome problems like these.

During my work with a shared ministry in High Level, Alberta, I discovered the importance of goodwill in keeping the interdenominational relationship alive. I had come from a United Church background, and I had believed that United Church people could work with any denomination. I was shocked to discover that at times United Church people could be the biggest barriers to shared ministry.

At one meeting of my presbytery, there was a great debate about whether we should continue sharing in ministry with a denomination which wouldn't allow United Church ministers to preside at their eucharist. The debate was rancorous and hostile. I was left wondering: if the United Church couldn't work with other denominations, who could?

But the goodwill of people from each denomination seemed to always overcome problems like these. On certain Sundays, the Lutheran pastor-pilot would fly myself and the Anglican priest to Rainbow Lake to provide an ecumenical service. There was no competition about who did what and we worked well together.

On one of these trips we had to fly home in a blinding snowstorm. We flew in a tiny Cessna 185, the pastor-pilot in the left seat, me in the right, and the Anglican priest behind. I was assured by the pilot's confidence, but my confidence failed when I asked why we were flying without lights. The pastor-pilot turned on the lights for a second. We were blinded by a solid wall of snow falling in front of us. I gripped my seat a little harder.

Finally we were able to find the High Level airport. The pastor-pilot's ability with instrument flying had saved us again. We landed safely.

After we got out of the airplane, I turned to the priest. "Were you as scared as I was when the pilot turned on the lights?" I asked. "Not at all", she answered. "I had my eyes closed and I prayed all the way home." I realized it took both good flying and good praying to bring us home safely!

I learned many valuable lessons from the shared ministry in High Level. I learned how the faith of others differed from mine. I learned about some of the uniqueness of my own faith. I learned how I could be a better Christian. But, most of all, I learned about the importance of goodwill in Christian ministry.

David, who served in this shared ministry for several years, is presently minister at St. Andrew's United Church, Prince George, B.C.

WE ARE SURVIVORS

Campbell-Stone United Church, Calgary, Alberta

submitted by Judy Egli

We are survivors, and every stone that blocks our path, we as a whole congregation... will roll it away.

Campbell-Stone United Church is a congregation of The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ working in a shared ministry with The United Church of Canada. The name "Campbell-Stone" derives from The Christian Church in the United States whose followers in the 1800's were called the "Campbellites".

In Calgary during the Spring of 1972, a group of approximately 25 people were meeting in a private home in the southwest part of the City to form a new Congregation of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. At this meeting were members of the United Church of Canada who were also interested in starting a congregation in the same area. It seemed that both denominations were making pastoral calls in the community, both had similar motivations and ideas, and both felt they could work together. The two groups became one church.

The church was incorporated as a congregation and its constitution was legally approved. However, it wasn't until 1989 that Campbell-Stone United Church became an ecumenical congregation of the United Church of Canada and The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ.

Over the years we have had our dreams. We hope for a building,

full-time ministry, lots of money in the bank, new members coming to our doors. We don't have any of the items mentioned. What we have is a "Call to Serve". We also have spirit, friendship, determination, love, and laughter.

We are a congregation of about 60 families, the average age being around 40 years. Most of the long time members have accepted the babies of the congregation through baptism and have seen them as toddlers waddle to the front for a story during the worship service, have shared the stories of first days of school, heard the trials of teenagers and witnessed the joys of marriage vows. We have a family.

Of course, over the years, like many struggling congregations today, we have not been without the normal problems surrounding churches. However, we believe that we are survivors and Campbell-Stone United Church will survive.

In talking with many members of the congregation, what keeps us all together as a community of faith are the people. I know personally that I have never experienced in any other congregation the support system, the hugs, the caring attitude that is unconditionally given from the members of this church. Over the past few years, we actually thought we had no choice at times except to close our doors for good; however, at every Annual Meeting held in February, the vote is always NO. The main reason always comes back to the feeling that we are a family, we love each other, we support each other. What would we do if we folded? Our lives would never be the same again.

To get back to the story of ecumenical congregations, to tell you the truth, I don't even know which members are United and which are Disciples. We are one. The main difference, if one must point

out, is that we do celebrate Communion every Sunday; and in the Lord's Prayer we say "sins...sins against us" instead of "trespasses". And youth and adults of the Disciples' tradition are baptized "by immersion". Coming from a United Church background myself, I can live with these minor changes and actually look forward to "breaking bread" together every Sunday.

So here we are, still surviving after 22 years and enjoying our shared facilities with Hull Home - a Child and Family Services Centre. We are now much more visible in the community with signs, still employing part-time Ministry, still encouraging new members to try us out, and we are having fun in our faith journey. We are all growing daily in our spiritual journey and we are sharing this wonderful experience with each other.

Our main priority in 1994 is Outreach. We support both denominations in their Mission work, we work together on projects such as Guatemalan Refugees, the food bank, the Mustard Seed Church (for Street People), Operation Eyesight, Hull Child and Family Services, and we help in every way we can in our community. We also do fun things like 40th birthday parties, the men put on "souper" lunches, we gather together for movie nights, families enjoy a scary Halloween Haunted House, we even have co-ed pie making gatherings for fund raising - just about any event to get together and socialize, to hear our stories, and to get to know one another more than we did yesterday.

We have an official board, team committees, a women's group, men's group, youth group, Sunday School, Bible studies, and we are working on a Choir. We keep plugging our faithfully merry way - just like the Energizer Battery! We are survivors, and every stone that blocks our path, we as a whole congregation of Campbell-Stone United Church will roll it away.

If you are visiting Calgary, we wholeheartedly welcome and invite you to share our worship time together Sunday mornings at 10, or give our office a call to say "Hi"! We would love to hear from you, our sisters and brothers in shared ministry.

A UNIQUE SENSE OF GRACE

St. Paul's, Tumbler Ridge, B.C.

by Brent Neumann

It is the norm to have people singing in church with the distinct voices of Newfoundlanders, twangs found in Ontario, and the slight drawls associated with the West. Yet they all arrive in church with the one intent of worshipping together.

As I reflect on our shared ministry in Tumbler Ridge, I realize I feel very new to this kind of ministry. I started my ministry here at the end of April last year, so in many ways I am a newcomer. Be that as it may, I have found my own way of thinking things greatly challenged and changed in that short time.

Tumbler Ridge is a new community established early in 1983. It is a mining town with one industry. . . Coal. The town was created out of nothing. Much of the money came from foreign investment and government. The effort created a beautiful little community nestled in Grizzly Valley of the Rocky Mountains.

However, shaky world markets and rising debt loads on the governments have impacted communities like this one on a regular basis. People have come here with the hope of getting a stake which they could use somewhere else. No one is from here, except for the very young who have been born here in the last ten years. Transience has been the name of the game. It is not uncommon to have upwards of a hundred families move out in a summer, only to be replaced in the fall. Trying to build a community around these dynamics has always been difficult.

The parish of Tumbler Ridge was moulded around this very hardy group. They saw a need in the community and knew that they needed a church family that could help people through the hard times. They also knew that few denominations could make it on their own: a shared ministry was the obvious answer. They brought together four denominations: Presbyterian, Anglican, United, and Lutheran which gave the natural formation of our name - St. Paul's. There are a few families still here from its formative years, but most have moved on.

As with the town, this parish continues to attract a few new members each fall as new people arrive in the community. The problem has always been that of trying to maintain a sense of cohesiveness around these dynamics. Yet with all of this said, there is something here that excites the imagination and speaks about the gospel at a very profound level. There is a solidness in the people here that gives this community strength to survive. Yet there is also a gentleness and warmth that come from people who have had to endure much unsettledness in life.

What surprised more than anything was the discovery of how Anglican I am. I have done most of my ministry in hospitals where I was expected to minister to all walks of faith. Yet when I reflect on that, I am aware that I was never asked to examine my own personal worship style. When it came time to design worship services for this congregation, I asked them what they wanted. The reply I received was: "do whatever you want and we will tell you what we like and don't like". Not much guidance to a man used to a book where everything is laid out for him. Discovering when people stand and sit, what they like to sing or how the last minister did things were all part of the challenge. I thought I was such a non-traditional. We have done a lot of laughing over this in the last few months.

The unexpected part of a community such as this is the diversity of backgrounds of people who are here. It is the norm to have people singing in church with the distinct voices of Newfoundlanders, twangs found in Ontario, and the slight drawls associated with the West. Yet they all arrive in church with the one intent of worshipping together. There is a freshness and freedom that comes in worshipping in this kind of community.

What I find here is that I am asked to live the gospel at a very deep level. I am never guaranteed that I will have a job next month, let alone next year. I work in a community that could easily be bulldozed into the ground in a few years. I work with people who may be gone in a few months. I am asked to love and care for people I may never see again - all the time being profoundly aware of that call "Trust in Me".

We travel into Tumbler Ridge every Sunday morning and I am out there one or two times a week. I work part time in Dawson. Yet I find that Tumbler has become part of me. My family looks forward to going out there every week as much as I do. It is a place that confronts much of what I came to expect as normal while at the same time fills me with a sense of grace that few other communities could offer. What more could be said.

Brent is an Anglican order of ministry person serving the Tumbler Ridge congregation.

SHARED MINISTRY RESPONDS TO RURAL REALITIES

Turtle River (Saskatchewan) Parish

by Donald Skinner

Turtle River Parish, from the outset, was guided by the concern of how best to provide ministry within the realities of rural Saskatchewan.

In the mid to late 60's, discussions took place in the Turtle River area of north-west Saskatchewan concerning the feasibility of some kind of Shared Ministry. At the time there was a variety of Anglican Parishes and United Church Congregations, some of which had already gone through various forms of re-organization within their respective denominations. Their motivation for change was a combination of concerns for the provision of effective ministry together with concerns of financial viability.

Eventually there were six communities which saw their way clear to enter into a new ecumenical entity which began in January of 1970 and took the name of Turtle River Parish. The communities involved and the founding congregations were as follows:

Spruce Lake - St. Faith's Anglican Church, Spruce Lake United
Turtleford - Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Turtleford United
Livelong - St. John's Anglican Church
Mervin - Mervin United Church
Edam - Trinity United Church
Meota - Meota United Church

In each of these communities a fully integrated, single congregation was formed. Where two properties existed, they

were used in a variety of alternating patterns. In 1985-1986, the Parish was formally joined by St. Mary's Anglican Church in Meota, again with an intergrated congregation the pattern. Each congregation is governed by a Board, and the Parish is overseen by a Parish Council. Other active Parish committees include a Parish Life and Work Committee, and a Ministry and Personnel Committee. The joining together of local congregations had the immediate and continuing effect of making new groups and activities feasible, such as was the case, for example, with the creation of new women's groups shortly after the formation of the Parish.

The Parish's basic outlook includes the guiding principle that ministry is the work of all of the people. As part of that ministry there have been between two and three members on the Clergy Team, always with a minimum of one Anglican and one United Church representative. Team members have included ordained clergy as well as a variety of Trained Lay Ministers. Each member of the clergy team is involved in the worship and ministry of all of the congregations.

Over the years, worship evolved into an alternating pattern of Anglican and United Church worship, depending on the denomination of the person leading it. There is weekly worship in each of the congregations. Part of the Parish's on-going worship life are two Parish-wide services which are held each year, often with specially invited guests from beyond the Parish. One of the major benefits of the creation of the Parish has been an increase in understanding and acceptance of differing ideas and traditions.

Throughout the life of the Parish, there has been a strong tradition of lay leadership, both in the governance of the Parish, and in the

leadership of worship when this has been necessary. There are a total of eight women's groups meeting regularly to provide fellowship for one another and support to the congregations. Mid-week bible studies have been a regular feature of a number of the congregations, as have been a variety of forms of Christian Education for children.

In the mid-80's the Mervin congregation took initiative and built a new church structure. Shortly afterward, the congregation in Turtleford went through some significant changes as well. The old Anglican property was sold, the old United Church building was moved, and a new church building was built as a joint effort. The Turtleford congregation assumed the new name of Good Shepherd United-Anglican Church.

The Parish will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 1995. The first decade of those years represented a time of adjustment and development for the Parish. The next decade represented a more or less stable time of continuing worship, congregational and parish ministry. With the 1990's, however, due to decreases in population, new challenges have presented themselves. As of the beginning of 1994, the congregation in Spruce Lake has decided to cease regular worship services there and the Parish, consequently, is entering a time of adjustment to these changes. Some of the questions include how best to continue effective ministry in changed circumstances, together with the ever present concern of financial support.

Turtle River Parish, from the outset, was guided by the concern of how best to provide ministry within the realities of rural Saskatchewan. There have been many changes over the years, all of them met with insight and courage. The commitment within all

of the congregations to work together for ministry provides a strong promise of continuing life for the Parish well into the future.

Donald Skinner is a clergy team member of the Turtle River Parish.

OUTREACH MORE IMPORTANT THAN A BUILDING

Pinawa (Manitoba) Christian Fellowship

by Harvie Barker

...they have chosen to spend their resources on Outreach projects rather than on a building for themselves.

In early November, 1993, I had the privilege of attending a Special Service marking the 30th Anniversary of a unique Shared Ministry congregation in Pinawa, Manitoba. Not only was the congregation celebrating 30 years of life together. The congregation represents the co-operation of 5 denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Mennonite, Presbyterian, and United) whose members have worshiped and worked together for three decades.

For 30 years they have continued to meet in an elementary school gymnasium which is transformed into a worshipful setting each Sunday morning. They have chosen not to construct a church building, arguing that they prefer to direct their financial resources toward other projects - such as support to the Mission Budget of each of the 5 participating denominations, as well as other outreach projects.

Following the worship service at which the Rt. Rev. Stanley McKay (Moderator of the United Church of Canada) delivered an Anniversary message, there was a Luncheon held. During that time, several long-time members reflected on their life together. What stood out in my mind was the number of Outreach

projects undertaken and financed over the years - in part, because they did not have the burden of a church buildings' expense. They had yearly contributed to the Mission Budget of the participating denominations. Early in their history, several members travelled several hundred miles north, part way by canoe, to an isolated village where they helped residents construct a church building. Some of those involved were professional people working at the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment, and their expertise helped in this project. For at least 10 years, the congregation engaged in a friendship exchange program with young people and adults of Little Grand Rapids - an aboriginal community of about 300 people located 250 kilometers to the north. Each summer, a group from Pinawa would travel to Little Grand Rapids, and later the same summer, a group from Little Grand Rapids would make a return visit. This project - which was designed to promote understanding between the two groups - saw students attend high school and be billeted with families in Pinawa. Prior to that time, many students were sent to Winnipeg to complete or continue their education, and they often found it difficult to adjust to life in a large city. Pinawa, with its population of 2,500, was a place they could continue their education with students and adults they had already met.

The congregation's outreach was not limited to projects beyond the community. Some members were involved in getting established a much needed Day Care Centre - proving both physical and financial help.

It was a privilege to be a part of the celebrations for this Shared Ministry which has continue to live and work in harmony for such a long time, and to realize that they have chosen to spend their resources on Outreach projects rather than on a building for themselves.

SHARED MINISTRY WITH AN INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR

The International (Saskatchewan and North Dakota)

Pastoral Charge

by Kay Wilson

Trinity United Church, Bienfait, Saskatchewan
Knox United Church, North Portal, Saskatchewan
First Presbyterian Church, Portal, North Dakota

We are privileged to worship in this "hands across the border" setting. Together, in shared ministry, we are able to function financially.

It was with great interest that I read the Sampler booklet of stories and reflections on shared ministry congregations across Canada. But, there was much more than interest: there was a tremendous admiration for those ministers and lay people - ordinary people like me - who dreamed and built and persevered until a shared ministry became a reality. It must have been difficult sometimes for even the most diplomatic and tactful of clergy; difficult too, for congregations who had to open up a little, to learn the traditions and the liturgy of the partnering church, and to become a little less protective of their own. In achieving shared ministry, we must surely be one step closer to the unity God would want for us.

Our story is somewhat different from those I read about, and yet it has the same reason to be - necessity born of financial stress.

By 1964, it was patently obvious that some of our small congregations in the area were doomed to disappear. There was no longer enough money to support each church. Our short grass culture in the southern prairie was undergoing the change that seemed endemic within the larger church. Fewer people were coming to worship on Sunday, and the coffers were strained.

After many meetings (an oversimplification of the work actually done), the International Pastoral Charge was born. It embraced the Presbyterian congregation at Flaxton, North Dakota; the Presbyterian congregation at Portal, North Dakota; and, on the Canadian side, United Church congregations at Black Diamond and Bienfait, Saskatchewan. The Black Diamond congregation was the last of several rural preaching points in the area. In an earlier day, services had been held in several rural schools, and the village of Roche Percee had, at one time, a thriving congregation.

But, times were changing, and the coal mine community at Black Diamond ceased to exist. This left Flaxton and Portal in North Dakota, and North Portal and Bienfait in Saskatchewan, to share in the establishment and arrangement of the International Pastoral Charge. We believe this to be the first of its kind in Canada.

It was twenty-eight years ago, but the Rev. Wes Warren, the United Church minister at the time, will not totally forget the headaches and frustrations of the unification. Loved and respected by all, Wes was the man for the task. In 1990, when we celebrated our first twenty-five years together, Wes Warren and several others who had preached here since 1965, came to share in what was a joyous thanksgiving and celebration.

In the early stages of the shared ministry, the minister was expected to preach four times daily at the above mentioned

churches. After some time, the Portal and North Portal congregations combined further to have one service on Sunday - one month on the American side and one month on the Canadian side. Since that time, the Flaxton congregation has been forced to close for lack of members. The cost of operations has been divided among the three remaining congregations. The percentage allotments through the years have varied somewhat. If one congregation finds itself strapped, the other two "pick up the slack" until the congregation that was in trouble is once again able to carry its share of the financial assessment.

I reflect upon all this from my seat at the church organ. I played regularly at the Bienfait service, usually from *Songs for a Gospel People* or the red *Hymn Book*. Once in a while, I play at the "other" service in North Portal, or in Portal, N.D., depending on what month it is. On the south side, I use the Presbyterian *Hymnal* - not unlike ours, a rich collection of good hymns. I have to keep those numbers correct. It is appropriate, I have found, to play the same hymn as the congregation is going to sing!

Our Psalm readings differ from those in the Presbyterian Church. No problem there. I would trade with them any day - their's being more melodic and somehow satisfying. But, when we repeat the Lord's Prayer, I find that, time and again, I use the word "trespor". You see, in Canada and in the United Church, we say: "Forgive us our trespasses...." In the United States and in the Presbyterian Church, we say: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." From years of habit, I automatically start to say "trespass"; then, with some slight embarrassment, switch to "debtor". It doesn't always come out well.

Back in 1965, the decision was made to hire American and Canadian ministers alternately. The theory was right, but in actual

practice, it was not possible. We have had more than one Canadian minister, and more than one American minister, depending on availability. A few years ago, we were unable to find a minister at all. The entire year was spent with lay supply. We managed very well, but knew by the end of the year that we really needed a minister of our own. Each minister brings his or her unique character and experience to a pastoral charge, and we in the congregation have had our lives enriched by the presence of both American and Canadian preachers in the pulpit.

There is no wall dividing our countryside from the countryside that is in the United States. There is no language barrier. We have much in common. We are all prairie people. We worry about the same things: our families, our crops, our world neighbors. The Canadian meets the American at the door after church and says, "Great day, eh?" And the American replies, "You bet! That was quite a rain, huh!"

From my seat on the organ bench, I would say that only the "ehs" and the "hubs" tell us apart. We are privileged to worship in this "hands across the border" setting. Together, in shared ministry, we are able to function financially. We learn from each other. We enjoy the fellowship, and feel the strength that comes from our unity. The shared ministry has been successful here on the prairies.

Kay is the Organist and Church Board Secretary of the Bienfait congregation, as well as having regular contact with the other two congregations.

A UNIQUE SHARED MINISTRY

Logan Lake (B.C.) Community Church

by John F. Hoekstra

"... members and adherents of the fellowship are very much aware of the differences in worship, but they enjoy those experiences as they celebrate their common faith from Sunday to Sunday."

The Logan Lake Community Church is jointly owned by the Roman Catholic Church and the Logan Lake Christian Fellowship Society - an independent organization, not connected with any one denomination. The Community Church has a joint Roman Catholic and Fellowship Church Auxiliary, an Emergency Assistance Committee, and a Church Management Committee.

The Fellowship is Inter-denominational and holds regular Sunday worship services, maintains a Sunday School (using the *Whole People of God* curriculum), holds Bible Study meetings, has a Ladies Guild, and expects the serving clergy to do some pastoral visitation.

The regular Sunday services are conducted by an Anglican priest (who resides in Logan Lake), a Lutheran minister who comes from Vernon, myself as the United Church minister who lives in Kamloops. On the fourth Sunday, there is a non-denominational service which is presently conducted by an Anglican deaconess. When there are five Sundays in a month, usually a Salvation Army officer is asked to conduct the service.

Members of the Fellowship are encouraged to maintain

their membership in their own denomination, since the Fellowship does not issue transfers. In 1993, the Kamloops-Okanagan Presbytery decided to have to have the United Church members under its wings - a situation not covered by the (United Church) Manual but a way of keeping a Roll of memberships.

Although the work I do is limited to one Sunday and one week-day every month, it is a rewarding experience. I am expected to conduct a "United Church" service, while those from other participating denominations follow the liturgy of their own tradition. The worshippers are of a mixed variety every Sunday, and within the Fellowship, denominational differences are not important. The members and adherents are very much aware of the variety of worship liturgies, but they seem to enjoy this weekly opportunity to share their common faith in worship from Sunday to Sunday.

In a small town like Logan Lake, the Community Church is a living example of Christian Unity - not just in the sharing in worship of members from several Protestant denominations, but in sharing a facility with their Roman Catholic brothers and sisters.

John F. Hoekstra is a retired United Church minister, and he resides in Kamloops, B.C.

POWER STRUGGLES IN SHARED MINISTRY

by Christopher J.L. Lind

Power struggles are real but not insurmountable. We can deal with them if we don't make them central. The point of the exercise is faithful discipleship.

In January of 1993 I attended my first conference on shared ministry. I was there as a representative of St. Andrew's Theological College in Saskatoon and was asked to share some reflections on the conference, which I have included here.

During the conference I had the mixed blessing of renewing acquaintances with two Lutheran ministers who had taken one of my courses several years earlier. I say "mixed blessing" because while they are each fine people and accomplished ministers, the meeting reminded me (and them) of one of the most painfully conflicted experiences of my teaching career.

St. Andrew's is a United Church College in a cooperative relationship with the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad (Anglican) and the Lutheran Theological Seminary. One year, because of sabbaticals and other staffing arrangements, I taught an Introductory Christian Ethics course to fifty students divided among the three denominations. Actually, there were also some Pentecostal students enrolled as well.

For my part, I attempted to chart a middle course through the denominational shoals but I ended up on the Great Barrier Reef. I chose a text authored by a Lutheran and tried to emphasize dialogue and an understanding of difference. By the end of the term, when we discussed abortion as an issue in Christian Ethics, I thought I would have to call the police. My tolerance of difference was understood by my female United Church students to be a tolerance of women's oppression. The male Lutheran and Pentecostal students (some of whom were active in Campus Crusade for Christ) interpreted this same attitude of tolerance of difference as a rejection of the Christian faith. Only the Anglicans were appreciative of this "middle way" but expected me to end the conflict authoritatively by declaring which position was the right one.

The conversations in Winnipeg were enlightening in one specific aspect. I learned there that the Lutheran students had been alienated after the first assignment when they received grades 10% lower than they were used to. Not knowing that all students in the class received low grades on that assignment, they interpreted the evaluations as the result of denominational prejudice and settled in for a battle. I knew that the class felt like a power struggle, but until then I didn't know what had precipitated it. While many people at the Winnipeg conference had wonderful and inspiring stories to share, I also discerned an undercurrent of conflict that told me that struggles for power were the unspoken dark side of shared ministry.

There are two ways in which I share in the experiences of shared ministry, neither of them common. In the first place, I am an Anglican layman serving in a teaching ministry in a United Church College. In this way I share the double identity typical of

shared ministries. I must also acknowledge that the openness shown by the United Church in hiring staff from other denominations is tempered by the knowledge that the last two Anglicans hired by St. Andrew's were both eventually received into the U.C.C. This historical reality also illustrates the fear that shared ministries are merely preludes to shifts in denominational loyalties.

The second way in which I share the experience of shared ministry is also unusual, though more common. I am also a divorced father sharing custody of two wonderful children. I consider parenthood to be a vocation and ministry. In the activity of fathering I am doing God's work to the best of my ability. The context of this ministry is a relationship with the mother of these children that became so alienating that we divorced. It is a relationship so seriously conflicted that we wound up in the law courts more times than should be recounted in polite company.

What has this to do with shared ministry? Surely the tragedy of marriage breakdown shares nothing with the hope filled witness of two denominations sharing their ministry! Maybe, maybe not. If fathering is a ministry, parenting is a shared ministry. I share this ministry with someone I argue passionately with about all manner of things. Just as in the congregation and the classroom, in order to be both successful in my task and faithful in my vocation I need to focus on the ministry, not the conflict. Power struggles are a reality that I must negotiate and deal with but which I can not avoid if the ministry is to be done.

The power struggles arise because of history, because of miscommunication, because of distorted perceptions and because of forces we have not even learned to recognize yet. These are all the reasons power struggles emerge in any congregation. They

are also a part of any shared ministry. In conventional shared ministries we don't like to talk about them because this information might dampen enthusiasm for the project. We want to assume harmony because this represents the best possible image of ourselves.

The shared ministry of parenting in divorced families throws these images into sharp, ironic relief. Divorce battles and custody fights represent the worst possible aspect of ourselves - no less true but no more pleasant for all that. In this context our expectations are low. This is a project for which no one has any enthusiasm. It is surprising then, that parenting in these circumstances can be embraced not only as a necessary task but as a ministry that is shared. Yet it can and is by a surprising number of people.

If power struggles in one kind of shared ministry are a dirty little secret, shared ministry in other kinds of power struggles are a happy and surprising discovery - like a rainbow in a storm cloud. Yet they are two sides of the same event. Power struggles are real but not insurmountable. We can deal with them if we don't make them central. The point of the exercise is faithful discipleship. That's the reason all of us share ministry in so many different areas.

Dr. Lind is on the faculty of St. Andrew's Theological College in Saskatoon where he has served as Professor of Church and Society since 1985.

NEWNESS ARISES FROM COOPERATION AND GROWTH

Gold River Pastoral Charge

by G. Jennifer Hansen

Trust and faith in God have kept our church alive and lively.

"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28,NRSV). How true this verse is as St. Peter's and St. Paul's Ecumenical church works together each day to remain faithful to God'd call to be God's people.

Gold River is a village of 2,300 on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The economy relies on the logging and the pulp and paper industries. The parish began in 1966 as the logging camp was being turned into a permanent community with the advent of the pulp mill. An Anglican priest, Father David McKay, conducted weekly Sunday morning services. The congregation then, as now, was made up of Anglican, United Church, and various other denominations.

In April, 1968, the Anglican and the Roman Catholic communities formed a committee to plan and oversee the construction of a church building which would be home to both congregations. Separate buildings would have been preferred, however that was not financially feasible. Funding was provided by the Anglican Foundation and the new church building was dedicated in October, 1968. On May 28, 1994, that original mortgage will be burned as part of our twenty-five year

anniversary celebration at St. Peter's and St. Paul's, Gold River.

The backbone of local fundraising was the Women's Church Guild made up of individuals from both congregations. These faithful ladies equipped the church with carpet, dishes, etc. Today, the building is owned and operated by the St. Peter's and St. Paul's Church Society, comprised of members from both congregations. Its maintenance is funded by a modest monthly rental from each parish. The two communities of faith share the building and a common sanctuary.

The Anglican/United Church congregation worships at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, while our sister Roman Catholic congregation worships at 5:00 p.m. Back in 1968, and for many years after, the Anglican priest ventured to the town of Tahsis, 70 km. beyond Gold River, to minister to the Anglican portion of the United Church congregation there. The United Church minister conducted worship in Gold River on the same Sunday. This met the needs of the denominational traditions in the most viable way possible at that time.

The charge became totally ecumenical when, in 1981, it was decided to place the first United Church minister here in Gold River. It was anticipated that as each pastorate changed, the next incumbent would be of the alternate denomination. This was not to be. In 1992, Rev. Winston Stokes became only the second United Church minister to serve this charge.

Trust and faith in God have kept our church alive and lively. To meet the needs of our multiple traditions, a common Protestant liturgy has developed, with communion observed at least twice a month. As well, we have recently enhanced our ecumenical flexibility by adopting the *Whole People of God* curriculum. Each

week there is a pre-service sing song with an impromptu band of children assisting. Seventeen of our number are studying the two year Bethel Bible Series course. On Monday evenings, a small group meet for an hour of prayer in the sanctuary. In 1993, we co-sponsored a Lenten retreat with another North Island shared ministry.

Our path of faith and sharing in Gold River was not without its struggles, and it remains today an aid receiving charge, and without a resident Catholic priest. Ecumenism grew as joint worship services were held on occasion with our sister Roman Catholic congregation. These, coupled with invitations to worship together, ensure that all the major festivals of the Church year are covered for both parishes.

The past two years have seen a renewed awareness of the meaning of the words "work together" in Romans 8:28. For a year-and-a-half each Thursday evening, a time of Prayer and Praise was held with participation from all congregations in the community. This endeavor was laity directed and led.

We have a lively ecumenical fellowship. A group of men from the two parishes at St. Peter's and St. Paul's meet each Sunday morning at 8:00 o'clock to share breakfast and fellowship. The Anglican/United congregation organizes and leads a Christmas Carol Sing throughout the community prior to Christmas.

We feel very privileged and blessed in Gold River to share the ecumenical spirit and celebrate our uniqueness as a shared ministry. Our individual traditions are important. However, new and innovative traditions arise from cooperation and growth. Recently, for example, Gold River sponsored an Anglican Order of St. Luke Healing Mission. Three other United Church

ministers attended, and that catalyst has, in part, led to a renewal of United church interest in healing ministries across the presbytery.

We continue to look for ways to expand our ecumenical mission while continuing to love, laugh and cry together. We walk into the future confident in the knowledge that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is with us every step of the way.

G. Jennifer Hansen has served as People's Warden for St. Peter & St. Paul's Ecumenical Church in Gold River.

SHARED MINISTRY: A CHALLENGING OPTION TO CONSIDER

Naramata (B.C.) Community Church

by Sid Rowles

One of the possibilities...would be to move boldly to shared mission and ministry in existing marginal churches, and to move even more boldly to shared (perhaps among several denominations) mission and ministry in the new suburbs of our towns and cities.

About 26 years ago, there were Anglican and United Churches in Naramata, and they were having a hard time. Each, according to one report, was down to about seven worshippers. Everything was a struggle. It was a struggle to finance the churches, to maintain a Sunday School, to find a regular minister or priest to provide services. Now since this was the day of church union talks and a number of congregations were experimenting in Shared Ministry, the two congregations began to grow together. They began to have a shared Sunday Church School, shared meetings of the Women's groups, shared Board meetings, shared Worship services. At first, there was no commitment to continue any of these things, but gradually it became a pattern, and there was agreement to seek a shared minister and to go on with regular shared worship.

While one can trace the history, there was no decisive event when Naramata Community Church was born. In 1993, we observed the 25th Anniversary of Shared Ministry, but the date we were

marking was a bit blurred. And while we did ask one of the clergy, Anglican priest Doug Hodgkinson, to be a guest speaker - because he was the first 'shared minister' on a regular basis, and because his sympathetic and careful nurture had helped the cause - he was not the maker of the shared ministry. Many people, lay people and clergy, were the makers.

There were people who did not like what happened. From the beginning there were a few people - Anglican and United Church - who did not like co-operating. They exercised their option to worship in Penticton, sixteen kilometers away, or simply to stay at home. A few others were alienated a few years later when the United Church building, larger but probably in not as good a repair and more costly to heat and maintain, was sold. This resulted in the property of the congregation being the Anglican church and hall, still known as St. Peter's, but also known as Naramata Community Church. The United Church 'property' is a trust fund, maintained for future capital use, but with some of the income generated being used for operating expenses of the congregation and for the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada.

For most of the people, the shared congregation was a good decision. Worship has a more viable group, as has Sunday School and Women's groups. While financing a small congregation is never easy, it is easier than if there were two smaller congregations. And while it has not always been easy to find clergy to serve a 50% task, the job has alternated between United and Anglican clergy in a more or less regular pattern of four years for each denomination. Recently, the congregation moved to a 60% ministry pattern, and that seems manageable in terms of the work and the money - so long as it continues to be

possible to find someone who can give 60% to the task.

Now, I would like to say a word about denominational support for congregations like ours. At the outset - in the days when a union between the denominations (on a national level) seemed in the works - support was strong. With the more or less sudden cooling of union talks, there was more discouragement than encouragement of the work. Today, the denominations are basically supportive. We are recognized by Presbytery and by the Diocese and Bishop. In several ways, accomodation is made for our situation, and we don't feel neglected. On the other hand, we don't feel greatly encouraged by denominational attitudes. Quite frankly, cooperation between denominations does not seem to be at the top of anyone's agenda. Perhaps the denominations are in a somewhat defensive position, trying to maintain programs and finances in existing parishes and structures. But, for example, after quite a few years of the "Red" common Hymn Book, both Anglican and United Churches are at work on new denominational Hymn Books. That will be a very practical difficulty for us. It does not seem that in other small communities where congregations are struggling for ministry and for finances, that it occurs to anyone to promote more shared ministries. And while denominations do cooperate in a variety of coalitions around social issues, even there the commitment, as measured by financial support, is modest.

A national Shared Ministries event was held in Winnipeg in January of 1993, and a good deal of enthusiasm - as well as a good deal of frustration about the problems of cooperation without adequate denominational support, was expressed. Follow-up to the event has been very light - no doubt because no ongoing structure exists to follow up.

I think there are a good many people in the Naramata congregation, and in some other shared ministry congregations, who feel that they are enriched by the worship and spirituality of two traditions. One of the possibilities for our denominations to move out of the situation where they ever move to serving a smaller percentage of the overall Canadian population, would be to move boldly to shared mission and ministry in existing marginal churches, and to move even more boldly to shared (perhaps among several denominations) mission and ministry in the new suburbs of our towns and cities. Denominations that don't launch new missions and new congregations, don't grow, and don't offer much of their tradition or insight to the world.

This is, I believe, a time when we should be recognizing the several crises that are upon our nation and upon our planet. We do have some choices. One would be to cling to the traditions we value, and assume a defensive position on all fronts. Another would be to offer the insights of our tradition to others, and perhaps with more difficulty, hear with some care, and with some willingness to adapt the insights of the traditions of others. I believe our faith has a good deal to offer to a frightened and bleeding world. Jesus said that one must lose one's life in order to save it. Shared ministries are one modest beginning to losing, and saving our lives.

Sid Rowles is a long time supporter of Shared Ministries, and served for 17 years as Conference minister in Kamloops-Okanagan and Kootenay presbyteries.

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