RESOURCE ON RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR SIMPLIFIED PASTORAL RELATIONS (2008, 2006)

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DEMOGRAPHICS OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL REPORT

Theological Statement
Many within The United Church of Canada may have a sense of living in an earlier era. "The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread." (1 Samuel 3:1b) The recent decline in the number of persons entering the ministry may cause many to believe that these are indeed days when hearing "the word of the LORD" is rare. Rather than become dismayed over the infrequency of such calls, the Church has an opportunity to rejoice in the calls that are made, to support the Samuels of today in discerning their call to proclaim God's word, and to be contemporary Elis to explain the true nature of such calls and to encourage those who hear that voice to respond, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." As a Church, the options are open: to bemoan the loss of a previous time, when the call of the LORD was not so rare, or to decide how the United Church of Canada can best help those called to answer, "Yes!"

Recommendations
The Task Group on Demographics of Ministry Personnel recommends that:

1. The United Church of Canada take intentional steps to attract ministry personnel from current and future forecast under-represented demographic groups, namely:
    ➢ persons under the age of 35
    ➢ persons who come from racial minorities
    ➢ men

    The United Church of Canada must acknowledge that while the current cadre of ministry personnel give faithful service to the church, the profile of the current demographic does not position the denomination to provide the needed diversity of leadership for the future. There are significant groups who are under-represented in the present demographic and whose absence diminishes the ability of the church to embrace the call to mission the church has defined for the future.

2. The United Church of Canada continue to clarify its understanding of ministry and the categories of ministry within the church and communicate in clear language the particular gifts and responsibilities of each calling, so that those discerning a call to ministry as well as current ministry personnel and members and adherents of The United Church of Canada have greater understanding of the ministerial options available within the denomination, including the rationale for the existence of each distinct type of ministry personnel.

3. The United Church of Canada establish a national recruitment strategy and, through the responsible General Council Office working unit, staff and implement that strategy to:
    ➢ plan intentional programs that foster awareness of paid accountable ministry as a vocation that offers purpose, meaning and fulfillment
    ➢ develop strategies that connect with particular identified groups such as, young adults, racial minorities, and men
    ➢ foster a church culture of being a calling community
    ➢ develop ways of communicating the different categories of ministry in ways that connect with personal life experience, skills and gifts

4. Children, youth and young adult ministries and church camping be identified as priorities and that this recognition continue in order to foster the development of leadership skills of a new generation.

5. The candidacy processes be more accessible and be intentionally user-friendly for younger persons.

6. The Pension Plan take into account in its future planning the decreasing number of ministry personnel who will reach normal retirement age having served for thirty years or more and the Pension Plan manage its sustainability with different demographic assumptions than have been operative in the past.

    Future planning will need to include an exploration of a variety of factors, including contribution levels given the new realities of numbers of contributors to the fund and the shorter length of service forecast; the amount of time before contributions are considered vested; and the increasing number of ministry personnel members of the plan serving part-time. The Task Group further recommends that General Council Executive affirm that a sustainable Pension Plan for the United Church of Canada for both ministry personnel and lay employees is a matter of faithful management of resources.

7. The United Church of Canada address issues of retention, isolation and ministry personnel well-being by providing program resources to assist presbyteries in developing supportive peer communities for ministry personnel.

8. The United Church of Canada, through the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, develop and communicate to the wider church a transitional management plan to bridge the anticipated ministerial resources gap which will be facing the United Church due to the expected retirement of many currently-serving ministry personnel over the next ten years. This would be a short term plan to bridge the anticipated gap – not to enable the church to go on doing the same thing, but to allow the church to address the need for change and plan for its long-term leadership needs.

    This could include encouragement to retiring clergy to serve longer either in calls or appointments; greater encouragement to pastoral charges to consider being served by student supply appointments and to students to consider serving during their educational formation; strategies for encouraging retained clergy to consider re-entering active ministry; and strategies for actively recruiting ministry personnel through admissions.

9. The United Church of Canada, through the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, develop and communicate to the wider church a long term leadership management plan, based on its forecast long-term ministry leadership needs, following a review of the long-term need for its existing church buildings, the growth of part-time ministries which can place a particular financial hardship on its ministry personnel through reduced income, the current number of pastoral charges and the development of a clear understanding of what constitutes a viable pastoral charge/congregation/mission or community ministry, and the current policy that "as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral

Charge shall have a pastorate without interruption, and that, as far as reasonably possible, every effective member of the Order of Ministry shall have a Pastoral Charge" (Basis of Union 9.2). This long-term plan must address these issues in order to shape the future demographic and should be implemented beyond the short-term plan covering the next ten years.

10. While acknowledging there is a need to nurture mission and ministries that are responsive to God's call to the church in the current context, The United Church of Canada continue to articulate the call to ministry within the congregational setting as the primary need for paid, accountable ministerial leadership over the next decade.

11. The United Church of Canada through the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, along with staff of the appropriate General Council Office working unit(s), work cooperatively with theological colleges and related educational institutions to shape programs to determine what courses of instruction are required to educate the future ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada and which educational institution(s) can best provide that education, given the diversity of types of ministry personnel within the denomination and the work done to date on the "learning for leadership outcomes". Determining what level of education is essential to prepare individuals to serve as ministry personnel within The United Church also must co-relate to a clearer understanding of the categories of ministry personnel, the rationale for the existence of each of those categories, and the type of service offered by those serving in each of those categories (see recommendation #2).

12. The United Church of Canada obtain current demographic data on the members and adherents of its congregations (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) for the purpose of forecasting what the Church's future requirements will be for ministry personnel leadership and what the nature of the future church will be.

Background and Mandate

In 2007, the Executive of the General Council directed the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (the Permanent Committee) to implement a comprehensive study of the factors which had created the current demographic of ministry personnel. In response, on May 13, 2008, the Permanent Committee created a Task Group on Demographics of Ministry Personnel (the Task Group), which was populated through the nominations process along with one representative appointed by each of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services and the Permanent Committee, Programs for Mission and Ministry.

The Task Group was given the mandate to:

1. review the current demographic of ministry personnel;
2. identify factors that may have contributed to the creation of the current demographic of ministry personnel;
3. examine the impact the current demographic is having and will have over the next twenty (20) years on the life of the Church, particularly in the areas of congregational leadership,

      emerging challenges in maintenance of our congregations, and the management of the pension and insurance programs available to ministry personnel;

4. consider the findings of information gathered in view of current General Council programs and practices to:
   a. identify programs and practices that may be contributing to maintenance of the current demographic;
   b. identify programs and practices that may need to be initiated to ensure the future demographic of ministry personnel will meet the needs and resources of the Church; and,
   c. develop recommendations for actions to be taken with respect to the development of a demographic of ministry personnel that will meet the future needs and resources of the Church; and
5. prepare a final report for the consideration of the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services for presentation to the Executive of the General Council by June 1, 2010.

The mandate was subsequently extended by the Permanent Committee to September 30, 2010.

The Current Demographic

There are three demographic profiles that are of particular interest in understanding the strengths and weakness of the profile of ministry personnel that currently serve the denomination. They are age, gender and ethnicity. The age profile is relevant because it is an indicator of the church's sustainability in terms of ministry personnel supply to serve the current context and generation. The gender profile is of interest as it indicates the ability of the church to change its profile over time. In the past twenty years the number of women in active ministry has dramatically increased. The ethnic profile is becoming more of interest as there is recognition that in a multi-cultural context it is important to mirror that diversity in leadership. Each of these demographic profiles presents opportunities and challenges for the United Church of Canada.

The Task Group began its work by gathering information on the current ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada. [The term "ministry personnel" is defined in The Manual 2010. See Appendix A.] The Task Group focused its interest on the demographic factors of gender, age, category of ministry personnel, and urban/suburban/rural place of ministry for those in active service. Though demographic information on other factors such as languages spoken, ethnicity, marital/family status, highest level of education attained, and church membership history might have aided the work of the Task Group further, such data is not acquired from the denomination's ministry personnel and consistently recorded in its database within the General Council Office. The denomination may wish to consider if such information should be more diligently gathered in the future.

There are a number of other limitations on the demographic data available on the ministry personnel of the United Church. Firstly, data on those serving in Ethnic Ministries, Aboriginal Ministries, and Ministries in French cannot be identified as such and presented in distinct categories, due to their small numbers. Secondly, the data on those serving as Designated Lay Ministers tend to be quite fluid, since these are only included in the category of "ministry personnel" if they are serving in an appointment. Thirdly, demographic information available on

those serving in appointments as Ordained Supply, Candidate Supply, Student Supply, and Intern Supply is often limited.

More than 85% of ministry personnel serving in Pastoral Charges are members of the Order of Ministry (Ordained Ministers and Diaconal Ministers). For the members of the Order of Ministry, reliable data is available on their gender and age. Most of the data provided in this report will focus on those two key demographic factors.

Over the past few years, there has been much conversation about the age of ministry personnel serving in The United Church of Canada. The Age Distribution Chart attached [see Appendix B] reflects the age and gender demographics of five of the largest categories of ministry personnel serving in Pastoral Charges as of May 14, 2009, for those ministry personnel whose birth dates are entered in the database. The five largest categories of ministry personnel are: Ordained Ministers, Diaconal Ministers, Ordained Supply Ministers (those from other denominations in the United Church's admissions program), Presbytery Designated Lay Ministers, and Conference Designated Lay Ministers. Statistics available as of October 1, 2009 reflect that of the 4,451 total ministry personnel, 2,208 (or 49.6%) serve in Pastoral Charges. The rest are retired, "retained on the rolls", or serving in special ministries.

The attached Appendix C [see Appendix C-A and C-B] is charted data on the actual numbers of Ordained and Diaconal Ministers by age and gender. While the data on certain categories of ministry personnel is limited or absent from the database, the data on those in the Order of Ministry reveal that the average age of those in the 65 and under age group is relatively high: the average age of an Ordained Minister in that age group is 53.88 years and the average age of a Diaconal Minister in that age group is 53.66 years (based on data retrieved on April 15, 2010).

When defining the demographic of ministry personnel by gender, the numbers are well balanced in terms of the Order of Ministry. The April 15, 2010 data reflect that there were 1,101 (approximately 54%) male Ordained Ministers and 952 (approximately 46%) female Ordained Ministers. It is interesting to note that, of those aged 45 and under, 172 (approximately 56%) are female and 137 (approximately 44%) are male. When the Diaconal Minister numbers are added to the number of Ordained Ministers, the balance is almost 50/50, with 1,118 males and 1,112 females in the Order of Ministry. There has been noticeable growth in the number of females entering ordered ministry over the last few decades.

Of all ministry personnel serving within Pastoral Charges, over 75% are Ordained Ministers; almost 25% provide leadership from within the other categories of ministry personnel. In examining the categories of ministry [see Appendix D], the highest percentage of men serving as ministry personnel do so as Ordained Ministers (85%). In contrast, 66% of women serving as ministry personnel do so as Ordained Ministers. Women have significantly stronger percentages in most other categories, the exceptions being Ordained Supply and the Minister in Training Program. The Age Distribution Charts (Appendix B) also highlight the fact that the Diaconal Minister category and both Designated Lay Minister categories are female dominated in terms of numbers. In contrast, the Ordained Supply Minister category is male dominated in numbers.

The United Church of Canada has not been able to avoid the impact of urbanization across the country. Many rural areas have suffered major depopulation over the past number of years, and

in many cases the youth and young families have moved on to urban centres for education and work. Though the majority of the Canadian population lives in urban settings the United Church of Canada still has a significant percentage of preaching points in rural parts of the country. Appendix E reflects the categories of pastoral charges being served by our ministry personnel, based on gender and age factors.

Identification of Contributing Factors

It is hard to say definitively what has created the current demographic of ministry personnel within the United Church of Canada, but there are a number of factors which have worked together to contribute to the current demographic. These are not exclusive to The United Church of Canada. Studies by other denominations in North America reflect similar trends: more women in ministry, more mid-life individuals entering ministry, and fewer people under the age of 30 entering ministry.

American mainline denominations have been asking the question "Where are the younger clergy?" since the late 1990s. The patterns of age demographic visible within the United Church of Canada can be found in most North American mainline denominations. Roy Oswald of the Alban Institute, as early as 1993, wrote about it in "Finding Leaders for Tomorrow's Churches: The Growing Crisis in Clergy Recruitment". Since 2000 there have been a number of studies which have addressed the issue of clergy demographics and the impact on the denominational life. Among the studies and resources are:

> "Clergy Age Trends", A Lewis Centre Report, United Methodist Church, 2006
> "The Crisis of Younger Clergy", Lovett H. Weems, Abingdon, 2008
> "Will there be a Clergy Shortage?", Episcopal Church USA, 2002
> "Recruiting Young Clergy", Centre for Clergy Excellence, Texas, 2007
> "Report on Clergy Recruitment and Retention", Presbyterian Church USA, 2004
> "God's Potters", Jackson Carroll, Eerdmans Publishing, 2006
> "Who Shall Lead Them", Larry Witham, Oxford University Press, 2005

The common thread is the reality that those serving in ministry are, on average, an older group than a generation ago. Many North American churches have suffered a serious and sustained decline in the number and percentages of clergy under the age of 35. Denominations share the dilemma of attracting young clergy with other denominations. A United Methodist Church study places The United Church of Canada 12th out of 13 North American denominations in terms of the percentage of clergy under the age of 35, citing 2.62% as the operative number or 59 clergy [see Appendix F]. This statistic seems to be consistent with the demographical statistics generated for this study. It is worth noting that, while the United Church of Canada has experienced a more dramatic decrease in the recruitment of younger clergy, the denomination has also lagged behind other North American mainline churches in identifying the concern.

Given that the trends within The United Church of Canada are consistent with those of other North American mainline denominations, it is unreasonable to speculate that there is some particular aspect of the denomination's theological direction or its practices over the past 20 years which has particularly impacted the development of its current demographic.

The age of the ministry personnel of The United Church is a key demographic factor. There are a few identifiable trends which have contributed to the current demographic. As noted in Appendix G, there has been an upward trend in the average age at which people are entering the ministry. No longer are the faces of new ministers predominantly those of young adults in their mid- to late-twenties.

To get beneath the numbers, the following factors are seen to have had a significant impact on the age factor of the demographic:

➢ The aging of the general population, including those who would identify themselves with The United Church of Canada
➢ Changing cultural and social perceptions of "the Church"
➢ Lengthier vocational training requirements
➢ Gender-based perception changes – now a more attractive vocation for females who may have begun their working lives in another line of work
➢ Wider diversity in the categories of ministry, thus now attracting some to new types of ministry not previously available to them
➢ New opportunities for leadership through the DLM program (Lay Pastoral Minister programs were at one time restricted to those over the age of 40)
➢ The decline in church attendance, creating a smaller pool of potential ministry personnel, especially with fewer young people being active in church life
➢ The ending of nation-wide programs for children, youth, and young adults which had served in part to develop faith-based, church-centred leadership skills (i.e. Explorers, CGIT, Tyros, Sigma-C, TuXis, Hi-C, YPU)
➢ Dwindling participation by youth and young adults in congregational and denominational programs that are offered
➢ Greater career choices now available to young people and more competition and aggressive marketing among potential "employers" to attract these young people
➢ The perceptions, and reality, of the compensation packages offered to ministry personnel (including the salary and the provision of a manse)
➢ The perceptions, and reality, of the church (as a place of work) and what it means to be and serve as a minister
➢ The secularization of society and the Church as an institution – the loss of the sense of something "holy"
➢ Church structures and practices which have encouraged older, more life-experienced leadership – leadership attracts "mirrored leadership": when young adults do not experience young adult ministers, there is less connection to ministry
➢ Issues related to the candidacy process, initial settlement requirements, and ministry within the pastoral charge context
➢ Recognition of the rural demographic – there are many rural congregations, but not a significant number of youth in those congregations; many candidates now come from urban contexts and are less willing to live and serve in rural settings
➢ Ever increasing educational costs – they present a greater hurdle for those who have not worked to save up to cover the costs of completing the required educational programs for ministry and/or they result in new ministry personnel being faced with small incomes and large student loan debts to repay

> ➢ Congregations and ministry personnel now much less proactive in supporting the discernment of a call to ministry in younger persons – no existing "culture of call or discipleship" in many congregations
> ➢ The impact of the media on the image of the wider Christian Church
> ➢ The harm done to the Christian Church through abuse done by clergy (i.e. sexual abuse and the failure on the part of some church leaders to respond to the abuse appropriately) – fewer individuals want to be included in the same vocation as abusers
> ➢ The current view that a career/vocational path is no longer a "life-long commitment"

Gender is also a key demographic factor. As is also evidenced in Appendix G, over the last few years the number of women coming to serve the church has outnumbered the men. In 2010 there are 42 new Ordered Ministry Personnel, two thirds are female and one third are male. There has been a significant trend of more women being trained to serve the church and entering its ministry over the past couple of decades. Some factors identified as related to this change are:

> ➢ When it existed, the work of the Women's Desk at the General Council Office
> ➢ Changes in the role of "the minister" – less authoritative, more nurturing
> ➢ The loss of societal status afforded to the clergy
> ➢ The perception of ministry no longer connecting with what are perceived to be traditional male-leadership roles
> ➢ Opportunities for more women to become involved as a late career choice or second career option – to respond to a call years after it was first heard

With the increasing use of Designated Lay Ministers, there has been an obvious jump in terms of overall numbers of those members of the laity who have been recognized by Conference or appointed by Presbytery to serve in ministry positions. This may be due in part to:

> ➢ Greater accessibility of lay leadership training
> ➢ The move of more Ordered Ministry Personnel (particularly men) to urban locations resulting in a shortfall of Ordered Ministry Personnel serving in rural contexts
> ➢ A desire for local ministry leadership to sustain a long-term pastoral relationship in a rural context
> ➢ Second career options for those who are unable or unwilling to participate in a residential degree program
> ➢ The absence of a requirement to accept initial transfer and settlement
> ➢ The opportunity for immediate appointment/employment in ministry
> ➢ The United Church's increasing recognition of the importance of lay leadership, particularly to address the shortage of Ordered Ministry Personnel
> ➢ The church's policies reflecting denominational ambivalence about attributing status to any one form of ministry

The current demographic of the ministry personnel has also been impacted by admissions and re-admissions to the ranks of the United Church's ministry personnel. This, no doubt, has increased the ethnic diversity of the church's ministerial leadership, although to what extent is impossible to determine, given the lack of statistical data on the ethnicity of ministry personnel. However, new admissions and re-admissions do have an impact on the gender and age statistics [see

Appendix H]. The significant numbers of ministry personnel being admitted or re-admitted to the Order of Ministry within the United Church of Canada may be due in part to:

➢ Church polity which invites inclusion and participation of persons called to ministry regardless of gender, family status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, etc.
➢ Conflict and persecution within other countries which threatens ministry personnel serving in those countries
➢ Opportunities within the United Church to serve in ethnic ministries in another country than one's country of birth
➢ A less rigid theology than is offered by some other denominations and an openness to a variety expressions of faith, both individually and congregationally
➢ Opportunities to serve in communities which are eager to welcome ministry personnel

As has been noted, there has been a shift in the United Church of Canada and to a greater extent in society as a whole towards a more urbanized lifestyle. For many considering ministry in the United Church, the probability of serving a rural (often multi-point) pastoral charge is not ideal and this has impacted inquirers' willingness to pursue their call to ministry within The United Church. The factors influencing this urban/rural dichotomy include:

➢ Ministry Personnel's mobility is often limited by a desire not to disrupt or impact adversely their spouse's career, particularly if the spouse is already established in a particular work location, and their children, particularly if they are school-aged
➢ The increasing number of rural pastoral charges which have become part-time ministries, thus offering less income on which to live
➢ Geographic spread and the time and distance requirements for travel to serve within a rural pastoral charge and also to take time away from the pastoral charge
➢ Issues of isolation – from their "home" communities, extended family, and friends
➢ Perception/Reality of "palliative" congregations – a greater sense that as urbanization increases, those serving rural pastoral charges are there to keep the church open until the last member dies
➢ Candidates coming from urban context face a cultural shock and often hold the perceptions that rural means traditional, outdated, conservative, etc.

Other Factors, Influencing Programs and Practices
With the declining numbers of people participating in congregational life and contributing, through their time and treasure, to the Church, many pastoral charges no longer require, and can no longer afford, the services of full-time ministry personnel. So the ever expanding existence of part-time ministries is impacting the demographics of The United Church's ministry personnel. In April 2010, there were 603 ministry personnel within The United Church who were serving in part-time ministries (anything from two hours to 37 hours per week). At least 35 of those ministry personnel served concurrently in two or more part-time ministries. Retired supply ministers made up 136 of the 603. The increase in the number of part-time ministries makes the vocation of ministry more attractive to older individuals (many receiving pension income as a result of a previous career) and less attractive to younger individuals just starting out, often with significant debt loads.

Ministry personnel are also retiring with fewer years of service. In 2007, 76 ministry personnel retired after having completed a combined 1,945 years of service – an average of 25.6 years of service each. The average age at retirement was 63.6 years. In comparison, in 1990, 96 ministry personnel had retired after a combined 3,110 total years of service – an average of 32.4 years of service each. Further information on retirements can be found at Appendix I. A lower retirement age results in more potential years of receiving pension benefits.

As more and more individuals enter the ministry of The United Church later in life than was the practice earlier in the Church's history, a significant demographic has developed. The Church can no longer hold the expectation that older ministry personnel have more years of service and experience in the vocation of ministry than do younger ministry personnel [see Appendix J]. In actual fact, of the members of the Order of Ministry, 54.4% of active members have less than ten years of service. This also tends to lower the average years of service completed at the time of retirement, which in turn reduces the amount of the monthly pension benefit payable. However, some ministry personnel (though clearly in a minority) are choosing to defer receiving pension benefits in order to complete more years of service prior to retirement. The impact of this is to ensure a larger pension benefit payable on retirement while reducing the potential years available to receive that benefit.

Some pastoral charges have been unable to attract and retain ministry personnel to serve their congregations. As a result, these pastoral charges are now relying entirely on Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to provide leadership on an ongoing basis, rather than for limited and periodic service which was the original purpose behind the creation of the category of Licensed Lay Worship Leader. While LLWLs do undergo a training program prior to their recognition by their own Presbytery, they are not "ministry personnel" as that term is defined within The United Church of Canada. As a result, several pastoral charges are now being "served" by persons not qualified as ministry personnel.

The Impact of the Current Demographic Now and Through the Next Twenty Years
The current demographic of ministry personnel causes the Church to face some serious issues:

> ➢ Many ministry personnel choose to retire with less years of service. Fewer individuals are entering the ministry; thus fewer individuals will be contributing to the pension plan. Therefore ensuring the sustainability of the current pension plan becomes a priority
> ➢ There is increasing confusion about the role of a "Minister" – about what is the true meaning of ministry, whether there is an ongoing need for all the various categories of ministry, and if The United Church of Canada should continue to have an Order of Ministry, set apart through ordination or commissioning for service in the Church
> ➢ Where should the Church's ministry personnel serve – is the greatest need for ministerial leadership within pastoral charges or should the Church's ministerial resources serve predominately in other ministries
> ➢ There are currently fewer ministry personnel serving pastoral charges than there are pastoral charges. This calls into question the Church's ability to continue the policy that "as far as reasonably possible, every Pastoral Charge shall have a pastorate without interruption" (Basis of Union 9.2, The Manual 041)

> ➢ The current demographic does not position the denomination well to address the priorities of being an Intercultural church and to attract youth and young adults into a more active and involved role within The United Church of Canada
> ➢ The presence of younger ministry personnel enhances the "energy level" and innovation of the church
> ➢ There is a sense that The United Church of Canada has slipped, perhaps irreversibly, into "survival mode"
> ➢ While the increase of female ministry personnel has increased female leadership within the Church, there is a sense that increasingly males have withdrawn from participation in the Church's leadership

There is a lot of speculation involved in what the impact of the current demographic will have on the life of the church over the next 20 years. On October 1, 2009, there were 1,683 Ordained Ministers serving Pastoral Charges and 128 Diaconal Ministers serving Pastoral Charges. The data in Appendix C-A indicates that of the current members of the Order of Ministry, only 309 Ordained Ministers and 15 Diaconal Ministers will be age 65 or under in the year 2030. Appendix K documents some basic projecting around the decreasing numbers of congregations and pastoral charges. While it is anticipated that more of these pastoral charges will become part time ministries and others may close, it is anticipated that the rate of decline in the numbers of ministry personnel will exceed that of the rate of decline in Pastoral Charges, the most common context in which United Church ministry personnel serve.

The glaring fact evidenced in the graph is that, at the current rates, the number of new ministry personnel coming into service within the church will not equal the number who are leaving active ministry, mostly through retirement. Over the short term some of the gap may be covered by retired supply appointments; however that practice cannot be considered an acceptable long term solution. The church must develop new models of "doing ministry". Many models could be explored. For example one option might be to utilize order of ministry personnel as supervisors overseeing multiple pastoral charges served by lay leadership.

Over the next twenty years, if trends continue, far fewer active members will be contributing and more pensioners will be receiving benefits. It is anticipated that there could be a significant shortfall in the Church's pension plan and an adverse impact on its benefits programs. These are areas which need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of the plans.

Again, looking at the projections, with the smaller number of young ministry personnel, then the church as a whole will lose out on the experiences offered by those who have served the church for lengthy periods of time. And with it, might also be the loss of first hand memory of where the church has been called – a loss of the ecclesiastical "corporate knowledge" of ministry.
If the trends of the last number of years continue over the next 20 years, the Ministry Personnel of the United Church of Canada will be predominantly female, with the "average ministry personnel" being someone entering the vocation in their mid-forties, and expected to remain in ministry for 18-20 years.

Within the wider context of the church, the shifting demographics of ministry personnel mean that the United Church of Canada cannot wait 20 years to act; the Church has to make some difficult decisions about church structures and relationships now:

➢ Is it still viable to have one minister to serve each pastoral charge?
➢ Is the church too property-heavy and, if so, how can the Church assist congregations in going forward beyond buildings to a more mission-based, out-in-the-community presence?
➢ What is the commitment of the denominational structures (General Council, Conferences and Presbyteries) to the ongoing life and health of small congregations, pastoral charges, and rural communities?
➢ Does the Church's current four-court structure serve the work of the church and best support its ministry personnel?
➢ In light of the anticipated continuing decline in the numbers of new ministry personnel, is there a need or the ability to support all of the current theological schools across the country?

These are significant questions which the Church must struggle with as the number of active ministry personnel continues to decline.

Changes Needed
In light of the shifting age demographic of our Ministry Personnel, it is important to hold up some of the trends that have been noted at the congregational level. As shown in Appendix L, over the last 20 years there has been a steady decline in most denominational statistics, including: number of congregations, number of pastoral charges, number of serving ministry personnel, number of households under pastoral care, and number of financially supporting households. The statistics of the last five years show an ever sharper rate of decline.

It is hard to predict what the United Church of Canada will look like in 10 to 20 years, but without some major revival, it is reasonable to expect that the trends of the last twenty years will continue. Given the average age of retirement of ministry personnel is currently 63.6 years of age, it is reasonable to anticipate that the most of the ministry personnel reflected in the numbers of members of the Order of Ministry listed as aged 44 and over [see Appendix C-A] will not be included in the numbers of ministry personnel serving the United Church in 2030.

While demographic information on our congregations is not available (and such information would be beneficial when projecting the characteristics of The United Church of Canada of the future), many of our congregation members appear to be senior citizens, many of whom within 20 years will no longer be able to contribute to the life of their congregations. There are other issues which may impact the financial viability of congregations including: mandatory increases to clergy compensation, changes to the compensation requirements dealing with the provision of a manse or a housing allowance, changes to pension funding, and increasing building costs – both day to day and capital expenses.

The possibility of a divisive issue arising within the United Church of Canada also presents a challenge to the congregational health of the church. As some churches and pastoral charges close their doors, it will alleviate some of the stresses of the potential shortage of ministry personnel, but it does not necessarily offer a comfortable solution. Such closures will primarily, though not exclusively, be happening in rural areas.

The Task Group does not have the skills to go into great detail with regards to the question of pension and benefits, but given the increasing number of retirees and the age of those who have been coming into ministry, it would appear that there will need to be significant reviews to both the Pension and Benefits program, unless there is a surge of new recruitment to offset the losses. The Task Group has been advised that, for the United Church's pension plan to "break even" in terms of contributions made and benefits received, a contributor must begin making contributions before reaching age 40. Given the average age of ministry personnel on entry into the pension plan and the plan's current contribution levels, the Church is faced with the difficult position of having to rely on the investment performance of the pension funds in order to address the shortfall in terms of contributions. This is not considered to be sustainable in the long-term. It is a concern that is foreseen, and thus a need to be referred to others with more skill and knowledge of the pension system.

Long Term Disability (LTD) is another area of some concern. The Task Group does not have data on the cause for ministry personnel being on LTD program. In order to respect the privacy of those who are on LTD and maintain the confidentiality of the program, the availability of statistics is limited. However it is estimated that about 6-8% of ministry personnel are, at any one time, on LTD leave. The responsible Program Coordinator for the LTD program advised the Task Group that, when compared to similar groups, these figures are on the high side. It signifies that the United Church may need to explore further ways to assist its ministry personnel to ensure greater availability of ministry personnel to continue in service.

Many of the Church's existing programs and practices contributing to the current demographic are offering good support. These include:

- The All Native Circle Conference's practice of raising leadership from within
- The current Admissions System – for bringing in additional ministry personnel from other denominations, especially ethnic ministers, adding to the numbers and the diversity of the Church's ministry personnel
- The existence at the General Council Office of two positions dedicated to Children's/Youth/Young Adult Ministries
- The existence of the Ministries In French Unit
- The growth and development of the Designated Lay Ministry Program
- The development of the Summer Distance (In Ministry) Program for candidates leading to ordination

Yet much remains to be done. The following existing policies, programs and practices should be revised to reach a different (i.e. younger, more ethnically diverse, male) demographic and address their concerns:

- Candidacy
- Transfer and Settlement
- The "meaning of ministry" – greater articulation and greater understanding (plain language)
- Salary/Compensation Issues
- Benefits Packages, including EAP/Disability/Pension
- Camping/Camp Ministries

> ➢ Youth And Young Adult Ministries
> ➢ Church Structure as a whole, including the Conciliar system
> ➢ Moving ministry from maintenance to transformation
> ➢ Clearer statements on issues of buildings and properties
> ➢ Part-time Ministries
> ➢ Defining the place of rural congregations and ministry personnel's expectations
> ➢ Defining the place of ethnic congregations and ministry personnel's expectations
> ➢ Recruitment and Retention

To suggest what programs are needed for the future church, it is necessary to envision what that United Church will be, in response to God's call. It is the view of the Task Group that the future church will need to encapsulate the following:

- The Church must be composed of relevant, mission-oriented, vibrant communities which are faithful to the Gospel of Christ.
- There will be an increased focus on issues relating to ecology, global justice and peace issues, as well as worship and the pastoral presence that is offered.
- It may be a place that is more focussed on discipleship than membership and more intentional about the formation of a Christian identity.
- The church will require a paid accountable ministerial leadership that is connected to our faith tradition and story. There may be need of others who are called to serve in various leadership roles in the life of the church.
- Given that the number of congregations is decreasing, there is an opportunity to re-purpose some of the church buildings.
- The entire structure of the Church from General Council to the congregations may need to be more nimble to deal with the diversity of the church.
- In more communities, it may be advisable to move in the direction of Ecumenical Shared Ministries with our partners.
- United Church Ministry Personnel would offer leadership in this model by being equipped with a new set of skills, including but not limited to:

> ➢ offer a pastoral presence to a variety of people, "churched and un-churched"
> ➢ articulate effectively their own experience and theology
> ➢ communicate clearly
> ➢ be technologically aware
> ➢ demonstrate and use leadership and administration skills
> ➢ create and implement a business plan or work in community development
> ➢ utilize conflict resolution skills
> ➢ demonstrate self-awareness and maintain a program of self-care
> ➢ commit to continuing education
> ➢ demonstrate consistently the ability to work in a team staff environment

In order to develop a demographic of Ministry Personnel that will meet the future needs and resources of the Church, it is recommended by the Task Group on Demographics of Ministry Personnel that The United Church of Canada implement the Recommendations listed earlier in this report.

Over the period of time that the Task Group has been at work, it has become apparent that the demographic sands continue to shift. Appendix M reflects the age and gender demographics as of August 4, 2010. Some significant developments have been noted by the Task Group. This spring, 72 persons were welcomed into the ranks of ministry personnel within The United Church of Canada through ordination, commissioning, recognition, admission, or re-admission. Of those 72, 65% are female and 35% are male. Thirty-nine individuals joined the ranks of the denomination's Order of Ministry. Only four (10.25%) of these new ministry personnel are Diaconal Ministers. A particularly noteworthy statistic is that, of the 35 newly Ordained Ministers, nine (more than 25%) were under the age of 30 at the time of their ordination. Perhaps this can be considered the first indication of the turning of the tide.

Other recent developments will also have an impact on the demographics of ministry personnel. For example, the results of the vote on the remit which will allow new ordinands and commissionands to seek a call, rather than be settled in a pastoral charge, may now encourage those who feel a calling to ministry but are not geographically mobile to pursue that calling. Similarly, the ongoing work of the Ministry Compensation Task Group and the Steering Group on the Candidacy Pathway may result in changes which will remove barriers that have prevented some individuals from answering in the affirmative God's call to serve as ministry personnel. The recent decision of the Executive of the General Council to accept the report, "Planning for a Future Grounded in Faith and Action", will no doubt give rise to an examination of seemingly limitless opportunities for new ministries. The Church of the future will need ministry leadership for those ministries as well as for its existing ministries, particularly in the congregational setting.

Yet clearly there remains much to be done and there is a sense of urgency about how the church will respond to its ongoing need for educated, qualified ministry personnel. As the call goes out for more persons to respond to God's call to ministry within the Church, the demographic profile of the ministry personnel of the United Church will continue to change.

The developments which have been made to date and the developments which will occur if the proposed recommendations are implemented will indeed be cause for a, "Thanks be to God!"

Gratitude
Thank you to all those individuals who shared their insight and offered helpful information and encouragement as the Task Group conducted its work [see list of guests at Appendix N]. Their contributions were invaluable. Particular appreciation is expressed to Tom Broadhurst, Information and Statistics Coordinator, and to Jason Ding, Programmer Analyst, for their expertise and assistance in researching the data used in support of this report. This work could not have been completed without their ongoing help.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL TASK GROUP ON THE EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL

1. Introduction

1.1 Mandate

In August 2000, the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel was appointed in response to the following motion adopted by 37th General Council (2000) (Resolution 77):

> That the 37th General Council (2000) direct the Executive of the General Council to appoint a task group, in consultation with the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education (or appropriate body in the new structure as determined by the General Secretary, General Council) to ensure that the 38th General Council (2003) has before it a report with resolutions for its consideration on the exercise of discipline of Ministry Personnel in the United Church of Canada.

In August 2003, the 38th General Council (2003) of the United Church accepted the report of the Task Group. The report outlined a three-year plan to develop standards of practice and ethical standards for ministry personnel, and to evaluate existing practices through which ministry personnel are held accountable.

The 38th General Council (2003) passed the following resolution (Resolution 35):

> That the Task Group be mandated to continue its work on the exercise of discipline of Ministry Personnel and report to the 39th General Council, including the following tasks:
> (a) development of draft ethical standards for Ministry Personnel for the consideration of the 39th General Council;
> (b) development of draft standards of practice for Ministry Personnel for the consideration of the 39th General Council; and
> (c) evaluation of the present process for discipline and oversight of Ministry Personnel, with recommendations to be made to the 39th General Council (2006) of any revisions that the Task Group may consider appropriate.

1.2 Background

Following the 38th General Council, the Task Group began to plan the way forward for the development of standards of practice and ethical standards for ministry personnel. After researching the topic using United Church materials, information from other religious organizations, and standards and ethical resources from the private sector, the Task Group elected to ask United Church members, including ministry personnel, for their input.

In March 2004, a questionnaire soliciting input was mailed to all pastoral charges and posted on the United Church web site. By the end of the summer of 2004, the Task Group had heard from more than 140 groups and individuals. The responses contained a wealth of information, advice,

anecdotes, admonitions, and thoughtful reflections on the topic of standards of practice and ethical standards.

In September 2004, the reconstituted Task Group met to review and consider these responses and to proceed with the next steps in the development of standards, as authorized by the 38th General Council (2003) – to write standards of practice and ethical standards for Ministry Personnel.

By January 2005, the Task Group had drafted standards of practice and ethical standards based on the responses to the 2004 questionnaire. In March 2005, the standards were posted on the United Church web site and mailed to all pastoral charges, active and retired ministry personnel, theological colleges and other church-related groups. The documents provided background, a rationale, the standards themselves, and in an accompanying document, an invitation for response and commentary. Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire on the draft standards, provide some demographic information about themselves, and to offer additional comments on the standards as they felt necessary.

Results from across the country were compiled during the spring and summer of 2005. The Task Group met again in September 2005 to consider the results, and to finalize a version of the standards for consideration at the 39th General Council (2006) in 2006.

1.3 Membership of the Task Group

The 2004 reconstituted Task Group consisted of lay members Rick Chambers, Annette Hoare and Bill Rogers, and the following members of the Order of Ministry: John Burton, Roslyn Campbell, Anne Duncan, Don Gillies, Beth Rutherford and Sharon Willis-Whitwell. Don Gillies served as facilitator and chair.

Staff resource and support was provided by the General Secretary, General Council, Jim Sinclair, along with Legal/Judicial Counsel Cynthia Gunn.

1.4 Process followed by the Task Group since 2003

(a) The Task Group met in January 2004 to implement the mandate from the 38th General Council (2003) – to develop draft ethical standards and standards of practice for ministry personnel, and if possible, to evaluate the present process for discipline and oversight of ministry personnel, with recommendations to be made to the 39th General Council (2006) of any revisions that the Task Group may consider appropriate.

(b) After the Task Group researched standards of practice and ethical standards, using church documents and standards from the secular world, they decided that soliciting input from ministry personnel and United Church members would inform the development of the standards.

(c) In March 2004, a questionnaire soliciting information and advice was posted on the United Church web site and mailed to all pastoral charges. It invited ministry personnel, ministry and personnel committees, church boards, groups, and individuals to respond

to six questions - the first three on standards of practice and the remaining three on ethical standards:

   I.   Describe the role and work of ministry personnel. You may want to organize your description under some or all of these headings: word, worship, education, service, pastoral care, outreach, social justice, leadership, other.

  II.   Describe the background that is needed for this work, for example, education, life experience, church experience, other.

 III.   Describe the gifts and skills that ministry personnel need to have in order to do this work, for example, spiritual qualities, personality traits, attitudes, other.

 IV.   List your assumptions about the ways in which ministry personnel should conduct themselves.

  V.   Describe the ethical standards that flow from your list of assumptions. In your description, consider using verbs like clarify, inspire, reflect, encourage, emphasize, demonstrate, model, comply, act, recognize, respect, enable, and others.

 VI.   In what ways and under what circumstances should the Church use ethical standards? Please give examples to illustrate your meaning.

The Task Group received 142 responses from across Canada. Responses from ministry personnel accounted for 35% of the returns. The remaining submissions were from ministry and personnel committees, official boards, presbyteries, other church groups and individuals.

(d) In September 2004, the Task Group met to consider the responses from the questionnaire. Using the respondents' suggestions, and referring to other standards and codes established by churches and secular organizations, the Task Group began to articulate standards of practice and ethical standards. Over the next few months, the Task Group refined the draft standards into a manageable and representative form.

(e) In January 2005, the Task Group finalized the draft standards of practice and ethical standards. The document included an introduction to the standards highlighting the Biblical and theological foundations, the principles behind their development, the reasons for having standards, their purposes, a list of definitions of terms, and a bibliography.

(f) In March 2005, the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel (Draft) were posted on the United Church web site, and mailed to every pastoral charge, all active and retired ministry personnel, theological schools and educational organizations, and other church-related bodies.

(g) By the end of July 2005, 187 responses had been received representing the input of hundreds of United Church members and ministry personnel. Statistically, 38% of the responses were from active ministry personnel, 19% were from retired ministers, and the remaining 43% were from individuals, Ministry and Personnel Committees, official boards, sessions, Conference and Presbytery groups, United Church Women, *ad hoc* response teams, and so on. All provinces and one territory were represented in the results, with almost half of the responses coming from Ontario, and with substantial numbers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

(h) In September 2005, the Task Group re-assembled to consider the results of the national consultation and to adjust the draft standards in response to the input. The consultation responses were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of both the initiative to develop standards, and the way in which the standards articulated the practice to which Ministry Personnel aspire, and the ethical standards they are expected to maintain. This comment was typical of many which were received:

> I want to thank you for the care and energy you have put into creating this important document for our denomination. . .First of all, I appreciate the distinction between Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards. The Standards of Practice are helpful in delineating for both ministry personnel and for those in their congregations the scope of work involved for ministry personnel. This is a good starting place for congregations to begin to define what is realistic to expect from their minister. It is also a good tool for presbyteries and congregations as they work through job descriptions created in the Joint Needs Assessment process. . .[In Section 5 of the introduction] I appreciate the introduction to this section that names things such as "ministry personnel are expected to know and understand the culture of the ministries in which they serve". This is something that I have come to know as I practice ministry yet was not something for which I was carefully trained in seminary. . .I am affirmed as I read this section to see named the many responsibilities I have in ministry, responsibilities that are not often acknowledged by the congregation. I appreciate that the standards are worded as much as possible in behavioural terms, e.g., participate, facilitate, identify, model, mentor, encourage, etc.

At its September meeting, the Task Group used the data gathered over the summer to clarify some of the language, to augment some standards and to pare others.

2. Principles

2.1 Principles and Assumptions Underpinning the Development of Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

Ministry personnel engage in challenging leadership roles and assume positions of trust, responsibility and accountability. They strive to conduct themselves with integrity and apply their skills and knowledge to their work. They acknowledge the need for mutual accountability and commitment from all partners in their faith community.

The Task Group has focused on the standards of practice as descriptions of the work of ministry personnel. The ethical standards are expressed as expectations of conduct. As such, the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards for ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada:

- describe what it means to be ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada
- reflect the beliefs and values expressed by the participants in the development of the standards
- acknowledge the aspirations embedded in practice and the expectations of conduct contained in the ethics
- recognize and value the diversity and complexity of the roles played by ministry personnel
- are evolutionary and will need frequent re-visiting for updating, clarifying, and modifying
- recognize the need to explore and examine ministry from the perspective of both policy and practice
- identify and acknowledge the multiple and varied contexts within which ministry personnel work
- generate frameworks upon which levels of church governance may build
- assume that personal and professional growth are integral to the job
- are interdependent and are not meant to stand alone.

2.2 Biblical and Theological Foundations for Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

The United Church of Canada believes that all people are children of God, created in the image of God and therefore worthy of respect and love. Living out that belief requires a deep sense of mutuality, trust and accountability. There are, however, times when the church does not live out that commitment. As a result, people suffer - both people within the community and people outside it. We believe that when one suffers, all suffer together. (1 Cor. 12:26)

 Theologian Douglas John Hall asks: "What is the *discipline* to which as a disciple community we are called?"[*] Such discipline is not limited [or reducible], he suggests, to such dictionary meanings as punishment or chastisement. Rather, it flows from discipleship and is subordinate

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[*]   Hall, Douglas John, Thinking the Faith, Fortress, 1991, p. 58

to it. For this reason, "it must never be divorced from those who are its practitioners - from their lives, their personal struggles, their social condition, their racial and sexual identities."[†]

In contemporary society, discipline, as a verb, has acquired a distinctly negative connotation. All too often, it has been linked to parental, societal and religious practices that are excessively strict. It was not always so. The term has, for the most part, a more positive history. In its root meaning, the word discipline (Latin: discere), like its twin disciple, has to do with learning and education, which is why, even today, the various branches of learning are often referred to as disciplines.

Historically, discipline has been closely tied to the concept of punishment. It was assumed that punishment was for the purpose of correction, improvement and education rather than retribution through the infliction of pain and suffering. According to the Epistle to the Hebrews, God's discipline, which "always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time," is, in fact, "for our good" and later "yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (12:10, 11). Without it, people are "illegitimate and not God's children," (12:8) for God only "disciplines those whom God loves" (12:6).

Within the Torah given to Israel, there were particular codes that were to be followed by Aaron and the Levitical priests. Jesus gave a discipline to his disciples and followers and held them accountable for their actions. The Apostle Paul provided direction for church leaders and held these leaders accountable for their actions. Each expression of faith within the Christian community has had such a discipline or prescription for conduct by those giving leadership that has been used over the years to keep them on the spiritual path and to help inform others about the path of discipleship being followed. The gospel writers shed considerable light on the assumptions and practices of the early church. In Matthew 18, for example, there is clear guidance for the exercise of discipline within that community. (Matt. 18:15f; see also John 20:23) As life in the early Christian community became more complex, the need for regulation became more urgent. Under the guidance of Tertullian (160-220 CE), exomologesis (that is, the practice of public confession before the congregation coupled with an appropriate act of penance) came into fashion. Discipline began to take on a more public, and sometimes more ominous, character.

At the same time, the emphasis in the early church was on self-discipline. "Examine yourselves," says the Apostle Paul, "to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down." (2 Cor. 13:5, 10) There is an echo of this in the thought of Zwingli [16th century], who suggests that a believer must "go down into himself . . . probe the reasons for his acts . . . and turn to God, begging for mercy. A new life then begins."[‡] Here, the task of discipline is assigned to the individual Christian (the disciplinant), though, in the highly structured "Book of Discipline" of a monastic order for example, it takes on a distinctly corporate or communitarian dimension. Even in Reformation times, where radical

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[†]   Ibid, p. 62

[‡]   McNeill, John T., A History of the Cure of Souls, Harper, 1951, p. 195

spirituality required nothing less than direct access to God, "mutual edification and fraternal correction of small groups"[§] played a significant role.

In our own time, Marie Fortune, who has written and worked extensively in the field of clergy sexual misconduct, approaches the matter of discipline from a theological as well as a practical point of view. "Accountability," she says, "is the most difficult issue for institutions to face."[**] Yet the church must face it because it is bound together by covenants of mutuality and responsibility. To avoid it, either through denial or by handing it over to some civil authority, is to betray the very heart of the faith the church professes.

As Marie Fortune goes on to say, the God in whom we believe is a God of justice, one who "stands with the powerless, who will not let the powerful go unchallenged, who takes sides, who seeks not punishment but repentance for the abuser, who carries the victim through the valley of the shadow."[††] To be sure, it will take more than policies and procedures to accomplish this end. However, they are important, in that they "provide the mechanism."[‡‡]

Underlying all of this is the assumption that the exercise of ministry in the church is a serious and solemn responsibility. It is not to be undertaken lightly or thoughtlessly. Nor is it to be understood in purely secular terms.

Theologically speaking, discipline is an act of faith and needs to be understood and exercised as an expression of faith. As Letty Russell reminds us, "office bearers" within the community of faith have a "responsibility to exercise that gift for the good of others,"[§§] or, as the Apostle Paul puts it, "for building up the church." (1 Cor. 14:12) When someone fails to do so, they are subject to the discipline of the church. Discipline in this sense has to do with what used to be called the "reclamation of delinquents,"[***] the restoration and healing of troubled lives. The goal must always be to "restore even the most serious offender to fellowship with God and communion with the church, even when forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be extended to include restoration to public office."[†††]

Therefore, discipline is not simply a matter of punishment or chastisement. Discipline has to do with the good of others, with mutual accountability and with the "building up" of the community of faith. As Anne Carr points out, the various structures of the church "are themselves ordered . .

[§]   Hunter, Rodney J. [gen. ed.] Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Abingdon, 1990, p. 291

[**]   Fortune, M. and Poling, J., Sexual Abuse by Clergy, JPCP Monogram #6, 1994, p. 20

[††]   Ibid, p. 9

[‡‡]   Ibid, p. 26

[§§]   Russell, Letty, Church in the Round, Westminster/John Knox, 1993, p. 66
[***]   McNeill, p. 253

[†††]   Fortune, M., Is Nothing Sacred?, Harper, 1989, p. 136

. to an end beyond themselves - to the gospel as the mission of Jesus and the inclusive participation of all in that mission, to one another and to the world."[‡‡‡]

For the very true beginning of (wisdom) is the desire of discipline;
and the care of discipline is love.
(The Wisdom of Solomon, Authorized Version, Ch. 6, v. 7)

[‡‡‡]   Carr, Anne E., Transforming Grace, Harper, 1988, p. 199

3. Purposes of Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

3.1 Why does the church need to have a discipline?

The United Church of Canada is known for seeking after justice. Part of the basis for justice making is the commitment to building up the Body of Christ. Another part of this basis is the faithful, accountable witness of the members of the United Church to the path of Jesus Christ. The United Church has a tradition of holding itself accountable for its actions. This faithful, accountable witness has been called discipleship.

Discipline and discipleship have been part of the Christian way from the beginning. Discipline refers to the practices in which the disciple is engaged to maintain a healthy and focused spiritual life that is reflected in the disciple's ministry. Through such discipline the disciple holds himself or herself accountable to God through the community to which the disciple belongs.

As mentioned earlier, the words discipline and disciple come from the same Latin root *discere* meaning to learn. The Latin word *disciplina* means instruction. The Discipline Task Group wants to uphold the understanding of discipline that emphasizes learning and instruction. A key element in the learning and instruction of those who exercise ministry in the name of Jesus Christ through the United Church will be standards of practice and ethical standards for Ministry Personnel.

Such standards will inform both the ministry practitioner and the parishioner of the common and agreed upon understandings of the practice of ministry within the United Church. In this way the parishioner can be made aware of what he or she can reasonably expect from Ministry Personnel and Ministry Personnel can be made aware of the boundaries within which he or she may be called upon to act.

Both Ministry Personnel and parishioner are upheld by the faithful witness of the United Church. The church identifies its standards and will hold its members accountable for their actions within the established and agreed upon covenants. In this way, the practice of ministry is and is also seen to be faithful to the path of Jesus - wanting to be held accountable, to be trustworthy, to be filled with integrity and to be just. Having standards of practice and ethical standards for Ministry Personnel is a faithful and accountable witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ministry personnel engage in a complex network of relationships and interactions that require high levels of commitment, energy and enthusiasm. In many cases, the social contexts are subject to continual change. Ministry Personnel are called upon to exercise the highest levels of individual judgment and skilful decision-making in the challenges of their daily work.

Ministry Personnel live out their faith in community with accountability to self and to others through Presbytery, Conference and General Council. It is the responsibility of the faith community to identify its expectations for ministry and Ministry Personnel and to be clear about what its Ministry Personnel can expect from the faith community. Ministry Personnel must be accountable to their faith community for their conduct.

Accountability based on standards of practice will set out clear descriptions of practice to which Ministry Personnel aspire; accountability based on standards of ethical conduct will set out descriptions of conduct to which Ministry Personnel are expected to adhere. The standards will support Ministry Personnel in their daily lives by providing guidance for behaviour when they are confronted with difficult and ambiguous situations that arise in practice.

Those standards will not, however, replace the need for the exercise of individual judgment. Because of the complexity of the relationships and social contexts that are the environment for ministry, the guidance provided by standards requires that those interpreting them, whether in the midst of the practice of ministry or in the cooler gaze of hindsight, need to do so with prayerful consideration of all that it means to be a minister in Christ's church.

The ethical standards have been written using language that points to this reality. They use the word "call" in introducing each standard to remind readers that ministry is a human activity in response to a divine initiative. Both those undertaking the activity and those looking at it from the outside need to be aware that there can be no formulaic rule book that will tell us what a minister should do in every circumstance. Just as biblical interpretation requires reading each passage through the larger lens provided by all of scripture (as well as other resources), so too determining what a minister is called to do in a particular circumstance requires an awareness of more than can be said in a line, or even a page, of text.

The need to consider wider circumstances in applying the standards is also pointed to by the use of the words "as appropriate" or variations that appear from time to time. This phrasing is not intended to create loopholes or wiggle room, but to recognize that, as Aristotle put it, "a correction of law [is needed] where it is defective owing to its universality."[§§§] Rules or standards of general application will always need to allow room for interpretation, but this does not mean that interpreters can treat the standards as merely advisory. Balancing the strict rule and the equitable interpretation is how we respond to God's call to seek justice. It is not an invitation to individualistic relativism and absolute autonomy.

3.2 Why Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards Are Important for Ministry Personnel

Standards of practice and ethical standards are intended to clarify and describe the varied and complex work of ministry personnel. They articulate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are expected of ministry personnel.

Standards are a way of communicating to ministry personnel, United Church members and the public what is involved in the work of ministry personnel - what they know, what they are able to do, and how they conduct themselves as they serve God, the church, their congregations and other ministry contexts, and the public. The standards provide the foundation and stability on which ministry personnel may grow, articulating both the values and characteristics that distinguish them as professionals.

It is expected that the standards of practice and ethical standards will continue to evolve over

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[§§§]   *Nichomacean Ethics*, Bk.V: Ch.10, McKeon, Richard ed. *Introduction to Aristotle*, The Modern Library, NY: p. 421

time and will require ongoing updating and modification. One critical question that often accompanies the development of standards is the question of how they will be used in practice. There are questions about whether the standards are absolute requirements or aspirations toward which an individual may strive.

Standards of practice are not measurements. They are descriptions of practice that seek to answer the question, "What does it mean to be ministry personnel in The United Church of Canada?" The standards of practice are intended to describe, rather than prescribe practice. There is a continuum of growth in the life of a professional, and as ministry personnel move through the various stages of their careers, the standards will describe practices to which they might aspire.

Ethical standards are designed to articulate attitudes and behaviours to which ministry personnel adhere. They will not presume to provide the answers to all ethical questions facing ministry personnel, but they will help to set out parameters within which such ethical questions can be discussed and evaluated.

As one respondent wrote in the spring of 2005, "I am glad [the Task Group] is offering a descriptive approach for the standards and an agreed-upon expectation of conduct for ethics. I feel that both are stated with the right amount of detail, allowing for both freedom and boundaries to inform ministerial standards and behaviour."

The standards' criteria must not be so prescriptive as to remove the professional judgment of ministry personnel as they determine how best to serve God in the church and in the world. Within the boundaries of the standards, ministry personnel must exercise their professional knowledge and skill to make choices that support the church and its mission.

Commentaries for both the standards of practice and ethical standards will be needed. This work will form part of the necessary preparation for the implementation of the standards.

3.3 Purposes of the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards

Ministry personnel need to be able to see the work they do described in the standards of practice and be able to recognize their conduct and behaviour as described in the ethical standards. The standards are not intended to be the criteria for ongoing performance appraisal of staff. However, their descriptions of both practice aspirations and ethical expectations may serve as starting points for Ministry and Personnel Committees and other groups to discuss performance issues.

The standards of practice and ethical standards:
- focus on the responsibility of ministry personnel to enhance the spiritual life of the ministry in which they serve
- provide a common understanding of what it means to be ministry personnel
- clarify the knowledge, skills, values and ethics that are necessary for the practice of effective ministry
- provide the basis for ongoing personal and professional growth
- represent the aspirations and expectations of ministry personnel
- inspire the quality of behaviour that reflects the honour and integrity of ministry

personnel
- encourage and emphasize the positive attributes of conduct which characterize effective ministry
- enable ministry personnel to declare themselves publicly accountable.

One respondent in 2005 commented on the purposes of the standards:

This document, in both areas, identified many matters which have been a concern at a variety of times in the life of this pastoral charge. To have had such a document to use as a 'starting point' for discussion could have led to a much more productive resolution of the matters. The resolution could have been more focused, and brought about faster, leading to less negative fallout. When we treat this document less as a punishment stick and more as a starting point for discussion, we are pleased with it as it has been presented. This is with the understanding that it will not be a static document (no 10 Commandments written in stone), but will be changed as necessary for clarity, and as a result of learning which results from it being used. We applaud what you are doing. You are on a good track, one which will strengthen both ministry and the overall work of the church.

4. Definitions of Terms

The document makes use of several terms that are used in particular contexts and with particular meanings. The following list clarifies definitions of terms for the purposes of this document.

4.1 Bias

Canadian Courts have said that "bias denotes a state of mind that is in some way predisposed to a particular result, or that is closed with regard to particular issues." It is a state of mind which affects the judgment of the individual and makes the person unable to exercise his or her functions impartially in a particular situation.

There may be circumstances where the individual does not consider that he or she is actually biased, but it may be alleged that the individual should not participate in a decision. In those circumstances, when it is alleged that an individual is not impartial, the test that must be applied is whether the particular conduct gives rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias.

The question of whether a reasonable apprehension of bias exists requires that the person considering it must be reasonable, and that the apprehension of bias must also be reasonable in the circumstances. Further, the reasonable person must be an informed person with knowledge of all the relevant circumstances.

4.2. Boundaries

A boundary is "the limit of that which is reasonable or permitted." Boundaries are necessary to help define and shape the structure within which healthy and appropriate relationships may develop and grow, as well as to manage the power and vulnerability present in the relationship. In ministry, as in other helping relationships, boundaries need to be clearly defined and maintained, primarily for the benefit of those who seek help. Ministry personnel are expected to function in informal, even intimate settings (a home or a hospital bedside) and in multiple roles (pastor, teacher, community leader, social friend), usually without supervision or oversight.

4.3 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual makes a decision, or is present when a decision is made or participates in making a decision in the carrying out of his or her role that may directly or indirectly confer a benefit on the individual or any person with whom the individual does not deal at arm's length, and at the same time knows that in the making of the decision there is an opportunity to further his or her private interest, or the private interest of a party with whom the individual does not deal at arm's length.

4.4 Discipline

The words discipline and disciple share the same Latin root *discere* meaning to learn. Discipline has to do with learning and education (which is why the various branches of learning are often referred to as "disciplines"). Jesus gave a discipline to his disciples and followers and held them accountable for their actions. Discipline refers to the practices in which the disciple is engaged to maintain a healthy and focused spiritual life that is reflected in the disciple's ministry. Through such discipline, the disciple holds himself or herself accountable to God through the community to which the disciple belongs. Theologically speaking, discipline is an act of faith and needs to be understood and exercised as an expression of faith. Discipline has to do with mutual

accountability, with the building up of the community of faith, and with the good of others.

4.5 Ministry
The term ministry includes the following: service in a pastoral charge, staff appointments in Presbyteries/Districts, Conferences or General Council, outreach ministries, teaching and analogous positions.

4.6 Ministry personnel
By ministry personnel, the Task Group means the following persons: ordained and diaconal ministers, designated lay ministers, persons serving under appointment as student supply, intern supply or candidate supply, and ministers from other denominations who are serving the United Church as ordained or diaconal supply. It includes members of the Order of Ministry under appointment to a staff position within the United Church, to the faculty of an educational institution, or an outreach ministry such as a hospital, home, social service centre, community project or chaplaincy. It also includes all ordained and diaconal ministers retained on the roll of Presbytery/District whether they are active or retired.

4.7 Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counseling
Pastoral care refers "to all pastoral work concerned with the support and nurturance of persons and interpersonal relationships, including everyday expressions of care and concern that may occur in the midst of various pastoring activities and relationships. *Pastoral counseling* refers to caring ministries that are more structured and focused on specifically articulated need or concern. Counseling always involves some degree of 'contract' in which a request for help is articulated and specific arrangements are agreed upon concerning time and place of meeting; in extended counseling, a fee may also be agreed upon, depending on the institutional setting and other considerations."
(*Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Abingdon, 1990)

4.8 Polity
The polity of the United Church includes all the policies and procedures for accountability, organizational structure, and decision-making which are followed in the church, as set out in *The Manual* and other church documents.

4.9 Profession
By profession, the Task Group means a calling requiring specialized knowledge, intensive preparation including instruction in skills and methods as well as in the historical and scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods. The Apostle Paul exhorted leaders to "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Cor.13: 5). A profession also maintains by force of organization or concerted opinion, high standards of achievement and conduct. This means that members are accountable to each other as well as to their profession. Members of a profession commit to continued study and to the kind of work which has for its prime purpose the rendering of a public service, or in the case of ministry personnel, service to God.

5. Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

5.1 Introduction
The standards of practice describe practices to which ministry personnel aspire. They recognize that personal and professional growth is a developmental process and that ministry personnel move through a variety of career and life changes that affect their practice of ministry.

In practice, ministry personnel are expected to know and understand the culture of the ministries in which they serve so that they are responsive to the spiritual needs of those contexts. They take seriously local traditions of faith and the worship, and share their faith in ways that are relevant and constructive.

Ministry personnel are responsible for leading, guiding and supporting the community of faith in the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. What is more, they touch people's lives at various points of joy, pain, celebration and vulnerability. Ministry personnel do this in a variety of ways - by leading in worship, by providing pastoral care, by standing with those who suffer, and by working for justice and peace.

These standards are not to be viewed as measurements of performance. Rather, they are descriptions of practice to which Ministry Personnel aspire.

5.2 Standards of Practice
The standards are presented alphabetically. Ministry personnel, Ministry and Personnel Committees, and other bodies to which ministry personnel are responsible, may want to order the Standards of Practice according to the priorities of the particular pastoral charge or appointment.

5.2.1 Administration
Ministry personnel have administrative responsibility to:
    a) ensure timely completion of tasks that are their responsibility, delegating such tasks where needed and/or appropriate
    b) ensure that all documents that are the ministry personnel's responsibility, such as marriage, baptismal and funeral records, are complete and that they are safely stored
    c) know the organization, governance and policies of the United Church
    d) know the administrative responsibilities of their positions
    e) encourage and enable the congregation to keep accurate records and to maintain and protect administrative and historical documents in accordance with the policies of the United Church.

5.2.2 Community Outreach and Social Justice
Ministry personnel with The United Church of Canada, a church committed to social justice, and global and community outreach ministries, have responsibility to:
    a) engage people with a vision of gospel that recognizes and responds to needs beyond their own
    b) encourage and support the development and pursuit of social justice and outreach programs
    c) encourage the support of the Mission and Service fund of The United Church of Canada

d) facilitate knowledge about outreach projects and activities of the United Church
e) encourage people to know and understand United Church policies as they apply to social justice issues
f) encourage lay leadership on social justice issues and outreach programs.

5.2.3 Continuing Education
Education is a lifelong and ongoing process. Ministry personnel are responsible for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills. To this end, they:
a) pursue personal and professional goals for continuing education in conjunction with the appropriate persons or committees related to their ministry
b) strive to be current with issues in theology, ministerial practice, community and world events.

5.2.4 Denomination and Communities
Ministry personnel have responsibilities as members of The United Church of Canada to the denomination, the wider church, their communities, and the world. As such, they:
a) honour the organization, governance and policies of the United Church
b) participate in the courts of the church as set out in *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada (session/official board or equivalent, Presbytery/District, Conference, and General Council)
c) respond in appropriate ways to needs beyond the ministry in which they serve
d) participate in ecumenical and multi-faith activities as possible and appropriate
e) maintain an active connection with the wider church
f) represent the United Church in the larger community.

5.2.5 Faith Formation and Christian Education
Ministry personnel have responsibility for faith formation and Christian education. As part of this responsibility, ministry personnel:
a) learn about the ministry context in which they serve
b) serve as teachers, advisors and spiritual resource persons sharing faith stories - formally and informally - with insight and integrity based on their education, life experience, knowledge and background
c) relate the Gospel to the everyday experience of people
d) communicate the theology, history and traditions of The United Church of Canada.

5.2.6 Leadership
Ministry personnel are expected to function as leaders in their ministry contexts, recognizing that leadership has many dimensions. Ministry personnel have responsibility to:
a) encourage and challenge people to assist with or take on leadership roles
b) employ such means as communication, cooperation, collaboration, consultation, and wise and appropriate use of authority for effective leadership
c) identify and address conflicts in appropriate ways
d) work with people in the ministry context to achieve agreed-upon goals.

5.2.7 Pastoral Care
Ministry personnel are responsible for the pastoral care of persons they encounter through the ministry in which they serve. As providers of pastoral care, ministry personnel:

    a) are sensitive to the situation and needs of those to whom they offer pastoral care, and recognize the unique dynamics of the pastoral relationship

    b) provide a supportive presence for, and are accessible to people in times of change and crisis

    c) encourage and facilitate a process to ensure that pastoral care occurs on a regular basis.

5.2.8 Self-care

Ministry personnel are responsible for maintaining a healthy balance in their own lives. Accordingly, they:

    a) maintain their own physical, emotional and spiritual well-being

    b) nurture supportive personal and collegial relationships

    c) manage time for work, family, friends, personal development and renewal.

5.2.9 Worship

Ministry personnel have primary responsibility for the conduct of worship. As worship leaders and facilitators, they:

    a) lead and enable the exploration and celebration of God's presence through preaching, liturgy, prayer, music, drama, dance and other means

    b) inspire, strengthen and challenge the people of God

    c) encourage and support lay participation and leadership in worship

    d) celebrate God's grace, facilitate the community in its prayer and devotion, and help the community to recognize God's presence in the church and the world

    e) relate the good news of our faith to everyday experience

    f) heighten awareness of world events and invite appropriate responses

    g) encourage the exercise of faithful stewardship

    h) conduct special services of worship (such as weddings and funerals) and administer the sacraments of communion and baptism.

6. Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel

6.1 Introduction

The 38th General Council (2003) charged the Task Group with developing standards of practice and ethical standards for ministry personnel and with evaluating existing practices through which ministry personnel are held accountable. The development and implementation of standards represents a first step in the re-thinking and possible development of a broader policy of discipline for ministry personnel. Ethical standards are developed so that ministry personnel may commit to agreed-upon standards of conduct which will guide their practice and behaviour.

Responses to the questionnaire in 2004 and the draft standards document in 2005 contained much support for the development of ethical standards and suggested that they may be used as:
- a common set of values
- a basis for talking openly about ethical issues and concerns
- a foundation for creating a stronger sense of community
- a starting point for productive resolutions
- an operating framework within the church that provides for transparency and principled behaviour
- a set of norms for the education and formation of ministry personnel.

Ethical standards enable the church to attain two goals. They act as a resource for ministry personnel as they struggle with ethical issues and dilemmas in the context of their daily practice. Ethical standards also enable ministry personnel to be accountable to self, church and community.

Among the many questions addressed during the development of the ethical standards was, "How are ethical standards to be articulated?" Clearly, it is not possible to anticipate and specify how one should behave in every circumstance. In many ways, it is easier to be specific about what one should *not* do rather than what one *should* do. However, a list of prohibitions may imply that everything is allowable unless otherwise prohibited. Rather than focus on the negative, the Task Group has opted to use affirmative language when drafting the ethical standards. The intent is to highlight the expectation rather than identify the prohibition.

6.2 The Ethical Standards
The Ethical Standards are presented alphabetically. The document does not represent an attempt at establishing priority or sequence.

6.2.1 Competence
Ministry personnel come to their work adequately prepared to fulfil the positions to which they are called or appointed. In these positions, they:
  a) represent, truthfully and accurately, their abilities, skills, education, qualifications and experience
  b) acknowledge the limitations of their skills, abilities and competencies and make referrals when necessary and/or appropriate
  c) establish, maintain and communicate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.

6.2.2 Conflicts of Interest and Perceptions of Bias
Conflicts of interest and perceptions of bias may put ministry personnel's integrity and professional conduct in question. Therefore, ministry personnel are called to:
  a) identify and appropriately disclose conflicts of interest or bias, real or perceived
  b) follow, where applicable, guidelines established by the church with respect to conflict of interest
  c) deal appropriately with conflicts of interest, consulting where possible with colleagues and/or the body to which ministry personnel are accountable.

6.2.3 Personal Relationships and Professional Conduct
"God's intention for all human relationships is that they be faithful, responsible, just, loving, health-giving, healing, and sustaining of community and self" (Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality, 1988). Therefore, ministry personnel are called to:
  a) abide by and faithfully live out the explicit policies and procedures on sexual abuse (sexual harassment, pastoral sexual misconduct, sexual assault) and child abuse as outlined by The United Church of Canada
  b) be appropriately open and transparent in all relationships
  c) conduct relationships in ways that honour covenants
  d) conduct relationships, especially those that may be intimate and/or sexual, in ways that seek to maintain the peace and welfare of the community of faith
  e) take steps to ensure that alternate pastoral care is available for any person with whom they have an intimate and/or sexual relationship and for whom they are the sole or primary providers of pastoral care
  f) disclose to, and seek advice from a colleague and/or the appropriate body to which they are accountable, and to take steps to disengage from the pastoral care or professional relationship when that relationship is moving beyond a pastoral or professional level.

6.2.4 Professional Relationships
Ministry personnel are expected to honour the covenantal relationships of other ministry personnel. Therefore they are called to:
  a) respect the call and placement of other ministry personnel, including colleagues or those with whom they are in team ministry
  b) respect the expertise of members of other professions with whom they work in the church, other institutions or the community
  c) uphold and honour the church's policies on the exercise of the functions of ministry, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms and pastoral care, as outlined in *The Manual*.

6.2.5 Relationship with the Law
Action on behalf of the church in pursuit of social justice may bring ministry personnel into conflict with the law. Ministry personnel are called to:
  a) abide by the law and encourage others to do so
  b) consult with the body to which they are accountable when contemplating any action that they believe to be an ethically justified act of civil disobedience in aid of a greater good
  c) consider –before acting—the consequences to self, church and community of any action that contravenes or appears to contravene the law.

6.2.6 Relationships with Persons Served
Ministry personnel are aware of and attentive to the possible impact of their words and actions in caring for the emotional, mental and spiritual needs of persons who seek their help. In all relationships, ministry personnel are called to:
   a) uphold the integrity of the ministry relationship in which they serve
   b) honour the dignity, culture and faith of all persons
   c) respect personal boundaries such as those of space and touch
   d) use the power and influence of their office appropriately
   e) be sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of all, while clarifying and maintaining the professional nature of the relationship.

6.2.7 Responsibilities of the Role
Ministry personnel are expected to execute faithfully the various responsibilities of their roles. Thus, ministry personnel are called to:
   a) adhere to the organization, governance and procedures of The United Church of Canada as outlined in *The Manual*
   b) fulfil all the responsibilities of their position description and honour the United Church's Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel
   c) protect the integrity of funds and any property entrusted to their care
   d) use discretion and good judgment and abide by applicable guidelines when accepting favours, honoraria, gifts and other forms of remuneration.

6.2.8 Self-awareness
Ministry personnel are called to exercise good judgment and maintain a level of self-awareness that enables them to:
   a) be accountable to the church, to the ministry in which they serve, and to themselves
   b) be authentic, dependable, trustworthy, compassionate, understanding, and to live with integrity
   c) keep confidences
   d) be open to constructive criticism, guidance and challenge
   e) accept that, at times, they will fail or make mistakes
   f) be aware of the visibility of their position and consider how their conduct may be experienced and perceived by others.

7. Continued Work

7.1 Commentary
If adopted by the 39th General Council, the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards will need an implementation plan. Part of the plan will include commentaries on each of the standards, presenting situations and case studies that ministry personnel and others may use to deepen their understandings of the standards.

As for the evaluation of the present process for discipline and oversight of ministry personnel, the Task Group believed that identifying the standards of practice to which ministry personnel aspire and the ethical standards for which they are held accountable needed to be in place first. The Task Group sees its next step as the evaluation and review the current process for discipline and oversight in light of the standards of practice and ethical standards.

Many respondents to the 2005 consultation inquired about the application and effectiveness of the standards without a monitoring or discipline function as part of the project. At this point, the standards are practical aspirations and behavioural expectations, and are not formally part of a discipline process. However, once adopted, the standards will provide a resource for discussions about practice and ethics. An evaluation of the discipline process will include an examination of how the standards may be used to support discipline.

7.2 Implementation and Education Plan
The implementation plan for the standards of practice and ethical standards will need to be both informative and educative, and happen relatively quickly. The standards will need to underpin theological school programs for aspiring ministry personnel, discernment processes, Ministry and Personnel Committee deliberations, and ministry personnel's practice and conduct.

As such, a national roll-out of the standards may include materials that provide:
- Questions and Answers about the standards including many of those posed by respondents in the consultation in 2005
- Suggestions for use of the standards for ministry personnel, Ministry and Personnel Committees, and other groups and organizations
- Commentaries on each standard, and ways that they might be interpreted or applied
- Workshop materials for Ministry and Personnel Committees, discernment process participants, and other groups to become familiar with the standards.

7.3 Timeline
Fall 2006
- Development of an implementation "kit"
- Initial evaluation of the present process for discipline and oversight of ministry personnel
Winter and Spring 2007
- Roll-out of standards implementation kit
September 2007
- Recommendations to General Council Executive of present process for discipline and oversight

8. Recommendations

The Task Group recommends that the General Council:

(i)   adopt the draft standards of practice appended to this report as the standards of practice for Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada;

(ii)   adopt the draft ethical standards appended to this report as the ethical standards for Ministry Personnel in The United Church of Canada;

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(iii) direct the Task Group on the Exercise of Discipline of Ministry Personnel to:

      a.   develop and execute an implementation plan for the standards of ethics and standards of practice, as more particularly outlined in Section 7 of this report.

      b.   evaluate the present processes for discipline and oversight of Ministry Personnel, with recommendations to be made to the 40th General Council of any revisions that the Task Group may consider appropriate.

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