

PREACHING AND OTHER
VERBAL PERFORMANCE IN
A UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
CONGREGATION:
SPEAKING OF EXPERIENCE.

by

PAUL A. CUMMERGEN



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-19943-6

Canada



UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Dissertation submitted
to the
Department of
Religious Studies,
University of Ottawa,
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Paul A. Cummergen
University of Ottawa
April 1996

ABSTRACT

This is a study of the ritual of Sunday worship in a United Church of Canada congregation. It seeks to provide a contextual analysis of the preaching and other verbal performances which are the most significant ritual elements.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu is critically assessed. On this basis, an account of preaching as symbolic labour is developed. Samples of preaching collected through participant-observation of the service are analysed to show the ways in which preaching serves to provide a discursive resource for the (re)production of communal and individual conceptions of the "self" among members of the congregation.

Age and gender are identified as key variables among this urban, middle-class population. A particular group of upwardly mobile, female adults is identified as especially responsive to the way in which the verbal performances of the minister provide a model and the linguistic resources for the production and transformation of self-description and self-understanding.

In these ways, some account of the persistence of this example of mainstream, conventional Christianity is given.

Chapter 1	<u>Introduction</u>	p. 1
	Review of Literature	16
	Methodology	23
	Interviews	25
	Questionnaire	26
	Statement of Hypothesis	32
2	<u>Portrait of a Congregation</u>	34
3	<u>Portrait of a Minister</u>	59
4	<u>Sunday Morning Worship</u>	84
5	<u>Preaching</u>	111
6	<u>A further aspect of preaching: narrative</u>	137
7	<u>Remembrance and Renewal: a close look at two sermons</u>	165
8	<u>Talking to the Children</u>	202
9	<u>Arguments and Conjectures</u>	231
	Recognizing Liberal Protestantism	232
	Preaching as Symbolic Labour	239
	The Private Life of the Middle Classes	245
	Ministry and Gender	257
	<u>Conclusion and Summary</u>	267
	Bibliography	274
Appendix A:	Transcripts of interviews with four ministers	
B:	Transcripts of sermons	
C:	Transcripts of Theme Conversations	
D:	Questionnaire	
E:	Statistical Summary of Questionnaire returns	

Charts and Inclusions

Interview Outline	facing page	26
Chart 2-1		52
2-2		52
2-3, 2-4		53
2-5		54
2-6		55
2-7		56
2-8, 2-9		57
3-1		75
4-1a,b		98
6-1a,b,c		147
9-1		254

Chapter One: Introduction

Someone stands speaking. Others are present, seated: evidently, they are listening.

It seems ingenuous to ask "What is going on here?" Surely, there are countless occasions which exemplify this basic form of human interaction. Yet, with only the lightest sketch of context, these countless possibilities are quickly reduced to only a few. The briefest adumbration of a frame for this picture is sufficient for us to know the context, to guess the situation. For, if I say, merely, that this is in some sense a "formal" occasion and, further, that all present are adults, then the parlour-game is almost over. It is not a story told by an elderly relative at a family gathering, nor a joke told to friends over a beer: neither are "formal" enough. It must be a meeting of some kind, perhaps a lecture. A speech is being made: some kind of oratory.

It is Sunday morning in the centre of a Canadian city. People have come by car and on foot from the surrounding apartments and houses to a church that has stood on this site since the early years of the century. They are attending the Christian ritual of Sunday worship at a United Church of Canada.

They have stood and sat, greeted one another, sung, prayed and listened to passages from the Bible read aloud ("the scriptures"). Now they sit, evidently listening, while their minister stands speaking, preaching the sermon. Now the context is known, the situation has been defined. Now we can ask again, this time less ingenuously, more cautiously, "What is going on here?"

This is an ethnographic account of the ritual of Sunday worship that occurs in one United Church of Canada congregation. It is an account of the forms of

speech that make up this ritual and, specifically, a study of the preaching, which is the preeminent ritual element and the most elaborate of the various linguistic forms.

In large part, this account will seek to describe the nature and function of the linguistic forms that make up the ritual, concentrating on the sermon. Description, though, however "thick", is insufficient and must lead to and be informed by some definite perspective. That perspective is provided by the sociology of religion. This study may, therefore, be described as a sociological investigation of mainstream, conventional religion in a present-day, urban setting. The congregation studied belongs to the United Church of Canada and, as such, is an example of twentieth century liberal Protestantism. Further, because the congregation is made up of members of the urban middle-classes, the study also addresses the question of the persistence of mainstream, conventional Christianity in the late twentieth century among this social group. Both the conventional wisdom of sociological theorizing and current empirical evidence suggest that the religiousness exemplified by such a congregation must be in decline, if not actually at the point of atrophe. However, as will be described and argued in detail below, this congregation is one of an, admittedly small, number that claim for themselves (with justification) renewal and growth in the face of these known and observable trends.

While the focus of this study is much more particular and sharply defined, this general issue is ever-present as a general theoretical backdrop.

If this brief, initial description of the approach taken to the subject matter seems unfashionably functionalist, I am content to reiterate Bourdieu's remark

that:

It is not sufficient to ridicule the more naive forms of functionalism in order to have done with the question of the practical functions of practice.

(Bourdieu 1977 p115)

Further, and more fashionably, one may suggest that the ritual uses of speech studied form an important element of this discursive practice which, this study will seek to demonstrate, is a significant factor in the production and maintenance of the participants as subjects in a specific socio-cultural milieu.

This study is, therefore, not only descriptive but analytic. It is appropriate at the outset to indicate its theoretical orientation.

In several major works (especially 1977 and 1984) and in numerous articles (Bourdieu 1971, 1971/85, 1971/87, 1977a, 1985, 1985a, 1985b, 1986), Pierre Bourdieu has developed a conceptual framework for the analysis of symbolic systems, their genesis and function within a social context. Overviews of Bourdieu's work are available in a number of places (eg. Accardo 1983, Bourdieu 1986a, Harker et al. 1990) and there are several critical assessments of his work, though these tend to concentrate on his contributions to the study of ritual (see, in particular, Cheal 1988, Bell 1992 and Kratz 1994) to the exclusion of his other, and notable, contributions to sociological theory (on other aspects of his work see Lambert 1987, Lamont and Lareau 1988, Lamont 1992, Thompson, J. 1984). Specifically, his concepts of champ, espace social and marché des biens symboliques are significant here. With these, Bourdieu provides the means by which an account of the labour of the minister/preacher can be given which takes account, not only of the production of symbolic goods, but also of their consumption. Another, relevant, approach is developed by Richard Antoun (1989) in his account of Islamic preaching in rural Jordan. In particular, he develops the concept of

"culture broker" initially introduced by Wolf (1956) on the basis of Redfield's distinction between "great" and "local" traditions (Redfield 1956) and developed by Geertz (1960). However, while this provides the means by which an account of the labour of the religious specialist can be given, it fails to do justice to the complexities of the consumption of the products of symbolic labour.

Bourdieu speaks of different social fields that have developed historically. An especially significant one is the champ religieux. With its development, has been the development of religious specialists (especially priests) who have often exercised a monopoly over the production and distribution of symbolic goods - traditionally, the intellectual and material means by which the cure of souls and bodies has been exercised. In general Bourdieu says:

The autonomy of a field of restricted production can be measured by its power to define its own criteria for the production and evaluation of its product.

(Bourdieu 1971/85 p17)

In Bourdieu's account, the process of secularization that Western culture has undergone is to be understood in terms of the breakdown of the monopoly held by the agents spécialisés of the champ religieux. The breakdown of this monopoly has seen the development of a variety of different forms of symbolic activity carried out by different kinds of specialist agents (psychoanalysts, psychologists, counsellors, social workers).

Tous font partie d'un nouveau champ de luttes pour la manipulation symbolique de la conduite de la vie privée et l'orientation de la vision du monde...

(Bourdieu 1985 p257)

These various specialist agents find their clientele in the societies of which

they themselves are products and members. Rather than accounting for their success or failure in terms of a simple model of supply and demand, Bourdieu says:

only the logic of the structural homology between positions occupied within the field of "professionals" and positions occupied in the social field is capable of accounting for intersections of supply and demand.

(Bourdieu 1971/87 p135n5)

In Bourdieu's account, subjects are thought to occupy positions in a social space which is defined in two complementary ways. Firstly, it is conceived of as an overlapping, multidimensional space in which various fields interact. Secondly, human subjects are conceived to trace paths or trajectories through this social space over their life course. These trajectories are defined in terms of the various forms of capital that the individual subjects acquire and transform through their activities as social actors. According to Bourdieu, capital can take three interchangeable forms: economic, social and cultural.

It is from this point of view that individuals can be seen as consumers and actors in the marché de biens symboliques. As they strive to acquire and maintain social status ("distinction"), they transform capital from one form to another, directly through their own labour (material, intellectual and symbolic) and indirectly, as clients of specialist agents.

I wish to suggest that this conceptual framework provides the beginnings of an account of the ritual of Christian worship and the preaching that is part of it. Specifically, the Christian discourse which is produced and communicated through the ritual speech acts of Sunday worship may be understood as a form of symbolic goods which are produced by a specialist agent for consumption by

a clientele. However, in order to produce such an account, Bourdieu's framework must be modified and extended. To begin, a number of shortcomings and lacunae must be noted.

Throughout numerous statements of his position, Bourdieu is consistently ambiguous in his use of the terms "symbolic labour" and "symbolic capital". On the one hand, he says that "symbolic capital" is not a form of capital per se, but only "capital - in whatever form - insofar as it is represented" (Bourdieu 1977 p255n3).

On the other hand, especially in his account of the ritual activities of everyday life (esp. 1977 p171, 180), he draws attention to the "reality" of symbolic labour and, therefore, by implication, to the autonomy of symbolic capital. Indeed, given the criteria (already quoted above) for the autonomy of a social field, it is clear that on Bourdieu's own grounds, he must recognize that symbolic capital and labour can have a distinct and equal status with the other forms.

This is the main force of Michele Lamont's criticism of Bourdieu in her study of upper-middle class males in France and North America (Lamont 1992). According to her, Bourdieu overestimates the significance of cultural capital. In Distinction, Bourdieu is concerned to examine the ways in which class and status differences are expressed and maintained. Therefore, he concentrates solely on cultural markers of distinction. However, as Lamont argues, there are other means of distinction and other functions performed by them. Lamont identifies moral discourse as an important means of self-identification among a particular fraction of North American, upper-middle class males. This is likely to be true of other groups not considered by her study. Further, I wish to suggest, symbolic capital may be deployed as a means of self-description whereby the subject may be

defined, not only in terms of class and status, but also in terms of age and gender.

A further shortcoming of Bourdieu's account is his failure to address the distinction between "public" and "private" or "domestic" realms. In his justly famous account of the interior, domestic space inhabited by the Kabyle women, the symbolic value and meaning of this domestic space is assumed to express aspects of a general, shared symbolic universe directly, without mediation. This may be one example of a common, unstated assumption of ethnographic accounts that in small, primitive societies, all interactions are "face-to-face" and, therefore, a distinction between public and private is meaningless. In Distinction, Bourdieu examines domestic life for ways in which it exhibits class differences. Therefore, its significance as a bearer of "private" as opposed to "public" relationships and social configurations is not considered.

Another reason for this lacuna in Bourdieu's account may be that it is only within N. American sociological literature that the significance of religion as a mediator between public and private domains has been recognised and studied (Cheal 1987). The public/private distinction has given rise to a large and heterogeneous literature (see eg. Sharistanian 1987) and, like other "folk dichotomies", is theoretically problematic (see Cheal 1988 and 1991). However, it is one that is firmly embedded in the discourses of everyday life and, as such, cannot be ignored easily. In fact, there are a number of reasons why it is pertinent to this study. In much of the literature (see eg. Rosaldo 1974), a link is made between public/private and male/female. As has already been noted, this latter is key for the analysis developed below. Further, the development and maintenance of an elaborate private domain and a "private life" (as opposed to a "public" or "professional" one) which is dependent upon it is related to social

class. John Porter states this in clear terms when he asserts that it is

... the value of privacy and the capacity to afford it which has become the dividing line between the real and the apparent middle class.

(Porter 1965 p5)

This claim, it seems to me, supports and supplements Lamont's criticism of Bourdieu. Western societies are often described as having undergone increasing embourgeoisement. This is certainly the case in the sense that greater and greater numbers have access to (relatively) more material resources. The economic difference between classes is much narrower. However, in such a situation, symbolic markers of class and status difference ("distinction") become all the more significant. This is, indeed, part of Bourdieu's insight, but, also, his limitation. In spite of his claims to the contrary, his account sometimes reads as if symbolic markers of distinction are reduced to material ones.

In gross material terms, privacy is, indeed, a function of economic status. Only those who can afford privacy can have it (in terms, for instance, of sufficient and separate living space). Further, however, the ability to cultivate a "private life" (including all the symbolic and cultural labour that this entails) is a function, not only of economic and temporal resources available, but also of one's participation in and membership of the literate culture of the educated middle class.

It will be argued at greater length below that a significant function of the Christian discourse produced and elaborated through the sermons examined in this study lies in the production of linguistic resources whereby such a private life and the sense of self to which it is linked, can be sustained. The Christian discourse, of which the sermons are the pre-eminent expression, is thus conceived of as ideological in the sense suggested by Althusser and elaborated

by his disciple, Foucault. A concise statement of this orientation is given by Therborn:

...to conceive of a text or an utterance as ideology is to focus on the way it operates in the formation and transformation of human subjectivity...

(Therborn 1980 p2)

This is a study, therefore, of a particular set of discursive practices and, specifically, of their linguistic expression: an exercise in discourse analysis. However, the term "discourse analysis" is used to describe many very different enterprises (for an indication of this variety see, for example, Brown and Yule 1983, Coulthard 1977, Dassetto 1973, Fairclough 1992 and Grimes 1975).

Discourse analysis is sometimes defined as the analysis of language at the "suprasentential level". While this may be innocuous enough, more often than not, it masks certain assumptions about language: that discourse is "made up of sentences" - that in some hierarchically conceived sense, sentences are the pre-eminent unit, not only of linguistic analysis, but also of expression. Neither of these assumptions is acceptable. It is therefore necessary to give some indication of an alternative notion of discourse that will be used in this study.

The work of M.A.K. Halliday and his associates provides an orientation to linguistic analysis which is most suitable for this study.

Halliday, a one-time pupil of J.R. Firth, is perhaps the most eminent representative of British linguistics in the "Malinowski-Firth" tradition. This approach to language contrasts strongly with all other prevailing schools of linguistics.

Halliday describes his approach to language as a "social-semiotic" one, though as he says himself (Halliday 1978), without further specification, this

could mean almost anything. Often, in work published during the 1970s, Halliday is concerned to contrast his approach with that of Chomsky. This is because his is a social rather than a psychological approach to language (he has a number of fundamental disagreements with Chomsky's position as well). However, though this is rarely made explicit, his approach is distinct from structuralist accounts of language also.

From Malinowski, Halliday inherits a concern with the specific "context of situation" in which language is used and, without an account of which, no explanation of meaning can be given. Further, according to Halliday, any account of language must include reference to its function. This is a point stressed repeatedly. Language is described as "relations based on meaning, with meaning defined in terms of function" (Halliday 1974 p14).

Again,

... function will be interpreted not just as the use of language but as a fundamental property of language itself... This amounts to saying that the organization of every natural language is to be explained in terms of a functional theory.

(Halliday and Hasan 1989 p17)

In Halliday's view, language is the most important semiotic system through which a social system and its culture are "realized". Considered at this level, language is "a semantic system with structural realizations" (Halliday 1974 p25).

This essentially abstract system is itself "realized" when put to use by social actors in particular situations, in terms of lexico-grammatical choices. These, in turn, are realized through acoustical or graphical systems.

Halliday's account of language does not remain at the level of semantics, but considers specific linguistic uses of this system that occur at the lexico-grammatical and the prosodic level. (In his controversial account, prosodic

realizations are seen as functions of the grammatical system).

As will be argued below, it is this aspect of Halliday's approach that makes it particularly valuable for the present study. Too often, discourse analysis remains at the semantic level and, as a consequence, has little to say concerning the function of specific linguistic performances (in terms of vocabulary, grammar and figures of speech: indeed, the traditional concerns of rhetoric) in specific situations. This, however, is precisely what the present study will attempt, through the analysis of specific texts, embedded in their "contexts of situation": the ritual context of utterance.

Concerning the idea of text, Halliday's approach again contrasts with other prevailing ones. A "text" (whether uttered or written) has certain characteristics which are not merely the aggregate effect of conjoined sentences:

... a text is essentially a semantic unit.
It is not something that can be defined as
being just another sentence, only bigger.
(Halliday and Hasan 1989 p10)

Further, textual analysis must recognize that a text depends on a context and, therefore, on a communication situation which involves both producers and receivers of meanings.

We need to see the text as product and the text as process and to keep both these aspects in focus. The text is a product in the sense that it is an output... having a certain construction that can be represented in systematic terms. It is a process in the sense of a continuous process of semantic choice, a movement through the network of meaning potential...

(ibid. p12)

Halliday is also responsible for the development of the concept of "register"

as it is used in current sociolinguistics. It is an attempt to provide an account of particular language-uses in terms of their typical social situation and linguistic characteristics. According to Halliday, a register is

a configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situational configuration...

(Halliday and Hasan 1989 p38)

In Halliday's terms, preaching is an example of a linguistic register. His own accounts of this concept are largely programmatic and explanatory rather than analytic. It is in the hands of others (see Biber and Finegan 1994 for a recent summary; see Crystal 1969 and Crystal and Davy 1969 for criticism of the concept) that the concept has been set to work.

This concept must be distinguished from that of "genre", which is the one more usually used in analyses of preaching. Broadly, the difference is between an interest in preaching as utterance performed in context on the one hand, and sermons as literary artifacts on the other.

Ferguson makes the distinction explicit by noting the different assumptions which underlie the concepts. For "register" he says:

A communication situation that recurs regularly in a society... will tend to develop identifying markers of language structure and language use, different from the language of other communication situations.

(Ferguson 1994 p20)

Of "genre" he says:

A message type that recurs regularly in a community... will tend over time to develop an identifying internal structure differentiated from other message types in

the repertoire of the community.
(ibid. p21)

Thus, register is defined in terms of communicative situation, language structure and use, while genre is defined in terms of message type and internal linguistic structure. Needless to say, the concepts are not mutually exclusive. Any example of preaching can be analyzed in terms of either concept. For present purposes, it is the former that is most valuable.

In a recent paper, Biber gives a valuable outline of register analysis (considered in greater detail below) and also makes clear some shortcomings (Biber 1994).

According to him, typical register studies have these components:

- a description of the situational characteristics of a register
- a description of the linguistic characteristics
- and - an analysis of the functional or correlational associations between situational and linguistic features.

This can be summarized as follows:



Most studies of register are done, naturally enough, by linguists. Their

analyses are, therefore, strongest in terms of the characteristics of linguistic forms. They tend to consider the specification of the situational features most problematic and, frequently, these analyses show a dependence on situational analyses developed by the "ethnography of speaking" (eg. Hymes 1972, 1974) which work is, conversely, most frequently least developed in the analysis of linguistic forms.

Biber himself devotes the bulk of his analysis to an attempt to provide a framework whereby the situational features of a register may be exhaustively specified. The underlying assumption seems to be that if this can be achieved, the functional and conventional correlations between situational and linguistic realizations will immediately fall into place.

This seems somewhat simple-minded. The present study adopts a different outlook. In the first place, I am concerned with preaching in one situation only. While comparative material will be used to support any conclusions, no attempt will be made to develop a general and exhaustive account of preaching per se.

Further, the process of argument here is more complex and more hesitant. At the outset, the relevant situational features of the context are identified on the basis of field-work observation supplemented by information gathered by means of interview and questionnaire. The functional characteristics of the preaching are then identified, not initially by an inspection of specimen texts, but rather in the form of hypotheses developed on the basis of theory-informed observation. Only then are particular texts (gathered in field observation) examined for evidence of specific linguistic forms by which these functions are realized. Contrary to linguistics-inspired accounts of register, the present study makes no a priori assumptions about the specific functions of particular linguistic forms.

Review of Literature

As is evident from the preceding, this study claims a certain uniqueness in approach to a venerable and well-studied subject. Nevertheless, it is not conducted in a cultural or disciplinary vacuum and there are a number of studies of sermons and preaching that are relevant to it.

Preaching is a fundamental part of the Christian religious tradition and has been since earliest times. According to the Encyclopaedia of Early Christianity, it is defined as the "oral proclamation and interpretation of the gospel tradition".

More generally understood as a form of religious oratory, it is common to several different religious traditions. Maurice Bloch's account of religious oratory, based on his field-work among the Merina of Madagascar, is a notable contribution (Bloch 1984). In addition to Antoun's study of Islamic preaching in Jordan (already considered above), Gaffney's (1987 and 1991) work on contemporary Islamic preaching in Egypt is valuable for the comparative perspective it provides.

Almost two thousand years of Christian preaching has produced numerous and vast corpora of sermons and studies on them. Brilioth (1965) provides an accessible overview of this history.

Studies of Christian preaching tend to fall into two broad categories. On the one hand are confessionally based studies. These are generally normative, seeking to describe and prescribe for preaching on the basis of some theological position (for recent examples, see for instance, Lowry 1980 and Smith 1989). Occasionally, studies have been conducted that seek to provide normative criteria for "successful preaching" on the basis of empirical data. "Success" is defined, often only implicitly, in terms that combine theology and some form of communication

theory. Examples of this approach are provided by studies reported in Avery 1977, Maguire 1980 and Newman and Wright 1980.

An altogether more elaborate and ambitious project in this vein is Webster's (1981) study of preaching in American protestant congregations. This is one of very few attempts to study preaching from a sociolinguistic perspective. The research design is highly sophisticated. However, in order to gauge congregations' responses to sermons, Webster found it necessary to resort to recruited audiences who listened to specially prepared sermons in artificial test conditions. His main conclusion was that hearers are capable of determining the theological orientation of preachers on the basis of preaching style. According to Mitchell (1962) this is nothing new: he records anecdotal evidence that this was something of a "parlour trick" among seventeenth-century English protestants, who entertained one another with the preaching styles of various theological positions.

The second general orientation to the study of Christian preaching is historical and literary. One example is Auerbach's (1965) account of the transformation of classical rhetoric through its confrontation with the Christian message, in the preaching of St. Augustine. More recently, conceptual orientations based on the work of Michel Foucault have provoked a renewed approach to this era (eg. Cameron 1991). Blench (1964) provides a still exemplary study of preaching in late 14th and early 15th century England. Using the traditional tools of literary and rhetorical analysis of texts, he shows how changes in preaching are related to the transformation of the understanding and presentation of Christianity and the transformation of society and culture during that time.

The advent of structuralism has, in some circles, completely renewed the approach to texts as literary or rhetorical artifacts. Only very rarely has this

approach been applied to preaching and for this reasons two studies of contemporary preaching are especially noteworthy. These are by Van Billoen (1973) and by Rousseau and Dassetto (1973).

Studies of contemporary preaching are relatively rare. Those that attend to the socio-cultural "context of situation" are rarer still. What examples there are (eg. Davies 1988, Lawless 1988) find inspiration in the "ethnography of speaking" (for an overview, see Saville-Troike 1989).

This orientation owes much to the work of Del Hymes (1972). Studies in this tradition are most frequently concerned with the analysis of everyday conversational interactions. In part, this is because of the influence of Ervin Goffman (especially Goffman 1981) and North American ethnomethodology. Also, North American sociolinguistics (especially Labov) and folklore studies are both important influences.

Richard Bauman is one scholar using this approach who has studied preaching. However, his major work is a historical study of seventeenth century Quakers (Bauman 1983, but see also Bauman 1974). The particular value of Bauman's work is that he analyses specific linguistic practices. In his historical study, he seeks to show the relationship between the Quakers' religious beliefs and their refusal to use the current linguistic forms of politeness and respect expressed in forms of address.

In this regard, Bauman has elaborated the argument originally developed by Brown and Gilman (1960) in their paper "The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity" where they propose "a connection between social structure, group ideology and the semantics of the pronoun". (Brown & Gilman 1960 p253)

This is particularly significant for the present study, as will be argued below.

A further significant body of work is that of Elaine Lawless (1988, 1988b, 1991) whose research has centred on

the role of women in [Pentecostalism] as it
is practised in southern Indiana and
southern Missouri in white rural congregations.
(Lawless 1991 p53)

Throughout her publications, Lawless struggles to account for the evident fact that, although Pentecostalism is an "extraordinarily patriarchal religion", her studies show that, nevertheless, women exercise a significant degree of power. In the end, Lawless concludes that this female exercise of power is tolerated in exchange for the maintenance of strong boundaries against the surrounding secular culture.

Lawless' work, from a folklore studies perspective, is characterised by the relative sophistication her linguistic analyses and the rudimentary nature of the sociological framework used. The advantages of her approach are, therefore, primarily linguistic. She provides valuable descriptions (and models of) the various speech genres that occur during a worship service (based upon, but developing those suggested by Del Hymes) and the functions that these genres perform. (It should be noted that "genre" is Lawless' term - she uses it in a sense equivalent to "register" as used here).

Further, a basic of folklore studies methodology is to seek to show the conventional nature of apparently ex tempore oral performance. Consequently, Lawless draws attention to the constructed nature of narratives which occur as part of preaching and "witnessing". She says

Examples of what I have chosen to label
spiritual life stories are representative
of the kind of stories Pentecostal women

preachers tell about their lives... The stories are creations... these very specific life stories about women in religion are, in fact, not perfected entities, but rather each is a collection a pastiche of stories, many of them based on personal experience and traditional expectations at the same time.

(Lawless 1991 p58)

In this way, Lawless draws attention to the connection between religious speech - and preaching in particular - and the production of self-identity and self-description through narrative. Now, most sermons are not narrative structures (in the sense defined by Labov and Waletzky 1967). However, many sermons, including those that are the subject of analysis in the present study, contain some narrative material. Consequently, the question of the relationship between religious discourse, its specific linguistic realizations in the textual coherence of the sermon and the production and maintenance of "the self", is one that must be addressed.

A final study of contemporary preaching which deserves attention is that of Marsha Witten.

In her 1993 publication, All is Forgiven, Marsha Witten examines

Protestantism in late 20th century
American culture through a case study
of contemporary sermons of pastors
[in]... the Presbyterian Church (USA)
and the Southern Baptist Convention.
(Witten 1993 p5)

Pastors in these denominations were surveyed and asked for samples of sermons they had preached on the text of Luke 15:11 - 32, the Parable of the Prodigal Son. She analyses 47 sermons preached between 1986 and 1988.

A disciple and associate of the American sociologist of religion, Robert

Wuthnow, she writes:

The recent heightening of attention to cultural issues within sociology has spurred an interest in the cultural function of language. Scholars have turned their attention to the role of language in such varied social processes as power and authority... In doing so, they have added to our understanding of the social uses of discourse: constructing and communicating ideas and beliefs, symbolizing self and communities, and modelling ideologies and behaviours.

(ibid. p9)

However, she continues,

Because speech has been neglected as a topic in the sociology of religion, analytical techniques for studying religious talk are generally unrefined. There are, however, models from work in other areas... to which a researcher ... can turn.

(ibid. p10)

The models to which she turns are those of discourse analysis. Her approach involves the identification of a series of general semantic categories exhibited by the sermons. Her analysis is based on a relatively unsophisticated form of content analysis. She develops three general categories of discursive response to secularity: accommodation, resistance and reframing.

Accommodation

refers to the adjustments that religion makes in its practices, pronouncements and creeds to bring them into conformity with the values and behaviours of secularity...

(ibid. p18)

Resistance refers to

the discursive techniques that... moderate reactions against secular culture may use in part as they attempt to buffer religion from the pressures of modernity...

(ibid. p24)

Reframing is described thus:

As speakers reframe religious issues, they reconceive the primary function of religious speech away from rendering propositional claims... Instead, speakers use religious formulations ... to provide holistic meaning, on two levels: to people as individuals, by supplying over-arching significance to the whole of life, and to people as members of collectivities, by orienting them around shared symbols in community.

(ibid. p28)

Witten's work is extremely valuable for a number of reasons, not least because it is one of very few recent analyses of religious speech (specifically, preaching) undertaken within the sociology of religion. Further, at least some of the sermons that she examines are from the tradition of Liberal Protestantism, a largely neglected area of mainline conventional religion.

The categories that she develops are also valuable. The most interesting from the present perspective is, however, the one that she develops least: that of "reframing". Further, she does not provide sufficient detail of the particular linguistic patterns and practices which support the discursive techniques that

she identifies. Also, as she allows (Witten 1993 p14), because of the design of her project (soliciting texts from otherwise unexamined contexts), there is no way that her analysis can describe the connection between the linguistic nature of the texts and their socio-cultural context (except by using the broadest of descriptors: evangelical, fundamentalist, liberal etc.).

Nevertheless, the "discursive responses" that she identifies allow of general application. Also, a number of points that she makes can be assumed without having to be re-argued (viz. the general orientation of Liberal Protestantism vis à vis North American culture).

Questions of age, gender and socio-economic status (either of the preachers or their congregations) do not enter into Witten's study.

Methodology

Methodologically, this study is relatively straight-forward. However, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed at the outset.

During the fall of 1993 and the winter of 1994, the field work was done through participant-observation of the Sunday worship services of a United Church congregation in downtown Ottawa (referred to as Congregation A). This was done relatively unobtrusively. I took my place among the congregation as one of them during the service and did nothing during the course of the service to distinguish myself. As often as was practicable, I arrived "on site" earlier than most members of the congregation, for two reasons. One was so that observation could be made, not only of the ritual of worship itself, but also of the times preceding and following when members of the congregation arrived and dispersed. As a consequence, information regarding interactions between members

of the congregation during these times was gathered. Also, interaction between myself and members of the congregation could take place. Secondly, permission was granted for unobtrusive sound-recordings of the worship services to be made. Consequently, my early arrival generally enabled me to ensure that the recording equipment (concealed at the front of the worship area and connected to the church sound-system) was operational. This was published in the church bulletin as was my later request regarding a questionnaire. In addition to this, the size of the congregation regularly present on a Sunday is little in excess of 100 and so I was easily identified as a new-comer. Quickly I became known to several members of the congregation as the person who was "recording the sermons".

In making my initial approach, permission was sought to make recordings of the sermons and it was only because of practical considerations that other parts of the service were also recorded. This was because, initially, my intent had been to focus solely on the sermons. Further, I wished to avoid dependence on written texts as a source of material. However, during the course of my field-work two factors became apparent. In the first place, it became clear that a satisfactory analysis of the sermon would not be possible unless the other elements in the worship service were taken into account. Also, these elements showed themselves to be significant in their own right. In the second place, as the field-work progressed and observations were subjected to preliminary analysis, it became clear that the correct analytic perspective would be achieved not by a consideration of the speech characteristics of the preacher but rather by the total social and ritual "context of situation". It became clear that the written texts of the sermons were insufficient as objects of analysis not because they did not contain a record of the vocal characteristics of the preaching

performance. Rather, they were insufficient because they gave no indication of the sermons' relationship to other contextual elements: both ritual and social.

During the time in which field-work was done in this congregation, periodic visits were also made to other churches. Specifically, two other United Church congregations (Congregations B and C) were contacted and visits made as a participant-observer to their Sunday worship rituals. These congregations were not studied intensively, the intention being to gather comparative material to supplement and support the study of Congregation A. These other congregations were chosen because they were comparable in a number of ways to Congregation A. All are located in the urban area and draw their congregations from white anglophone middle class residents. Further, they all claim for themselves a measure of renewal in the face of general decline in church attendance. The significance of the comparative material will be considered in detail below.

In addition to the comparative material made available through participant-observation, other forms of comparison were made as well. Through the cooperation of the ministerial staffs of these churches, sound recordings and written texts of sermons preached in them were made available. Also, interviews were conducted with the ministers of each of the congregations. Finally, a questionnaire was administered to members of each of the three congregations.

Interviews

The interviews, which were semi-structured, were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were made available to the ministers for their comments and/or amendments. In no case were any amendments requested. All interviews were conducted in the ministers' offices on their church premises. A "semi-structured"

INTERVIEW OUTLINE

1. Personal: age, marital status, children/ages,
 how long in ministry? How many churches?
 how long at this church?
 before ministry? Education? Family background.
2. Becoming a minister:
 Process: general training, personal,
 How long? Family support?
 Judgement on training
 "Vocation", formative experiences, books.
3. Nature of Ministry:
 general characterizations,
 specific: day to day, v. private life?
 What (if anything) is special about this church?
4. Sermon Preparation/Preaching:
 what proportion of time?
 relation to other aspects of ministry?
 importance? purpose in general
 Bible (use of lectionary)
 specific purposes (individual sermons)
 relationship to congregation:
 - how should they respond to preaching?
 - how should they be active in the preaching?
5. "The heart of Christianity is..."
 - complete the sentence.

format was preferred in each case so that consistency in the questions asked and the topics broached was ensured. However, by avoiding the rigidity of a more formally structured interview, sufficient leeway was built in to allow for digressions and unforeseen information to be pursued as it arose.

The main advantage was that the interviewee could feel at liberty to expound at length on the topics raised and to explain fully their views and opinions. A possible disadvantage of this approach is that not all topics would be covered in the same depth in each interview.

The interview schedule is given below. As can be seen, this does not stipulate particular questions (in terms of wording), but rather, indicates a series of topics. In the case of personal details, these are very specific. As is evidenced by the transcripts, the way in which topics were raised can vary greatly (in terms of the wording used by the interviewer), depending on the immediate context and also on the degree of cooperation and understanding shown by the interviewee.

Questionnaire

A major source of the data upon which this study is based was gathered by means of a questionnaire. In terms of its development and administration, this instrument is similar to many others used in comparable studies. However, in terms of the use made of the data so gathered, it and, therefore the study, differ substantially from the usual form. It is important that this be made clear at the outset. The function of the questionnaire in the present study is peculiar in two respects.

In the case of Congregation A, church membership lists were made available

in a controlled and limited fashion. The congregation was informed by means of a newsletter and the church bulletin that a questionnaire would be administered. By this means, members of the congregation were given the opportunity to exclude themselves from possible selection. After this, 100 names and addresses were selected randomly. This selection was then vetted by the minister to avoid selection of chronically "shut-in" members (elderly members who maintained church membership but rarely, if ever, attended worship services). When these were eliminated from the original selection, others were chosen to replace them. One hundred questionnaires were mailed out . 56 were returned, having been completed.

Both the size of the selection and of the return are significant. The church membership lists from which selection was made numbered slightly in excess of 200 names and addresses. The original selection represented, therefore, almost 50% and the return represented almost 25% of the total membership. Further, as has been noted already, typical attendance at Sunday worship services is slightly in excess of 100 people (including children, who were not used as subjects of the questionnaire). Consequently, the returned questionnaires represent approximately 50% of an average Sunday congregation.

In what follows, no attempt is made to treat the results of the questionnaire returns statistically. Results are reported numerically and in the form of percentages as a convenience. However, they are not to be understood as a representative sample of a larger population, the character of which is then determined inferentially. Rather, the results are treated in a direct fashion, as the substantial record of who members of the congregation are and what they think.

In the present study, the questionnaire has been used as a convenient way

to gather anonymous information from individual members of the congregation. It has not been used to produce a summary of the (hypothetical) shared traits and beliefs of a supposedly homogeneous "audience".

The homogeneity of the "audience" (in terms of their communicative competence) is an underlying assumption of many studies of ritual and of preaching in particular. For example, in Antoun's (1989) otherwise exemplary study of Islamic preaching in rural Jordan, his account of the preacher's "success" rests on an assumption that the villagers who make up the mosque congregation all share, unproblematically, in a cultural and symbolic universe of discourse. They are all considered to share a common repertoire of concepts and beliefs that the preacher can draw upon in order to "communicate effectively". Ethnographic studies which recognize this assumption are rare indeed (Fernandez 1967 is an exception, but does not progress beyond recognition of the assumption).

Clearly, a congregation in contemporary Western culture cannot be imagined in the same way. At the very least, the effects of the division of labour and the associated production of class and status stratifications must be taken into account. Typically, this is done by taking measures of age, gender and SES. However, in other important respects, it is usually assumed that a congregation is homogeneous. The very fact that these individuals form a congregation must surely indicate that in some significant - possibly crucial - fashion, they are the "same". This obvious (and therefore unstated) assumption often colours the whole trajectory of analysis. Even where important differences are recognized, there is nevertheless an underlying assumption that the individuals legitimately may be considered to form and be members of a group. More often this homogeneity is assumed in the area of their character as an audience: in their supposedly

shared ability to understand in the same way any message that is communicated to them.

For example, in a study of reactions to sermons among Catholic laity, the authors conclude that

... sermons have a moderate effect and...
social variables such as educational
attainment, marital status and involvement
in parish activities are useful predictors
of sermon effectiveness.

(Newman and Wright 1980 p205)

Here, the same model of communication (sender: message: receiver) is implicit. The "effectiveness" of the message - the sermons' success or failure as communicative acts - is dealt with in terms of variability among the audience: in terms of measurable deviation from an implicit homogeneous norm.

The nature of the audience is a question considered by scholars in Media Studies (see, eg. Allor 1988). While this work concentrates on the electronic media, it is relevant to the present study. For example Ien Ang's observations about television audiences make a valuable point. He says

... lumping people together as so many members
of a "television audience" already stresses
something that compounds and unifies them...
Basically, it is people's shared orientation
toward some focal point - a centre of
transmission, a centre of attraction - that
turns them into "audience members". In this
context... audience as taxonomic collective
is in principle a term of amassment. At the
same time, representing an audience as a
collection of people also implies an act of
demarcation, of categorization: some people
are considered part of it, others are not.

(Ang 1991 p35)

A questionnaire in the present context would usually be conceived of as an

instrument to measure uniformity and variation in social categories and, further, to gain some measure of the attitudes and beliefs of the members of the congregation.

An extreme form of this approach is exemplified by the positivism of much of N. American social psychology and studies of religion inspired by it. (An instructive example is furnished by the work of Robert Wuthnow, whose work in the early 1970s is exemplary of this approach. His later work - eg. Wuthnow 1979 and 1987 - shows a growing discontent and, finally, rejection of this approach.) In this approach, questionnaire items are constructed to provide reliable indicators of beliefs and attitudes. These beliefs and attitudes are considered to be stable, persistent over time and to be reliably correlated with behaviour. If this approach were used in the present study, such identifications could be correlated with response patterns to sermons or preaching styles in order to produce an explanation of why some kinds of preaching are effective and some are not.

A different approach is adopted here. The various items in the questionnaire are conceived of primarily as indicators of difference rather than of uniformity. The questionnaire becomes, in fact, a kind of "short hand" ethnographic interview. Further, responses are not considered as indicators of underlying "traits", but rather as indicators of the various resources that the individuals bring to their active participation in the process of discursive construction which is the sermon preached and heard (see Jhally and Livant 1986 on this point). Likewise, variation in individuals' responses to a sermon is not interpreted as variation in the "success" of the communication process. Rather, it is an indicator of the variation in the way that members of the congregation act collectively to produce for themselves individually appropriated symbolic discourse.

Specifically, the questionnaire was designed to collect several kinds of information. In the first place, an attempt was made to gather general demographic information about church membership (age, gender, marital status). In addition, however, an attempt was made to obtain a simple qualitative indication of social mobility. The pertinence of Bourdieu's insight into the dual significance of cultural and economic capital for tracing the trajectory of subjects through social space was recognized. An attempt to gauge this was made by asking respondents not only about their educational attainment and occupation, but also those of their parents.

Another group of questions attempted to elicit information about religious affiliation, belief and theological opinion. This was done by asking about denominational affiliation and church attendance of the respondents and of their parental family. In addition, a series of questions were designed to give some indication of where on the spectrum of Protestant opinion these individuals were to be found, if, indeed, they could be so placed. In the absence of well developed and agreed upon identifiers for Liberal Protestantism, these questions were designed after a study of the several typologies of religious opinion. James Barr's (Barr 1977) definition of fundamentalism (in terms of biblical inerrancy, exclusivism, conversion experience and hostility to liberalism) was used as a limiting case. Likewise, James Davidson Hunter's distinction between confessional and conversional evangelicalism (Hunter 1983: inerrancy of the Bible, the divinity of Christ and either conversion experience or salvific value of Christ's life, or both) was taken into account.

On the basis of these and Wade Clark Roof's (1978) study of American liberal Protestantism, a number of significant markers of liberal Protestant opinion were identified. They are: attitude towards the authority of the Bible; opinion

regarding the divinity of Jesus Christ; belief about the way that religious belief is or should be expressed in practice. In addition, an attempt was made to measure the degree to which individuals could be said to exemplify the more general religious typology developed by Towler (1984). This is a valuable sociological and behavioural typology compared to the generally intellectual and confessionally-based definitions used in North American studies.

Finally, a series of questions attempted to elicit information about the respondents' attitudes to the worship services they attended, the minister both as pastor and as worship leader and preacher. In keeping with the position outlined above, an attempt was also made to gauge the nature and degree of productive activity that the respondents engaged in as participants in the worship service.

Statement of Hypothesis

In his consideration of preaching, Weber makes a number of claims. These provide a suitable vantage point from which to develop a concise and preliminary statement of the position argued here.

Weber makes two claims about preaching, which he defines, rather prosaically, as "collective instruction concerning religious and ethical matters" (Weber 1963 p74). He says that preaching is uniquely associated with prophetic religion and that the importance of preaching is inversely proportional to the magical components of a religion. Secondly, he says that preaching declines in importance wherever revealed religion is transformed by routinization.

Preaching unfolds its power most strongly in periods of prophetic excitation. In the treadmill of daily living it declines sharply to an almost complete lack of influence upon the conduct of life, for the very reason that the charisma of speech is an individual matter.

(Weber 1963 p75)

Like Weber's definition of preaching, the form of religiousness which is the subject matter of this study is very prosaic. It is, indeed, religion which is part of the "treadmill of daily (or at least weekly) living." Further, United Church Christianity has developed far from the charismas of early low church dissent, through the processes of routinization.

Nevertheless, I wish to argue that preaching in this form of religion functions significantly as a pre-eminent element in the ritual of worship. In the face of the forces that Weber and others have described, conventional mainstream Christianity has been able, in particular situations, to develop various "discursive responses". Specifically, in the congregation studied here, Christian discourse has been "reframed". The sermons are not primarily "instruction on religious and ethical matters". Rather, they are the means by which the symbolic resources of Christianity are made available to those present in order that they may appropriate for themselves the means of personal and collective self-description and, therefore, transformation.

The particular hypothesis defended here is that these discursive processes, which may be identified through ethnographic description and analysis, may be shown to be realized through specific linguistic practices (the very individual "charisma of speech") identifiable at both a semantic and lexico-grammatical level.

Chapter Two: Portrait of a Congregation

The United Church of Canada is seventy years old. It was formed in 1925 by a union of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches.

The circumstances of this union have been dealt with in detail elsewhere (see Morrow 1923 and Silcox 1933) and it is unnecessary to do more than summarize the main events here. However, because of their relevance to this study, a number of the generally accepted views of these events require some consideration.

The origins of the 1925 union may be traced to the General Conference of the Methodist Church, held in Winnipeg in 1902. It was customary for representatives of other denominations to attend as observers and, on occasion, to address the conference in order to extend "fraternal greetings". On this particular occasion, a representative of the Presbyterian Church, Principal William Patrick of Manitoba College, took the opportunity to propose union between the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

This was received favourably and, in consequence, a formal proposal of union was made to Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Anglican and Baptist churches.

The Baptists quickly rejected the proposal. They did so in a document (reproduced in Morrow 1923) which cites a number of theological issues (infant baptism, other sacraments) about which the Baptist positions were felt to be irreconcilably different from those of other churches. Further, the question of how the church is to be understood - a question of basic ecclesiology - was stressed. For the Baptists, the church (or, more properly, churches) is understood as a purely voluntary association of individuals who have achieved salvation. This association has a number of valuable effects (fellowship, witness,

the growth of holiness). However, none of these is essential for salvation. It is a moot question as to the degree to which this conception of church distinguished the Baptists from the Congregationalists and (some of) the Presbyterians.

Indeed, this same ecclesiological issue was dealt with repeatedly in the deliberations undertaken by various committees charged with working out the details of union. More often than not, this was done implicitly. The issues addressed explicitly are ones of practical administration and organization. These are, however, expression of this underlying theological concern.

It is only by failing to recognize this that the received wisdom concerning these deliberations can be maintained. This is that the discussions which led to union are characterized by a singular lack of theological debate and reflection. This assessment is only possible if the significance of ecclesiology is ignored.

The response of the Anglican Church was more equivocal, though initially sympathetic. As time went by, however, concerns over the episcopacy (another aspect of the same ecclesiological issue) resulted in Anglican withdrawal from the process.

A Joint Committee of representatives from the three remaining denominations met through 1904 to 1908, before producing an initial report. This was received with general agreement by both Methodists and Presbyterians. The Congregationalists raised a number of concerns.

In 1909, what became known as the "Basis of Union" was considered by the Annual Conferences of each of the three remaining denominations. Then, in the years following (1910 - 1912), individual congregations were asked for their opinion. After the initial general agreement, opposition to union grew, particularly among Presbyterians. Debate was further delayed because of the First World War and therefore it was not until 1921 that general approval was achieved and an

attempt begun to receive enabling legislation from the federal Parliament. As has been noted by Clifford (1985), the union of 1925 did not mark the end of debate, which was carried forward in the courts by dissenters from Union who form what is now known as the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Accounts of Church Union depict the Congregationalist Church as one in decline, if not on the verge of collapse. It is therefore treated as playing a minor role in the process leading to Union. Morrow, for instance, says:

The part taken by the Congregationalists
counted for comparatively little. They
were few and uninfluential in Canada.
(Morrow 1923 p19)

In particular, the objections raised by the Congregationalists to the report of the Joint Committee are treated as of little consequence. Further, these objections are said to have been ignored, presumably reflecting the minor role and lack of bargaining power enjoyed by this denomination.

The Congregationalists raised four points. They felt that any creed expressing the common faith of a United Church should be simple and should emphasize Christian experience and conduct over doctrine. This reflected traditional Congregationalist distrust of formulaic expressions of faith. Further, they felt that ministers should not be obliged to pledge adherence to any such creeds as a condition of ordination or pastoral appointment. They also wished to ensure that any and all elements of a United Church constitution should be such that revision and change be possible in the future. Finally, they wished for assurances regarding the autonomy of local congregations.

Contrary to the conclusions reached by, for instance, Silcox, it seems that Congregationalist concerns were largely met, albeit with a certain ambiguity on

some points. Ambiguity, however, is a frequent hallmark of documents which record compromise and unresolved differences.

Response to Congregationalist concerns is clearest regarding ministers' qualifications. In the finally accepted provisions for ordination,

... candidates shall be examined on the
Statement of Doctrine of the United
Church and shall... satisfy the examining
body that they are in essential agreement
therewith...

(Silcox 1933 p144)

The key phrase here is "essential agreement". In practice, this has allowed a degree of latitude for ministers, resulting in a broad spectrum of theological opinion among United Church clergy, which is sometimes at variance with those of their congregations.

Candidates for ordination are also required to answer three questions which reflect Congregationalist concern with the personal basis of faith:

- a) Do you believe yourself to be a child of God?
- b) Do you believe yourself to be called by God
to the office of Christian ministry?
- c) Are you persuaded that Holy Scripture contain
sufficiently all doctrines required for
eternal salvation...?

The third question is especially significant. For conservative Protestants in the early years of twentieth century Canada, this voiced a traditional concern to uphold the Biblical source of doctrine. However, the United Church of Canada has since espoused the principles of nineteenth century European Biblical criticism.

As a consequence, Christian doctrine was placed, not upon a firm and unchanging foundation, but rather upon a continually questionable source which requires expert interpretation.

The final provisions adopted by the United church for the appointment of ministers to congregations also reflect a response to these initial Congregationalist concerns. However, they are more usually described as responding to traditional concerns of the Presbyterians over "patronage".

Indeed, the tensions over liberalism that seem endemic to the United Church of Canada can be traced just as reasonably to concerns raised by the Congregationalists as to tensions between Methodist and Presbyterian, which is the more usual.

Either of these leave unquestioned the degree to which theological heritage is a sufficient explanation.

A significant attempt to provide a sociological account of developments within the United Church has been made by McLeod (1980) in his examination of the United Church during the post-war years from 1946 to 1977. He does this by examining the United Church in terms of the concept of "denomination", where this is understood (following Martin 1962) as a sociological type distinct from the more familiar "church" and "sect". According to McLeod, this is a key to understanding the nature of the Canadian religious situation, which is

.. a singular case in comparison to the European and American situations. The Canadian Protestant tradition has been dominated by moderate to liberal denominations.

(McLeod 1980 p24)

In fact, McLeod goes on to claim "Canada has developed its own unique

pattern of religious life" characterized by "its history of church unions and its lack of an established church" (ibid. p26).

McLeod is no doubt correct in asserting the unique nature of the Canadian religious situation. However, his other claims are more questionable. In describing the church union of 1925 as part of a larger history of church unions, McLeod reiterates part of the conventional wisdom about the origins of the United Church of Canada (as does Silcox also). A chart published in 1910 (reproduced in Morrow) depicts the United Church of Canada as the final stage in a genealogical progression whereby various small churches had been progressively amalgamated to produce the "forebears" of the United Church. However, as Grant cautions:

one may too readily conclude that
Canadian church history has been marked
by a constant trend towards union. In
fact, tendencies to union and to
division have been in constant tension,
and more than once, division and union
have been intimately associated.

(Grant 1967 p7)

McLeod also, perhaps, underestimates the stated ambition of the United Church to become, if not an established church, then a national church. So, the Preamble to the "Basis of Union" states that

It shall be the policy of the United
Church to foster the spirit of unity
in the hope that this sentiment of
unity may in due time, so far as
Canada is concerned, take shape in a
church which may fittingly be
described as national.

(quoted in ibid p30)

McLeod seeks to explain the developments in the United Church as a function of its nature as a denomination. He notes that a significant and

permanent bureaucracy has developed in order to administer a church which, from the outset, has been concerned with questions of accountability.

Since Union, the United Church has developed, in addition to its cumbersome system of presbyteries and assemblies, a permanent bureaucracy operating from a "Head Office", independently of any local congregation. As has been argued in the case of the United Church of Christ in America (in Pratt 1972) this can lead to a tension between the greater representation of liberal forces at a national - and policy setting - level and the broader spectrum of opinion at the congregational level. This can lead to the perception of a conservative lay population led unwillingly by a liberal leadership.

This point is also made by O'Toole and his associates (O'Toole et al. 1991) in their consideration of the "crisis" that faces the United Church as a result of the debate over the ordination of homosexuals to the ministry. It seems, however, that they fail with others to appreciate the full significance of the role of a "permanent bureaucracy" in the development of the United Church.

The recent and continuing debate within the United Church over sexual orientation and the ordination of homosexuals in particular, is viewed by many as a watershed in its history (eg. O'Toole et al. 1991, Riordan 1990). Indeed, it is a major cause of the formation and continual success of "Community of Concern", which represents conservative opposition to this and other liberal policies of the United Church.

This issue has been the subject of much media attention. However, in spite of the passions which issues of sexuality arouse, this is but one among a number of issues that are currently debated by United Church members (a point noted in the United Church document on sexual orientation "Gift, Dilemma and Promise"). For some, this may seem to be an inevitable result of unresolved tensions

between liberal and conservative forces present since Church Union. Just as plausibly, it may be considered to be another example of the continuing influence of Congregationalism. In fact, "Gift, Dilemma and Promise" explicitly subordinates the authority of scripture to the witness of authentic religious experience. It is at least noteworthy that what is usually judged to be an example of the triumph of liberalism within the United Church, can equally be judged as a further example of the enduring influence of the Congregationalist tradition.

The newsworthiness of this current debate may also serve to mask the significance of an earlier development, one that, as will be argued below, is as important as any other since 1925. This is the production and implementation of the "New Curriculum": a comprehensive Sunday School and Adult Bible Study programme introduced in the mid-60s. This was the primary means by which liberal Protestant attitudes and ideas about the Bible were made widespread at a popular level.

In one of the many study guides and booklets produced to support the New Curriculum, this is stated clearly:

Today there is a return to Bible Study.
Study groups are forming and continuing
to meet regularly... in the New
Curriculum, annual adult Basic Books and
Study Guides for use with the Bible are
provided for such groups. It is a new
day in Bible Study. Now the rich
dividends of biblical scholarship are
being distributed...

(McNairn 1965 p28-9)

This quotation is taken from one of a number of similar study guides. It is intended to fulfil three purposes: to act as a guide for individual reading of the Bible; to provide the basis for adult Bible study sessions; and to be used in the training of Sunday school teachers of the New Curriculum. This particular book

is about Jesus Christ and contains introductory material on the gospels. Topics such as the "Q" hypothesis and the synoptic problem, form criticism and the cultural background to the gospels are covered. Other comparable study guides published at the same time introduce, in a simple and accessible fashion, other aspects of the "dividends of biblical scholarship".

A guiding principle, underlying all the New Curriculum material, is the following

It is fundamental to any proper method of Bible study that the part shall be studied in relation to the whole. For there is a unity in the Bible; its many parts are held together by a common thread. This thread is the story of God's saving purpose. It is sometimes called salvation history...

(ibid. p29)

The "New Curriculum" is not new any more and it has been superseded by developments in religious education during the 1970s and '80s (a summary of which is given by Rummary 1975). The congregation studied here now makes use of another programme recently developed by the United Church called "The Whole People of God". This latter stresses ideas such as intergenerational teaching and the integration of liturgy and catechesis, both of which were unheard of in the 1960s, when the New Curriculum was developed. The New Curriculum, however, remains a landmark in the development of the United Church as a liberal Protestant denomination. While the programme itself has been superseded, a number of the characteristics of the present-day United Church can be traced to its effects, as will be argued below.

First United Church was formed in 1925 by the union of First Congregational Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church. The origins of these

two churches are connected with the development of the local area, first as Bytown, then as Ottawa.

In 1826, Colonel By arrived in the area to supervise the construction of the Rideau Canal system. The following year, a barrack was erected to house the Royal Sappers who were to provide the labour force for this project. Other settlers arrived and the development of the town began. During this period, a number of Protestant churches were established. In 1827, a Methodist chapel was established and St. Andrew's Presbyterian church was founded. In 1832, Christ Church Anglican was founded and in 1844, Knox Presbyterian was formed as an offshoot of St. Andrew's.

Though there are records of Congregationalists in the area during the 1830s, their activities were sporadic and the founding of a Congregationalist church is usually dated 1846, when a Congregationalist minister from Hawkesbury began to hold Sunday services in the Oddfellows Hall. By the following year, a building was under construction and in November of 1847, the basement of New Congregational Church was opened for worship. This first venture, however, did not survive. Financial resources were insufficient and, as a consequence, in 1850, the building was sold. Although uncertain, it is probable that the congregation survived for a time, continuing to worship in the same building, which now became a Temperance Hall, renting the space as tenants.

If there was any break in Congregationalist worship during this period, it was short lived, for there are records of a Sunday School being active in 1859 and by 1862 a tract of ground had been purchased for the construction of another church. This second venture was a success. By 1864, the congregation had hired the services of a sexton to keep the church clean and by 1865, the debt on the church had been paid off. Church membership is recorded as being

55 in 1877, but had almost tripled to 146 by 1888. In the last years of the century, the church continued to prosper, so much so that a new, bigger church was constructed on the same site (at Elgin and Albert streets) and two mission churches (supported by this congregation) were opened in the southern end of the city, which was rapidly expanding. Due to this urban expansion, the church was now surrounded by the commercial core of the city. Consequently, its location became less desirable as the site of a church, but very desirable (and valuable) as a commercial site. Therefore, in 1911, the property was sold and a new church built on the present site on Kent Street at Florence.

In the 1870s, a Presbyterian church had been founded on what is now Somerset Street. This soon moved to a new site on the corner of Preston and Elm and was named Erskine Presbyterian Church. This building was destroyed by fire in 1900, but the congregation continued, using temporary space until a new permanent home was found in 1905 (on Bronson Avenue, which site the church still occupies).

In 1908, a dispute arose among the members of this congregation over the choice of a new minister. No resolution was found and eventually, in 1911, a large number of the members separated to form Westminster Presbyterian church. Official recognition of this new church was not granted until 1915, so, for a number of years, it existed in temporary space as an independent church. During this period, Westminster Church began negotiations with First Congregational with a view to uniting the two churches. When it became clear that official Church Union would take place, the resolution of these negotiations was postponed so that the new congregation could be formed as part of the United church rather than as an independent church. As it was, their union preceded official Church Union by some months. Meanwhile, Erskine Presbyterian Church voted to remain

outside of union and, as a consequence, when Union was announced, a number of members left and joined First United.

The way in which the union of First Congregational and Westminster Presbyterian was celebrated is remembered as a significant event in their history and, as such, is worth recording here.

Thus it was that on February 15, 1925, Mr. Whidden of the Westminster Church with his congregation marched down the few blocks to their new home while the Congregational members stood in the two side sections and the new members might be received into the centre portion of the church. It was a deeply moving, unforgettable service and so the two became one body to be known as First United Church of Ottawa.

(Living Our Faith p14)

Formed in this fashion, First United Church continued as a large and successful congregation serving an established residential area in the years that followed. The history of the congregation records particular success in youth ministry during the pre-war years. In the years that spanned the Second World War, Sunday congregations filled the church, including the upstairs balcony. First United continued to thrive after the war, its success reflected in its financial position. In 1958, the Ottawa Presbytery United Church Extension fund was established. This served to assist in the foundation of new congregations in the suburbs that were developing south of the city. First United was able to pledge \$12,000 per year for three years and was the first church in the Ottawa Presbytery to complete its pledge.

In 1961, membership stood at 515. However, the sixties were a decade of decline for First United and other inner city congregations, as the suburbs became the dwelling place for most people. This is indicated especially clearly in

a personal reminiscence of the minister who served at First United from 1961 to 1971. He recalled that

The congregation was not too large and the minister and members were able to get to know each other well... I remember the Sunday when the service was cancelled because of a snowstorm, and it was possible to let everyone know in the morning by telephone.

(Living Our Faith p17)

Clearly, this is not a congregation that fills the church including the balcony. The decline in numbers continued into the 1970s. It is clear that the congregation was conscious of their situation and was concerned about the future. This time was remembered during a special service held in 1987 to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the church.

The seventies were a time when the culture was turning even further from the Church, and the Church-going population in Centretown declined.

(ibid. p37)

In 1985, the minister who had served since the beginning of the 1970s retired, to be replaced by the present incumbent. The text of the same anniversary service says this:

We were, in 1984-85 at a turning point. We had to face questions like, Should we close our doors and join with another congregation? Should we move our Church to a new community that needed it? or, Should we try to find our place here?

(ibid. p37)

The retirement of their minister was an occasion of deep crisis for the congregation. During the 1970s, numbers had continued to dwindle. In an attempt

to make good use of their facilities, for a time the Ottawa Chinese United Church had shared the use of the church building. However, eventually this church had grown to such an extent that they had to move away to their own more spacious premises.

First United Church in the 1980s, therefore, was not merely in decline, but at the point of seriously considering dissolution. This was the situation facing them and their new minister, the present incumbent. In an interview, the minister spoke about this situation that faced her on her appointment. Because of its relevance to the present study it is worth quoting at length. This is particularly significant because of the way that she describes the events, linking them to earlier events in the history of the congregation.

During the interview, I asked the minister about her ideas of ministry and, more specifically, about her experiences of trying to implement these ideas when she became minister of this congregation. The immediate context of her reply, which is given below, was a response to questions about how easy or difficult this had been for her, given the fact that she came to a congregation with its own history and local traditions of over sixty years. She said:

Before Church Union took place, before the United Church was formed, the Presbyterians and the Congregational Church here formed a unit and... that's why we're called First United. Not long before... but they were still way out in front, they took the risk of doing Church Union... before it actually happened. So... there are ways in which this congregation has... been involved in outreach. ... This church raised tons of money at one point ... for the Church Extension Fund which is why churches like Barrhaven and... Orleans now are able to have land... so concern for doing mission work has been there... [T]he other thing that's been there has been a sense of welcoming new people and that's been right from the beginning. One of the myths around here, I mean it's a true story, but

one of, kind of, formative myths is how when the Presbyterian Church came here, the Congregational members went to each side and allowed the Presbyterians to come into the heart of the church. Right into the middle. And... that's a formative story... and that's very much what these older people have done. When I came here they had money for three years and they didn't... know if they could survive and... so I came here knowing that it was either going to be death with dignity... or renewal and they wanted to try renewal... [S]o, renewal happened, it happened very slowly, but because we were building on the basis of people welcoming people in and there wasn't this hard and fast, well we've always done it this way... I didn't have an awful lot of resistance... So, what the people did was, they created space, and they did and they have done...

(A18/19)

Much could be said by way of analysis of this account. However, for present purposes it is sufficient to note the following. The present minister describes the congregation at the time of her appointment as one that had declined to the extent that its viability was in question. Further, she describes it as having undergone renewal since then. She does so in terms that link the origins of the congregation with this renewal. These origins, especially in the story already related which has the character of a "charter myth", are described as evidence of the welcoming and open nature of the congregation. It is these same qualities that are invoked to explain why renewal was possible and how it succeeded.

There is no direct evidence either to support or confute this evaluation. However, the question of renewal and the degree to which this has occurred is something that can be approached by examining the data gathered as part of the study.

Before doing so, however, it is appropriate to describe the nature of the data and the uses to which they will be put.

The data are of two kinds. In the first place, information was gathered by means of participant-observation of the worship services. Secondly, a questionnaire was administered to a random selection from members of the congregation. It is not necessary to reiterate what has already been said about the collection of information by this means (in the Introduction). However, the two sources (observation and questionnaire) complement and supplement each other. Further, since no attempt is made to draw conclusions on the basis of inferential statistics, it seems legitimate to interrogate the results of the questionnaire returns directly. In what follows, the only assumption made is that a reliable description of the whole congregation may be produced on the basis of returns representing a random 25% of the total membership. By "whole congregation", I mean not only those individuals who attended on a particular occasion, but all those active members who attended on some occasions over the period of time during which the study took place. The results of questionnaire returns from two other United Church congregations are also taken into account in producing this portrait of the congregation. These are used to provide comparative data, by which means, for instance, the typicality of the congregation under scrutiny may be assessed.

Before summarizing the information gathered through the questionnaire, a brief sketch of the congregation based on observation will be given.

Between 100-120 people attended the Sunday worship services during the period that they were observed for this study. The congregation consists of more females than males; more adults than children. All children who attend come accompanied by adults, either one or both of their parents. The children range in age from babes in arms and toddlers to those of elementary school age. Few, if any, adolescents were observed.

The adults range in age from young (20s) to seniors (retirement age and above). Some attend as couples, either with or without children. There are one or two same-sex couples, both male and female. A number of women (in their late 20s or 30s) attend with their children but without another adult companion. Most of those who are past retirement age come alone. Some of these older people are brought to church by other, younger people, often by car. These are people whose health is frail.

There is great variation in the dress of those who attend. Almost (but not all) males dress with some degree of formality. Most wear a suit and tie or at least a jacket and tie. Others wear shirt and jacket but no tie. Only one or two come more casually dressed in sweater or other casual clothes. Female dress showed more variation. A number of elderly women wore fur coats over dresses or skirts and blouses. Jewelry and hats were also worn. The period of study extended from early fall of one year through to the spring of the next year. Many of these women wore their fur coats from mid-fall through the winter and into the early spring. Other women, especially those in their 40s and 50s also dressed with a certain formality, indicating that they were "dressed for church". A noticeable number of younger women dressed in an altogether more casual fashion. They wore jeans or other casual slacks with shirts or sweaters. This group included both those with and without children.

On the basis of the questionnaire returns, this preliminary sketch can be supplemented as follows.

The majority of the congregation are female. This is a characteristic not only of this congregation, but also of the other two congregations examined and, quite probably, of Christian churches in general. Females make up 70% of this congregation. Most people who attend are married (about 40%). Almost 30% are

Chart showing age of members for all three congregations

CONG. AGE	ALL	FU	DC	GSJ
24 or less	1%	2%	-	4%
25-34	9%	15%	2%	11%
35-44	20%	35%	5%	22%
45-54	15%	13%	9%	33%
55-64	18%	18%	21%	11%
65 or more	34%	15%	61%	15%

ALL: aggregate of all three congregations

FU: First United (Congregation A)

DC: Dominion-Chalmers (Congregation B)

GSJ: Glebe-St. James (Congregation C)

Chart showing how long members have attended by age (FU only)

HOW LONG AGE	a few weeks	a month or two	six months	a year	1-5 years	6-10 years	more than 10 years
24 or less					2%		
25-34			2%	8%	4%	2%	
35-44	2%		4%		25%	8%	
45-54					10%	4%	
55-64				2%	10%	4%	4%
64 or more	2%				4%		10%

percentages reported as nearest whole numbers

single and 9% are widowed. 20% report themselves as divorced. This is a substantially higher proportion than in either of the two other congregations. Almost 40% report themselves as having children of school-age, while 28% have grown children. Approximately 34% have no children.

Membership is diverse in terms of age. Only 2% were 24 yrs. of age or less (the questionnaire was mailed only to adults: 18 yrs. and above). 15% were between 25 and 34 yrs. of age, while 36% were between 35 and 44 (the largest single group). In this regard, this congregation is distinct from the other two congregations examined, whose members are generally much older (see Chart 2-1).

Older people are represented in this congregation, though: 19% between 55 and 64 and 15% 65 yrs. or older. By combining these observations with those on the length of time that the members have been attending, it is possible to substantiate the claim that renewal has indeed taken place at this church during the tenure of the present minister. Over 50% report that they have attended for between 1 and 5 years. Another 16% have attended for between 6 and 10 years. Together, they account for almost 70% of the congregation, who started attending since the appointment of the present minister. On the other hand, less than 20% have attended for 1 year or less. 13% have attended for more than 10 years. Of this latter group, every one is 55 years of age or older. Over 70% of them are 65 years of age or older. The portrait that emerges from these observations is of a stable congregation dominated by adults in mid-life who have come to this church for between 5 and 10 years, but with a significant proportion of older adults who have attended for much longer (see Chart 2-2).

Almost 20% are retired. 57% report themselves as having full-time employment. About 5% describe themselves as full-time students. Over 15% describe themselves as having part-time employment. Almost all of this latter

Chart of education attained by males by education of fathers.

Dad ed. Edlev.	Not finished H.S.	H.S.	College Dipl.	B.A.	Higher Degree
Not H.S.					
H.S.		7%			
College Dipl.	15%				
B.A.	7%	7%		7%	7%
Higher Degree	7%	7%	7%	15%	7%

Chart 2-4

Chart of education attained by females by age.

Age Edlev.	24 or less	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 or more
Not H.S.						5%
H.S.	2%				8%	2%
College Dipl.		2%	5%		2%	5%
B.A.		2%	21%	8%		2%
Higher Degree		8%	8%	5%	8%	2%

group are female. Most of the occupations reported can be described as white-collar: a significant number work as civil servants for some level of government.

The education level of members of the congregation is generally high. Almost 70% have at least one degree from a University. 16% have a qualification from a community college. 11% report that the highest level of education completed is high school and under 4% report not having completed high school. By comparison to the general population, this congregation is highly educated. However, it is notable that one of the other congregations examined has members with even higher average levels of educational attainment.

When these observations are combined with information about parental levels of educational attainment, a simple, qualitative indicator of social mobility can be produced. Generally, the educational attainment of the congregation and (together with job status) their socio-economic status is significantly higher than that of their parents. This is especially clear in the case of males. Almost all the male members of the congregation have at least an undergraduate degree from a university. This is irrespective of the educational attainment of their fathers, which is much more diverse (see Chart 2-3).

The situation among female members is less uniform. Educational attainment is high, but less uniformly so than among the male members of the congregation. Almost 70% report having at least an undergraduate degree from a university. Almost 15% report having a qualification from a community college and over 15% report having no more than a high school education. A few report not having finished high school; they are most likely to be older, 65 yrs. of age or more (see Chart 2-4).

Approximately two-thirds of their mothers, however, had no more than a high school education (almost 25% were reported as not having finished high

Chart of education attained by females by education of mothers

Momed Edlev	Not H.S.	H.S.	College Dipl.	B.A.	Higher Degree
Not H.S.	5%				
H.S.	5%	5%		2%	
College Dipl.	5%	8%	2%		
B.A.	2%	10%	5%	8%	5%
Higher Degree	5%	10%	10%	5%	

school). Further, a substantial majority of females in this parental generation did not work outside the home, irrespective of their level of educational attainment (see Chart 2-5).

In general, therefore, one may conclude that the members of the congregation have experienced varying degrees of upward social mobility throughout the course of their lives. This is more marked, but also less uniform among female members, many of whom have experienced not only upward movement through socio-economic strata, but also have very different life chances and expectations than those of their mothers. The full significance of this will be considered below.

First United Church is recognized, and recognizes itself as a liberal Protestant church. However, the nature and degree of this liberalism is something that requires examination. As has been described above, a number of items in the questionnaire were designed to provide information about the religious beliefs of the members of the congregation.

Question # 24 required respondents to complete the sentence "The heart of Christianity is..." by selecting from among 6 possibilities. Question # 25 asked about the expression of Christian faith in practice. Question # 26 required a choice from among 4 statements concerning the divinity of Christ and question # 27 required a choice from among 6 statements about the Bible. These latter two questions attempted to gauge opinion in terms of classic markers of Protestant theological belief. However, it must be noted that here, as is often the case, liberal Protestantism is defined (implicitly) in terms of what it is not (not fundamentalism, not evangelicalism) rather than in terms of what it is.

Questions #24 and 25 attempted to provide supplementary ways of gauging

Responses to questions requesting a completion to the sentence:
 "The Heart of Christianity is..." (all congregations)

The Heart of Christianity is	ALL	FU	DC	GSJ
personal experience of Jesus	11%	4%	21%	4%
belief in God and Jesus as His Son	26	17	37	22
spiritual realm beyond everyday life	12	15	4	22
following Jesus' example	23	32	16	22
belonging to a community of faith	4	6	2	4
Following God's commandments as taught by the church	14	11	21	7

religious opinion, not in terms of theological categories, but in terms of typological categories (eg. traditionalist, fideist, exemplarist etc.).

So, for example, someone who responded that the heart of Christianity is a personal experience of Jesus as Saviour; that Jesus was divine in the sense that he was God among us and that the Bible is the Word of God and provides authoritative answers to all questions would count (in Barr's definition) as a fundamentalist. However, depending on the response to question #25, this same response could be further categorized as fideist, exemplarist etc. Again, one who responded that the heart of Christianity is following the example of Jesus; that Jesus was a great man and teacher, but not divine and that there are many ways that God communicates with us just as much or more so than the Bible might be taken to epitomize liberalism. On the basis of the data gathered, however, the reality seems to be more complicated.

Very few (4%) members of the congregation consider the "heart of Christianity" to be "a personal experience of Jesus as Saviour". Data produced by considering the returns from all three congregations together produce a comparable result. In total, only 11% of all respondents consider this to be the best response. Almost 50% of all respondents consider the heart of Christianity to be either "belief in God and Jesus as the Son of God" (a fideist or confessional response) or "following Jesus' example" (an "exemplarist" response). This latter response is the most prevalent among members of First United Church congregation, accounting for almost one third of returns (see Chart 2-6).

This "exemplarism" may be analyzed further by looking at response to question #25 which asked respondents to choose which of 5 responses was "the best way to express one's Christian faith in practice". In total, from responses from all three congregations, over one third of all respondents considered the

Chart 2-7

What is the best way to express the Christian faith (all congs.)

Best way to express faith	ALL	FU	DC	GSJ
Social justice	8%	19	-	4
support church community	28	19	42	15
Volunteer in the local community	3	2	5	4
pass on Christian values in the family	9	7	12	48
lead an honest, moral life	34	30	32	19

best way to express one's Christian faith was by "leading an honest, moral life". Responses from members of First United Church congregation were comparable to this general result: approximately 30%. Notable is the contrast to one of the other congregations. Almost half of the respondents considered the best response to be "passing on Christian values to your family". This congregation is the most family-oriented of the three examined (in part, due to its location in an affluent residential area occupied by families with school-age children). Further, the response "leading an honest, moral life" allows respondents to leave unresolved any possible tension between public and private foci of the Christian faith. Respondents who state that Christianity is best expressed by passing on values in the family locate Christianity firmly within the domestic or private sphere. Those who choose "leading an honest, moral life" can, at least in principle, do so both in the public, work-a-day world and at home (see Chart 2-7).

In terms of more traditionally theological terms, responses were equally interesting. Responses from First United were again comparable to those from all three congregations (52%: First United; 54%: total) in their conservative Christology. Approximately one half consider that "Jesus was divine in the sense that he was God living among us".

Slightly less than one third (31%: First United; 27%: total) consider that "Jesus was divine in the sense that while he was only a man, he was called by God in a unique way" (see Chart 2-8).

It is possible, therefore, to make a further distinction among kinds of exemplarism. On the basis of the present data, it is clearly possible to be a "moral exemplarist" without being a Christological one. In his development of a typology of "conventional religiosity", Towler (Towler 1984) suggested that those who consider Jesus to be a (or the) great moral example will also tend to

Chart 2-8

Responses to question asking about belief in Jesus' divinity

Jesus was divine	ALL	FU	DC	GSJ
God living among us	54%	52	59	46
uniquely called human being	27	31	25	25
embodied the best in humanity	11	12	11	13
not divine, but a great man and teacher	8	6	5	17

Chart 2-9

Responses to question asking about Bible as source of authority

The Bible is	ALL	FU	DC	GSJ
authoritative	17%	2%	33	4
needs interpretation by church	10	6	14	12
speaks directly to the individual	5	-	11	4
is the product of cultures and needs interpretation	30	38	13	52
is equal to other writings	3	6	2	-
God speaks in other ways just as much or more so	34	49	23	28

consider moral behaviour to be the best expression of Christianity and, indeed, its essence or "heart". However, here, among liberal Protestants in present-day, urban Canada, many are "moral exemplarists", stating that the best expression of Christian faith is through moral conduct, while only few consider Jesus in these same terms, preferring a more traditional fideist or confessional understanding of his divinity.

Responses to the question about the Bible show significant variation. 17% of all respondents consider the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God. However, this figure is skewed by returns from the biblically conservative Dominion Chalmers congregation. It is possible that results from the other two congregations are more representative of United Church attitudes (see Chart 2-9).

Large numbers of respondents consider that the "Bible is the Word of God but must be seen as the product of particular times and cultures". As will be argued below, it may be that this attitude to the Bible expresses the "classic" liberal Protestant view of scripture in the late twentieth century.

Equally large aggregate numbers chose to respond that "There are many ways that God communicates with us just as much or more so than the Bible". However, response to this alternative is skewed by the high proportion (almost 50%) of First United members who chose it. Almost twice the proportion at First United chose this response as in the other congregations. There are a number of possible explanations for this. One is that it reflects a greater regard for personal experience as an equal and alternative basis for religion. One may suggest that this is further evidence of the enduring influence of Congregationalism. This might be expected to be especially strong at First United, given its pre-Union origins in this tradition.

This suggestion is indirectly supported by another result. This is the

complete absence of respondents from First United who consider that the Bible "speaks directly to individuals". In historical and confessional terms, this option may be thought to represent the "Quaker" end of the spectrum. As such, it is not part of mainstream liberal Protestantism. Further, it shows that this "Quaker" attitude to the Bible and its interpretation is distinct from the "Congregationalist" attitude to the sources of religious belief. Just as it is necessary, apparently, to distinguish "Christological exemplarism" from "behavioural exemplarism", so, likewise, it seems necessary to make fine distinctions among attitudes to the scriptures. What has been called here the "congregationalist" attitude considers the Bible to be but one source of religious experience and not superior to personal experience. However, unlike the "Quaker" attitude, it does not consider that there is no need for expert and specialized interpretation of the scriptures.

As will be seen in what follows, this particular combination of attitudes is held by the minister of First United and clearly expressed through her preaching.

Chapter Three: Portrait of a Minister

Sharon Moon is a 48 year old married woman. She lives with her second husband, a professional artist, and her two sons aged 22 and 18, from her first marriage which ended in divorce.

She was born in 1945 in Slate River, in a small rural community in the Thunder Bay area. At the time of her birth, her father worked as a labourer in the logging camps. Later, he worked at various jobs in the community (pumping gas at a service station, operating a grader for the municipality) before securing a position with the Department of Highways. This provided a degree of security and eventually resulted in promotion to a supervisory position.

Her mother was a full-time homemaker, though at one time she sold cosmetics as an Avon representative. She also involved herself in the local community as a volunteer, serving at one time as the Chair of the local School Board. When the children were growing (Sharon Moon has one brother) she began to attend and be involved with the local United Church congregation.

Sharon Moon attended local schools before graduating from High School in Grade 13 and going on to attend Lakehead University. While she was in her first year there, the family moved to Toronto and she transferred to Queen's University in Kingston from where she graduated in 1967 with an honours degree in French and History.

While at Queen's, she became involved in student activities and took part in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. She also served as student representative to the Faculty Board.

Upon graduating from University, she immediately took a volunteer position with CUSO and spent one and a half years as a teacher at a Catholic High School in Ghana, West Africa. It was during this time in Africa that she married her

first husband whom she had met while at University.

On returning to Canada, she taught in a High School in Sault Ste. Marie before moving to London, Ontario. Here, her first child was born. With the birth of her children, she left teaching to become a stay-at-home mother. During this time, however, her interest in pottery which she had taken up as a hobby while teaching, developed into a full-time occupation and so, for a number of years, she worked as a professional potter, displaying and selling her work at craft fairs throughout southern Ontario.

Also during this time, she began to teach Sunday School at the United Church that she attended. As a result of this, she began to study the Bible, reading commentaries privately and also completing a Bible Study course. Eventually, she put herself forward as a candidate for ordination to the ministry in the United Church. She enrolled in the Master of Divinity programme at Queen's University. However, at the same time, her first marriage broke down, ending in divorce and she moved to Ottawa. Consequently, she was able to complete some of the degree requirements by attending courses at both Carleton and St. Paul Universities in Ottawa.

As part of her training for the ministry, she completed a Pastoral Internship at Emmanuel United Church (situated in a residential area of south Ottawa). Subsequent to this, she obtained a position at the same church as a Pastoral Associate. In 1985, she accepted the position of Pastor at First United Church, where she continues to serve at present.

This biographical sketch of Sharon Moon presents only the barest outline of her life. My interview with her also provides further information, however, especially about the history of her religious life.

Neither of her parents were church-goers when she was a small child. She described her father as having come from a Catholic background. However, his most recent experience of church attendance had been in a Baptist congregation. This was some time prior to his marriage and the birth of his children. Sharon Moon said that her mother had not been raised in any church: "My mother wasn't anything. My mother'd never been raised in the church."(A4)

When I asked about this, she said that her mother had been raised in a rural area (in what must have been the pre-war years of the depression) and that this was not considered especially unusual.

As small children, Sharon Moon and her brother were sent to a Baptist Church in the area. This was because of her father's positive memories of his own attendance at a Baptist church and also because this church offered to transport the children to and from Sunday service, enabling the parents to send the children to church without having to attend themselves.

As a consequence, Sharon Moon experienced fundamentalist Biblical Christianity at a very early age. After a time, however, her mother became concerned about the extreme nature of the Christianity that her children were being taught. The children stopped attending this church and began instead to attend a United Church in the area. No transportation was provided by this church and so their mother took them and so began to attend church herself.

An experience that Sharon Moon remembers "vividly" and which seems to epitomise her experience of the Baptist Church occurred sometime after this. She describes an occasion when she revisited the Baptist Church.

I can vividly remember going to a friend's house to sleep over and she was a Baptist, from the Baptist church, and so we went to the Sunday School in the morning and...

it was kind of like coming home, I wasn't aware of all this. My mother didn't say that this was a terrible place or anything like that. She just simply took us over to this other place and we began a different experience of church. So, as far as I was concerned, there wasn't anything wrong with the Baptist church, I just didn't go there anymore. So, when I went with my friend, there was this prayer that we, they would have spontaneous praying, and this man prayed for this backslider who was there this day, I mean, this was a small community, everybody knew that every Sunday since, I'd been at the United Church a mile away, you know, its not like I was living in the dens of sin and,er, some wild and wonderful place in Fort William. And they were, this backslider, and Jesus had seen fit to bring them back. Oh, I thought this was wonderful, until I realized it was me they were praying for. That was a really strong - that was a horrifying thing.

(A6)

The consequence of this experience is, says Sharon Moon, a lasting and "passionate hatred for fundamentalism" (A6).

From being a non-attender, her mother became a committed United Church member and it is clear that regular church attendance at the United Church was part of Sharon Moon's childhood at home. She mentions briefly two significant events that happened while she was still at home, but older, when she was in her teens. The first occurred when she was seventeen. She describes it as a call to ministry. On the basis of this experience, she went to the minister to discuss this, but, apparently, was told (contrary to United Church practice which, she surmises, the minister did not understand) that this was impossible because she was female. In ignorance, she accepted this. Later (but it cannot have been much later), she went again to the minister, this time to report ("in tears") that she no longer believed in God.

Even from these brief vignettes, certain things are clear. By late adolescence, religion played an important part in Sharon Moon's life. Her experience of church-going was clearly not just an unreflected-upon part of social and familial routine. Rather, hers was a faith which affected her deeply.

The minister's advice on this second occasion was as positive as it had previously been negative. He advised her to get in touch with the SCM (Student Christian Movement) when she began University. She did so and this provided her with a number of important things, possibly at a critical time in her personal development. It provided her with a peer group of like-minded individuals and a milieu in which her experience of Christianity could be explored in an intellectually more rigorous fashion. Further, this was possible while institutional and devotional commitment could be avoided. She describes this time as follows.

It was wonderful. It was the best thing that
happened to me... I found... a place where
I could question and search...

(A6)

and again,

It was in the SCM that I realized... you
could be a Christian without parking your
brains at the door.

(A7)

Among the books that she remembers reading at this time (the early to mid sixties) was John Robinson's "Honest to God". The influence of this famous, popular statement of twentieth century liberal Protestantism was "absolutely formative" on her.

The time that Sharon Moon spent in Africa, immediately after her graduation from University, exposed her to several new religious ideas and experiences. She met a number of missionaries, both religious and lay, some of whom impressed her

greatly. She taught at a Catholic high school and mixed daily with Catholic religious. She was thus exposed to the daily devotional and liturgical lives of these people, without herself taking part. At this time, she still did not practice her faith through any regular church attendance.

There is no indication that any of these experiences were formative in a religious sense. However, it is clear that her experience of her first marriage colours her whole memory of this time. This is hardly surprising, since this was when she got married and had to adjust to married life in an alien culture. Her remarks, however, indicate that this marriage was difficult and unhappy from the outset.

Sharon Moon did not "return to organized religion" for a number of years after this, having taught first in Sault Ste. Marie and then in London, Ont. Her return to active participation in the United Church was the direct result of the birth of her first child (in 1972). She described this as follows.

When I had my [first] child, that was
when I had a religious experience... a
very strong mystical experience... which
was a life changing experience...

(A9)

She began to attend church again as a result of this experience because she "didn't know where else to deal with this". Invited to elaborate on the nature of this experience, she gave the following description.

... I've known from that moment on that God
exists in a way that... I didn't really know
before, it was more of an abstraction. It
was not real, it was something out there
and that, the birth of that child just...
it was... well it was as people describe a
mystical experience. It was a profound, um,
breakthrough of, um, the numinous, the

transcendent, and, er, I simply knew that God existed and I felt a real sense of oneness and connection, connectedness with, with the Other, beyond myself, with all others who had ever given birth, throughout time... it was a very profound experience. And it drew me back to the church inspite of doctrinal... difficulties...

(A9)

There are two other things of significance in terms of religious development associated with this experience. The first is her interest in pottery. This began prior to the birth of her first child, but after her return from Africa. She took up pottery as a hobby when she was a High School teacher in Sault Ste. Marie.

... it was something that I did when I was teaching High School, I needed something that didn't have anything to do with books...

(A2)

and again,

... I was consciously trying to get away from books, do something totally different as a hobby while I was teaching...

(A2)

What began as a hobby developed after the birth of her children into a successful professional career. Further, however, she evaluates this now, in retrospect, as a means of personal, spiritual development.

... that was actually a time of real, developing of spirituality and silence and creativity and developed a whole different side of, the introverted side, the space side...

(A2)

Sharon Moon explains this in psychological terms:

Developing the other side in the Myers-Briggs kind of typology... I'm an intuitive off the map and I don't have an ounce of "S" in me... and so working with the other side is quite numinous.

(A2)

The activity of potting, which began as a hobby chosen to provide relief and change from teaching, became the means of experiencing and exploring the "numinous" throughout a period which extends before and after the birth of her first child and the mystical experience associated with it.

Not only was pottery different from the intellectual, bookish pursuit of teaching. It was also something done alone, in silence and which involved physical activity. This is part of the sense in which Sharon Moon speaks of it as involving "the other side". However, borrowing from the psychological typology of Myers-Briggs (developed on the basis of Jung's "introvert-extrovert" dichotomy), she also understands this experience as the means by which aspects of her psychological make-up not normally dominant or experienced consciously were recognized and dealt with. This she describes as numinous.

The second thing of significance associated with this time occurred after and as a direct result of her return to organized religion, in the wake of her religious experience.

She began to teach Sunday School and, as a consequence, found it necessary to study the Bible more seriously than she had done before. In my interview with her, I asked Sharon Moon how she had experienced attending church again. She replied:

There were parts of it I liked. I was surprised to see how much of the... God in our depths kind of theology had actually

got quote, unquote "down" or out or however you call that imagery, to the... congregational level, so in the prayers and in the sermons I found the kind of theology that connected with me and was something... The God that I knew, I could say, yeah this person seems to... it was stuff there that I could connect with. And then I'd run into some stuff that was just, made my, the hair on the back of my back just stand up on end. The hymns especially. The theology in the hymns, it would just drive me wild... it was the... very hierarchical theology and the very theistic theology... of a God, the out there God... and very military...

(A10)

As a consequence,

I originally went with teaching Sunday School to avoid having to sit through the worship.

(A11)

At this time (the early 1970s), the "New Curriculum" of the United Church had been available for several years. However, it seems that it was not used in the church that Sharon Moon attended. "I was teaching Davis C. Cook which is a fundamentalist programme." (A11)

Dissatisfied with and unwilling to teach the programme, she began an independent exploration of alternatives.

So I had to learn about the Bible. So I started reading some of the Abingdon Bible commentaries and reading some of the introductory articles, this stuff just blew my mind, it was so exciting, so interesting and so really, really neat.

(A11)

It is probable that in this way, Sharon Moon introduced herself to much of the thinking behind the United Church "New Curriculum". However, rather than reading the study materials available to United Church laity, instead she

educated herself in the kinds of critical Biblical study that form the intellectual and academic basis for those study materials.

The path that these explorations set her upon eventually led Sharon Moon to seek ordination as a United Church minister. According to her, there was no "key experience" of comparable significance which would, traditionally, be described as a "call to ministry".

It was more a cumulative thing... because
the path that I started on there... just
kept on increasing and I kept... learning
more and... developing my own theology...
and just sort of growing...

(A12)

In addition to this intellectual growth, however, was a growing dissatisfaction with her life in general.

... somehow, I'm getting to the point where
I've got two children by this stage and...
I'm beginning to feel a lot of unease... It
got to the point where the pottery was quite
successful... I had more orders than I had
time to do... but it wasn't... my gift. It
wasn't... what I was called to be about.
And part of me... knew that. And so every
time I'd go down to work, there'd be this
kind of unsettling going on... I felt
constantly drawn to be with, working with
people, that was really where my gift lay.

(A12/13)

Eventually, Sharon Moon put herself forward as a candidate for ministry and enrolled in the M.Div. programme at Queen's University. However, at this same time, her first marriage broke down and she became separated from her husband, eventually divorcing him. Concurrently, she moved to Ottawa and so, some of her studies for this degree were done at Carleton and St. Paul Universities, while on other occasions, she commuted between Kingston and Ottawa to fulfil the degree

requirements.

Among the many turbulent and personally unsettling events of this period, Sharon Moon singles out one as being especially formative in terms of her religious development. This was the first course she took, which was at Carleton University in the Department of Religious Studies, entitled "Models of God and Man in Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin and Jung". In some ways, the significance of this experience has to do with her self-esteem.

... I had convinced myself, or my life-situation had convinced me that I was stupid by this time, which was not the truth but it is what I felt... I didn't think I was going to pass [the course]. I got A+... I felt very proud of myself.
(A15)

Moreover, the subject matter of the course was

... formative... this was the clay molding, I was the clay that was being molded, my theology was being formed...
(A16)

This was due, not least, to the intensity with which she threw herself into these studies. In completing the course, she read the whole of Paul Tillich, the whole of Teilhard de Chardin and a substantial portion of Jung's Collected Works. It is evident that the ideas and concepts of these writers have formed Sharon Moon's theology in a number of ways, a fact that shows both in her conversations and her preaching.

The source of this information, a semi-structured interview (supplemented by documentary evidence), has both advantages and disadvantages. Compared to a more tightly controlled, structured interview, the possibility of responding to the unexpected disclosures and pursuing them is clearly advantageous. However,

there are a number of occasions when the need to observe the discipline imposed by the structure of the interview has precluded gathering more details on a number of subjects.

Perhaps the major advantage of a semi-structured approach is that it encourages responses from the interviewee in narrative form. As a consequence, the relative importance accorded to various life experiences by the interviewee becomes apparent.

This is the case in the interview with Sharon Moon. It is clear that she has had a number of experiences that could be described (by herself and conventionally) as religious. However, she does not evaluate all of them equally. In the course of the interview, I expected to hear some account of what is traditionally called a "call to ministry" or a "vocation" story. In the event, of the four interviews that I conducted with ministers (including the one with Sharon Moon), only one provided a classic narrative of a "call to ministry" while two others were altogether more equivocal. In the case of Sharon Moon, such a narrative is absent.

In the course of the interview, expecting such a narrative (or something similar), I attempted to advance our conversation beyond her account of her experiences in Africa. This was when Sharon Moon volunteered information about her "mystical experience" by saying: "But you're missing the key thing..." (A9)

In Sharon Moon's evaluation, the religious experience associated with the birth of her first child is "the key" to understanding her life and her vocation to the ministry. In fact, I suggest, this experience "stands proxy" for a specifically identifiable call to ministry. This is because her eventual decision to become a minister is a result of the "path I started on" (A12) in attempting to understand and deal with this experience. This is evident, not only from her

statement that there was no experience of comparable significance associated with her decision to train for ministry, but also from her response to my questions about her understanding of ministry. Her mystical experience provides her with a vocabulary with which to describe her ministry.

... I see myself, the image I used at the
time of ordination is an image that still
speaks to me, is a mid-wife... I'm not
giving birth, but I'm present at birthing
... my wisdom and knowledge of other
births help me help this other person...

(A16)

In Sharon Moon's understanding, a minister is one who helps people have the kind of experience that she herself has had and to understand it more fully when it occurs. As will be discussed below, this is also significant for her understanding of preaching.

This religious experience is clearly a key to Sharon Moon's self-understanding and, specifically, to her understanding of ministry. However, other events in her life are, I suggest, of equal importance. Her very early experiences of fundamentalist Christianity have left a lasting impression on her. However, this is of greater significance than merely providing a legacy of dislike for fundamentalism. In her narrative of this experience, it is the occasion of her return to the Baptist church and her realization that it was herself who was being prayed for as a "backslider" that stands out. Indeed, for a young child, this was, no doubt, a vivid and lasting experience. However, I suspect that this experience has come to serve as a "summary" for Sharon Moon's total evaluative memory of this period. For instance, prior to this final humiliation, she recalls that her attendance at the Baptist Church gave rise to conflict at home (at least in her experience of it).

Its interesting, because I can remember now having this discussion with my mother about creation and, er, I knew it had been done in seven days. And that anybody that didn't believe that was going to hell. And my mother didn't believe that and... I was just in horror that my mother was going to hell.

(A5/6)

There is no need to make this story carry more weight than it can bear. Nevertheless, it is clear that Sharon Moon had vivid and emotionally-engaging experiences of organized religion at an early age. Further, these experiences led to conflicting evaluations of her family and presented her with an idea of religion as something that causes judgements of people in terms of right and wrong and inclusion and exclusion.

The fact that in her adolescence religion was sufficiently significant for her to consider ministry confirms the lasting impression left by these early experiences. Further, they provide a perspective for her experiences at University with the SCM. These provided her with an opportunity to re-conceive Christianity in a more intellectual, more liberal and, perhaps, less emotional fashion than previously. Further, in her account of her return to church attendance as an adult, these same ideas re-emerge. The intellectual pleasure that she experienced in learning about the Bible is evident. Also, it is significant that she understands the critical study of the Bible as the means to escape from the moral severity of conservative Christianity.

... this stuff [articles in the Bible commentaries] just blew my mind, it was so exciting, so interesting and so really, really neat...

(A11)

More than just the intellectual excitement, was the challenge of translating

this into terms that children (in the Sunday School) could understand.

... how do you teach children in ways
that are not just moralistically, be good
and be obedient, not that... God just
becomes the judgemental parent...

(A11)

One further aspect of her experience is significant, especially for the way in which it ties the "key" religious experience together with her other life experiences. In her account of her return to academic study when she embarked on training for the ministry, she said:

I had convinced myself, or my life-situation
had convinced me that I was stupid by this
time...

(A15)

Sharon Moon was in her mid-thirties at this time. She had a university education, had worked as a High School teacher, was raising two children and had had a successful career as a professional potter. Nevertheless, her self-esteem was such that she faced the prospect of academic study feeling she was "stupid" and likely to fail. It is probable that, weighing against all these positive achievements, the experience of her unhappy and failed marriage gave rise to this self-evaluation. In spite of all these positive achievements, her experience as wife and mother was overwhelming. It seems, therefore, especially significant that her experience of motherhood has been transformed to form the basis of her religious and vocational self-understanding. Indeed, motherhood and giving birth provide the fundamental metaphors upon which her religiousness is based.

The foregoing analysis may be usefully supplemented by a comparison with the material obtained from the other interviews with ministers. This may be

Chart 3-1

17A

	MOON	CHURCHILL	NIELD	McKEOWN
CONGREGATION	A	B	C	C
AGE	48	58	54	35
YEARS IN MINISTRY	11	30	30	6
QUALIFICATIONS	M.Div.	D.Phil.	D.Min.	B.A. B.Ed.
YEARS IN PRESENT CHURCH	9	10		
ORIGINS	Rural Ontario	Small town Ontario	Rural Manitoba	Toronto
PARENTS	Manual worker; later gov't worker	Builder; self-employed contractor	Car dealer	Director of School Board
CAREER CHANGE	Yes	Yes	No	No
TRAJECTORY THROUGH SOCIAL SPACE	Steep: working to middle	Steep: lower-middle to middle	Moderately steep: lower-middle/middle to middle	Flat
THEOLOGY	Liberal; feminist	Conservative evangelical within U.C.C. tradition	Liberal Intellectual	Liberal
MINISTRY	Anti-ordained/called distinction	Anti-ordination	United Church position	"Theoretical Quaker"
RITUAL	Conscious manipulation of symbolic elements	Emphasis on Word of God	Awareness of minister as ritual leader	Modern, intellectual view of ritual
PREACHING	Personal, experiential; use of images	Central to ministry; didactic, exegetical	Use of story	"Preaching as pastoral care"
VOCATION	Radical transformation over time	Definite event	Unaccountable but definite	Fortuitous events = "call"

summarized by means of a chart (see Chart 3-1).

For example, by comparing the accounts of the "call to ministry/vocation", the particular nature of Sharon Moon's stands out. In the case of Allen Churchill, his call to ministry is related in a narrative that includes a number of conventional elements (see Lawless 1988). For example, the unexpected nature of the call, the resistance on the part of the one called, the demand by the one called that God confirm the call by some "sign", the more general confirmation of the vocation by the ensuing history of the one called, are all elements commonly found in such narratives. Further, in this same case, the vocation was and continues to be experienced as a call to be a preacher, whether or not this is in church ministry or not.

In the case of Pastor Nield, the reticence he exhibited in providing specific information about his vocation may be due to a number of things. However, one possibility is that this reticence reflects, not only a lack of any specific events or experiences (compared, say, to both Churchill and Moon), but also expresses the unaccountable or mysterious nature of God's call. This, it can be argued, is in keeping with Pastor Nield's "classic" twentieth century liberal protestantism, which lacks any vocabulary to describe such religious experience.

In the case of McKeown, who belongs to a different generation to the other three ministers, any pretense to a specific call to the ministry is completely lacking. In its place is a belief that the fortuitous or meaningful unfolding of life-experience is not merely evidence of, but is the very call of God. As a consequence, it is not surprising that McKeown finds it difficult to maintain any justification for a distinction between ordained and non-ordained Christians, since all share indistinguishable vocations. So, McKeown's own view of ministry is the furthest from the conventional United Church position. She described herself as

a "theoretical Quaker". By this she meant that while, in practice, she accepted and lived out the conventional vocation of a United Church minister, in theory, she accepted a "Quaker" view that all Christians are, not merely capable of, but ought to be equally responsible for the functions that have traditionally been part of a minister's role.

There are indications that Pastor Nield, at one time, held a somewhat similar view. However, his interview discloses that more recently he has begun to appreciate the significance of the minister's role as a leader in liturgy in addition to the more usual liberal understanding of the minister as a pastoral agent.

By comparison, Churchill has the most conservative understanding of his ministerial role and understands this role in worship as that of a leader and preacher in a service, the function of which is to proclaim and expound the Word of God.

So, by comparison to these others, Sharon Moon's understanding of ministry and the way it is expressed through worship is altogether more complex and developed. Indeed, given the context of the Free Church tradition, it is altogether more radical. Concerning preaching and worship, she said

... I don't see preaching apart from liturgy.
So worship is a very important part [of
ministry]. So preaching within worship is
just one of the pieces...

(A20)

Specifically, she estimates that about 30% of her time (almost two whole days out of a six day week) "goes into worship and worship preparation" (A21). The ritual of Sunday worship will be considered in detail later. However, the following may be noted now. Sunday worship at each of the three churches differs only

in small ways. Each is clearly and easily recognizable as an example of "the same thing": that is, Sunday worship at a United Church of Canada. However, the ritual at First United has certain characteristics not shared by the others and which may be considered to reflect Sharon Moon's particular and relatively well-developed appreciation of images and symbols and their function in ritual.

Like GSJ (but unlike DC), First United uses the Common Lectionary in its worship and so follows a three year cycle of prescribed Scripture readings for each Sunday. The older United Church tradition is for the preacher to choose a Biblical text each week as the basis for the sermon. The minister at DC, for instance, tends to preach a series over a number of weeks on a particular topic, the scripture readings coming from various parts of the Bible.

Apart from any effect that the use of a lectionary has on preaching (of which more below), one other effect is significant. This is a heightened awareness of the seasonal "liturgical cycle" familiar in Catholic and Anglican churches, but still something quite unusual in the Free churches. Consequently, for example, Christmas is marked and celebrated as in any other United Church, but Advent is also marked during the four preceding weeks and symbols such as a "Jesse Tree" and an Advent Wreath are used as part of the worship service.

Having indicated the central importance of worship and preaching as part of worship in her view of ministry, one must also point out the importance of other aspects, too. These further distinguish her from the other ministers interviewed.

During the interview, I asked Sharon Moon to describe her experience of ministry. She replied that she ministered

... with those who are part of the
congregation itself but also, I'm also
very much part of... the larger community
because this congregation certainly sees

itself as part of a larger community and as a congregation in the context of the larger community.

(A17)

In one sense, this expresses no more than a fairly common understanding of ministry that would probably find assent among many United Church ministers, including the others interviewed. For instance, though Allen Churchill insists on the importance of preaching conservative Biblical Christianity, he also continues to ensure that his congregation is active in areas of community outreach and social justice. Likewise, the ministers of GSJ describe their ministry as the means by which members of their congregation are enabled and encouraged to live out their vocations as Christians in their daily lives and this, specifically, by involvement in issues of social justice (poverty, racism) as they occur within the local community.

What distinguishes Sharon Moon's ministry from theirs is the way in which she has used the relationship with her congregation to expand her own ministry beyond its bounds. In the time that she has been at First United, she has been able to build upon its historical reputation and create for herself a base from which to become an active and known figure in the local urban community. She is a respected figure, not only as a United Church minister, but also as an advocate on issues of poverty, non-violence and, especially, women's issues. She continued

So I minister with, for instance, a lot of people who are abused women, I do services of remembrance for women who are murdered by their partners and... I am called on often as a voice for justice in the city. To put my energies and the congregation's energies behind certain things that... for instance, they were trying to get a Women's Shelter going and there was a big problem, so we

wrote letters, we made 'phone calls, we were involved in organizing something to try to bring others to peace and justice.

(A17)

It is Sharon Moon's feminist-activism which, I suggest, gives her ministry its particular character. Compared to the other ministers interviewed, this is, obviously gender-related, but also, by comparison with McKeown, age-related also. The origins of Sharon Moon's feminism can be found in her religious history, as has been outlined above. However, it also needs to be traced to her social history.

Compared to McKeown, who is 35, Churchill, Moon and Nield all belong to an older generation that grew up in the years after the Second World War. Churchill is the oldest, born in 1936, but too young to remember the beginning of the war in Europe. Moon is the youngest, born one year after the end of the war.

Compared to Churchill and Nield, Moon has been a minister much less time. Although, like Moon, Churchill comes to ministry from another career, only Moon stayed home to raise her children for almost a decade before entering ministry. McKeown, on the other hand, entered ministry as a first career, while marrying and raising children at the same time. Like Moon, her marriage ended in divorce.

Churchill, Moon and Nield are all from small-town or rural backgrounds and they have all experienced an upward trajectory through social space during their lives. Born into working or lower-middle class homes, they have risen to be part of the post-war generation of middle-class, well-educated Canadians. In the case of Churchill especially, it is clear that ministry and the opportunity for education that it presented has been the means of this rise. Moon's case is more ambiguous, since she had already obtained a University degree before working as a teacher.

By comparison, McKeown's trajectory (so far, she is still young) is flat. Coming from a prosperous urban family, her choice of ministry as a career has

served to maintain rather than advance her social status. Further, compared to Moon, her early religious experiences were such that the idea of women in ministry was not unusual. Further, she has grown to adulthood in a socio-economic milieu and in an era where it is not only acceptable, but expected that a woman would seek a career as well as, if not instead of, raising a family. In the case of Sharon Moon's generation, the coming of this possibility marked one of the major changes experienced by women. Further, it differentiated their life-experiences and expectations from those of their parents' generation.

Another way to analyze this information is by assessing it in terms provided by two different, but complementary frameworks. One is that of Richard Antoun who analyzed the role of preacher in terms of Eric Wolf's concept of "culture broker". The other is Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of champ, marché des biens symboliques and agents spécialisées.

The concept of culture broker originates in Redfield's work. It is used to describe the work done by an individual who mediates between "great" and "local" traditions. The concept was applied and developed by Clifford Geertz (Geertz 1960) who used it to describe how the social relations between Javanese peasants and the dominant landed class were mediated and maintained by the "kijaji".

Antoun adapts this idea for the context of rural Jordan in the person of the local Muslim preacher. He sees this person mediating, through his preaching in the mosque, between the great historical tradition of Islam and the local peasant culture of rural Jordan.

A number of criticisms can be made of Antoun's account, not least the way in which he assumes that the peasant culture of rural Jordan forms a common,

unified system shared by all the local people. Further, this common symbolic cultural system is communicated unproblematically through the preaching of the weekly Khatib. However, of greater pertinence for the present is the question of the way in which modern, secular Jordanian society and its culture articulates with these variables. Over time, and especially since the Second World War, Islam has come under more and more State control. In fact, the preacher studied by Antoun is licensed by the State and is one of a small number of individuals in the local community able to provide services to the local people whereby they can have contact with the State bureaucracy. It is tempting, therefore, to suppose that Antoun's account should read as follows. The preacher mediates, not between the great Islamic tradition and the local peasant culture, but between the official Jordanian State ideology and local peasant culture. Further, the religious tradition of Islam is the means by which this mediation occurs.

While this echoes one conventional sociological account of the function of religion, in this particular context there is no evidence that this is what actually occurs. Further, in general, there are a number of contemporary examples of the Islamic tradition being coopted as a vehicle of resistance and opposition to official State cultures (eg. Thaiss 1972).

The relevant question, however, is in what ways, if any, can this model be applied to the present study? If, indeed, Sharon Moon's ministry serves to mediate between modern twentieth-century Canadian culture and the lives of her congregation, it does so only in a most circuitous fashion, hedged about by many qualifications.

To begin with, there is limited sense in which the congregation can be conceived of as exemplifying a "local tradition" opposed to a dominant culture. As has already been described, members of the United Church of Canada in

general and First United Church in particular tend to be members of the mainstream of Canadian society. They are educated, middle-class and in the case of First United, urban. Further, it is arguable that the form of Christianity preached and practised at First United Church (and in most United Church congregations) is, like most mainstream Protestantism, not opposed in any fundamental way to mainstream Canadian culture. In Marsha Witten's terms (Witten 1993), United Church Christianity relates to secular society by means of accomodation rather than resistance.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be some sense in which Sharon Moon may be said to mediate between various contesting social and cultural forces. For instance, she proposes one particular version of Christianity, typical of some forms of twentieth-century liberalism, in her case influenced especially by Paul Tillich and C.G. Jung. More, this version of Christianity is proposed as right and true in opposition to others that are judged to be wrong and false. Further, the mainstream Canadian culture with which this version of Christianity is commensurate is, likewise, one version among many. The vision of social and personal life that Sharon Moon proposes is, like her Christianity, contested.

This aspect of the situation is one that may be addressed with greater success from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework. On this view, a minister functions as a specialist agent within the religious field. The nature and extent of the minister's clientele depends on the demand for the particular form of symbolic goods which is the product of the minister's labour. In this particular instance, Sharon Moon's ability to renew and build a congregation has been dependent upon her ability to produce a particular type of Christianity acceptable to them.

However, more than this, according to Bourdieu, the boundaries of the

champ religieux are altogether more fluid and less clear than previously. In fact, specialist agents of the religious field are now more profitably thought of as one kind of specialist in a larger champ de manipulation des biens symboliques (Bourdieu 1985). So, on this view, the mediating or "brokering" that Sharon Moon does is between various competing symbolic systems, using the resources of the historical tradition of Christianity as the means to achieve this.

An account in Bourdieu's terms goes some way to acknowledging the complexity of the situation under examination. However, Bourdieu can account for its contested nature only in general terms. Largely, he must say that Sharon Moon's success is due to a homology between her social position and that of her congregation, which on this view is assumed to be homogeneous (Bourdieu 1971/87). However, as has already been described, the congregation of First United Church is homogeneous only in very general categories.

In order to do justice to the way in which Sharon Moon's ministry, and her preaching in particular, recognizes and deals with the heterogeneity of her clientele, one must give a more detailed account of the symbolic labour that she performs. Further, this must be done in ways that do justice to the shared nature of this labour. The construction of meaning which is the labour undertaken specifically through the preaching of the sermon, is a labour shared in both by the minister and the congregation.

Chapter Four: Sunday Morning Worship

First United Church has two entrances. The main entrance - double wooden doors, several steps above street level - gives access to the back of the church through a small vestibule. This vestibule is a small dark space just large enough to hold a coat rack and a table for pamphlets and flyers. Unless one arrives for worship very early, there is at least one member of the congregation already there to greet people as they arrive and hand out the printed bulletin which contains the Order of Service for the day.

The other entrance faces on to the same street, a little to the north. This is the entrance used during the week to gain access to the church office or the church hall. During the week it is kept locked and the secretary answers when the door bell is rung. On Sunday morning, however, it is unlocked. Through this door is a hallway that leads, down a flight of steps, to the church hall where coffee is served after the service. Off this hallway to the left is the secretary's office and, beyond, the minister's office. On the right is a door into the church. Through this door one enters the church at the back left-hand (north-west) corner. In the hall next to this door is a rack used to pass notes and other communications to members of the congregation. On the same wall is a notice-board with flyers advertising various events in the church and in the local community.

People attending Sunday Service enter the church through either of these doors. Those who are to take some active part in the service (eg. as readers), Sunday School teachers and choir members are more likely to use the side door. Members of the choir go through the church hall and enter a small vestuary where they change out of their street clothes and pick up copies of the music to be used during the service.

The interior of the church is furnished in dark wood panelling which complements the wood of the pews, the furnishings at the front of the church and the floor where this is not covered by dark red carpet. High windows of tinted glass cover the south side wall of the church above the head-high wood panelling. The windows are hung with dark red curtains which are sometimes partially drawn during the service against the late-morning sun. Banners and other hangings are attached to the walls at various points. These change from time to time in keeping with the time of the church year. From the back of the church, one looks down to the space at the front of the church, which is about four feet lower. The floor slopes down to the front and the rows of pews are staggered so that no-one's view is impeded by those in front. In this open space is a dark polished wood table behind which the minister sits during the service. The table holds two candles in shiny brass candle-sticks and an open Bible displayed upon a brass stand. Once a month, when the service is extended to include communion, this table is laid with silver communion vessels on a white linen cloth. A wooden lectern/pulpit stands to the (south) side of this table. The scriptures are read from here and the sermons preached. On the other side of the table stands an upright piano, used by the organist for occasional music practices and as an alternative to the organ.

Behind this space is a raised platform which originally housed the pulpit. The organ console is here and behind this are the ranks of choir seats which rise steeply to the back wall. At either side of this raised platform are two doors which lead to two small vestiaries and through which the choir and the minister enter the church at the beginning of the service. Above the choir seats on the back (east) wall of the church is a large round stained-glass window (the "Rose Window") donated as a memorial of members who died during the First World War.

The pews for the congregation are in three sections. So, in addition to an aisle on either side of the church, two aisles run sloping down to the front, dividing the sections from one another. As is common in Protestant churches, on the backs of the pews are racks which hold a bible and copies of the United Church Hymnal (the "red book") and a modern supplement (the "green book") which contains new hymns written using inclusive language. These racks are found at intervals along the length of each pew. In addition to the books, they contain a card which may be filled out by visitors or new members as a means of identifying themselves to the minister and also an envelope which may be used for the collection.

Members of the congregation begin to arrive as early as half an hour before the beginning of the service. Most, however, arrive within five or ten minutes of the beginning. One member, Mr. C., has arrived earlier still. During this time, he has switched on lights and opened doors. He has activated the sound system and set out the microphone used at the lectern/pulpit. On the occasions that communion is celebrated, he has also set out the vessels. Mr. C is a retired widower. He told me that he was married at First United Church in 1951. He is often at the church during the week doing jobs to assist the secretary or the custodian.

As members of the congregation arrive, they take their places in the pews, singly or in pairs, depending on how they have arrived. There are also a small number of larger family groups. The pews are numbered, from a time when specific places were assigned to specific people. This is no longer the case, nevertheless, people tend to sit in the same seats each week. Often, members who arrive alone sit with others who arrive alone and spend the time before the service talking together. In many cases, the impression given is that these are

friends who see one another only on this occasion. Among the elderly, habitual topics of conversation are health and the weather and, in the winter, the difficulties of life that result from these factors. In other cases, this time seems to be spent in "catching up" on what has gone on in each other's life during the week since they have last seen each other. In a few cases, members of the congregation were seen to choose their seats in order to sit next to someone that they knew and saw would otherwise be alone. This seems to be a conscious attempt to reach out to members who otherwise would remain alone.

During this time before the service, there is also a certain amount of coming and going through two of the doors. The door at the back corner of the church is one of these. People who wish to speak to the minister come and go through this door as they attempt to catch her for a few minutes. Others come and go on some errand to do with the mechanics of the service or the teaching of the Sunday School. The other traffic is through the door into the vestuary, on the left-hand side of the choir seats. Members of the choir come and go as they organize themselves and collect their music. Sometimes, about ten minutes before the service begins, the choir leader will practice some of the music to be used and so she and a few members of the choir enter the church and gather around the piano to lead the congregation through the music. Once the practice is over, they leave the church again.

Finally, when he judges the time to be right, Mr.C. walks to the front of the church and lights the candles on the table. He then returns to the back of the church. The congregation becomes hushed and soon afterwards, the choir leader/organist re-enters the church and takes her seat at the organ to play. During this piece, a few last arrivals take their seats in the congregation. At the conclusion of this piece of music, the door to the vestuary, which has been

closed, now re-opens. The organist begins to play the music of the opening hymn and the congregation stands to sing. The choir, now all dressed in their dark red robes enter and take their places in the choir seats. The minister follows them and takes her place behind the table at the front of the church. She is dressed in a white ankle length garment that in an Anglican or Catholic church would be called an alb. She also wears a stole around her neck that is brightly multi-coloured. Her long dark hair is worn out long, reaching down her back. Both she and the choir join with the congregation in the opening hymn. In this way the worship service is begun.

The Order of Service for Sunday worship at First United Church is given below.

1. Organ Prelude
2. Opening Hymn (Introit): entry of minister and choir.
3. Call to worship
4. Hymn
5. Prayer of Approach
6. Passing of the Peace
7. Scripture readings
8. Sung antiphon
9. Theme Conversation with the Children
10. Hymn: children leave for Sunday School
11. Sermon
12. Prayers of the People
13. Offering
14. Life and Work of the Church: announcements

15. Hymn
16. Blessing
17. Organ Music: exit of choir and minister.

This is a generalized account based on participant observation of numerous actual worship services. Any particular worship service may differ from this generalized account to some degree. A number of "extra elements" were observed from time to time. They do not replace or disrupt the basic order, but, rather, supplement it.

"Extra Elements":

- solo singing by a member of the choir
- singing by a children's choir
- "liturgical movement": gestures by a small number of actors that accompany singing or reading
- verbal presentation by an adult member of the congregation

At the end of the opening hymn, all remain standing. At this point, the minister sometimes speaks a few words of introduction and greeting. On other occasions, however, the service continues without any verbal cue. On these occasions, as soon as the opening hymn is over, the minister begins the "Call to Worship" by reading from the text printed in the weekly bulletin and which she has in a black, loose-leaf binder that she has carried with her when she entered the church. She refers to this continually throughout the service. The exact wording of the "Call to Worship" varies from week to week, but the form remains

constant. An example is as follows:

One: We are called from the ends of the earth.
 All: We are called from the dead centres of our lives.
 One: We are called to praise God together in this
 sacred circle.
 All: We are called to open ourselves to the Holy One.
 One: God has breathed into us the breath of new life.
 Let us worship with joy.

The minister recites the parts labelled "One". The congregation responds with the parts labelled "All". On some occasions, a hymn is now sung. The minister announces this by giving the number of the hymn and in which of the hymn books it is to be found. At the end of the hymn, minister and congregation recite the "Prayer of Approach" that is also printed in the bulletin. They do this in unison. The wording of this prayer varies from week to week, but like the "Call to Worship", its form is invariable. Two examples follow:

Caring and compassionate Creator, you have
 offered us and our ancestors before us your
 life-giving presence. You have shown us how
 to be fully human in Jesus. You have been
 with us to lead us towards freedom, justice,
 wholeness.

When we are unable to respond, we hurt you.
 When we live as though you did not matter,
 we hurt you and ourselves. When we grumble
 and complain and lose courage to follow
 our path, we need to begin again. Help us
 to let go of what keeps us from moving
 forward in trust. Help us to see your vision
 of hope and peace. Help us to have the
 courage and strength to follow.

Again:

God of Life and Healing,
 we come into your presence, bringing with us
 all of the experience of our lives in these days.
 We open our hearts and our souls as they really are.
 Where we need healing, we open ourselves to that
 power.

Where we need confronting, we open ourselves to
your challenge.
Where we need encouragement, we dare to receive it.
Where we need conversion, we offer ourselves for
transformation.
Where we need empowerment, we reach out for strength
and courage.
Where we do not even know what we need, or how to ask,
we offer our silence trusting in your wisdom.

This done, the minister then invites the congregation to share a sign of peace. She does so using words such as these:

As we seek the healing presence in silence
and reaching out for the Spirit that surrounds
us and informs all that we are, let us also
reach out to one another, who are the concrete
embodiment of that Spirit, as we pass the
Peace of Christ to one another and as we greet
the presence of Christ in one another.

At this point, members of the congregation turn to one another and shake hands or embrace. For a few moments, the whole church is animated by movement and subdued voices, as members turn to their neighbours, stretch across pews or, in some cases, move to reach someone a few seats away. After this, the service continues with the reading of the scriptures.

The minister and the congregation all sit (as well as the members of the choir behind her, who have also been standing to this point). A designated member of the congregation then comes from the pews to the pulpit/lectern, carrying a copy of the Bible in order to read the scriptures. The reader introduces each reading by giving "Chapter and verse" so that those who wish to do so can "follow along", using the Bibles in the racks on the back of the pews. A number of those present were observed to do this, though it is by no means a universal practice. The readings of the Common Lectionary (which is used at First United Church) consist of one reading from the Old Testament, a

psalm, one reading from the New Testament (either from one of the epistles, or from the Acts of the Apostles) and a reading from one of the gospels. The Lectionary is arranged so that over the course of three years, each of the three synoptic gospels will be read (more or less) completely - one gospel each year. The reading from Old Testament is usually connected in some way (thematically or by reference) to the Gospel passage. The epistles are often read sequentially, week by week.

The actual practice varies occasionally from this. One occasion, it was observed that both the Old Testament reading and the psalm were omitted. In the case of the psalm, the practice is altogether more variable. Sometimes it is sung by the choir. On other occasions, the reader reads the psalm verse by verse and the choir and congregation sing a refrain between each verse. On other occasions still, the reader reads the psalm without any musical accompaniment.

When the reader has finished the passage from the gospel, he returns to his seat in the congregation. At this point, minister and congregation remain seated while the choir sings, accompanied by the organist.

When this piece of music is completed, the minister stands and says "Will the young people come forward?" At this point, the children in the congregation leave the seats they have occupied next to their parents and go to the space at the front of the church. Some sit on the front pew. Others sit on flat cushions that are kept under the front pew and are brought for this occasion. There is a pause at this point while the minister waits for the children to do this and also, while she directs them to sit where she wants them. The children seemed all to be of elementary-school age. However, this is quite a range, from, perhaps, four years old, to twelve or thirteen. Some, therefore, are very young and require close direction. Numbers vary, but were observed to be as many as two

dozen on some occasions. The minister has come to stand in front of the table behind which she has remained so far. For the "Theme Conversation", which follows, she kneels directly in front of the children. The "Theme Conversation" consists of an unscripted (but not unprepared) dialogue between the minister and the children and will be considered at length later. At its close, the children are dismissed and leave the church by the door at the back corner, in order to take part in their Sunday School programme. A hymn is sung while they leave. During the singing of this, the congregation remain seated.

The noise and activity caused by the children leaving is over by the time that the hymn ends. Silence lasts for a few seconds while the minister goes to the lectern/pulpit and prepares to deliver the sermon. On average, the sermon lasts between ten and fifteen minutes. This is short by the standards of other United Churches, but still makes it by far the longest single element in the worship service. When finished, the minister returns to her place behind the table and begins the "Prayers of the People".

She continues to stand during this. The members of the congregation remain seated. However, their posture changes relative to what has gone before. During the "Theme Conversation", most relaxed noticeably relative to their attentive listening postures during the scripture readings. These postures of attentive listening were resumed during the sermon. Now, however, many lean forward in their seats, heads bowed in postures indicating prayer. The congregation at First United does not kneel to pray.

At the close of these prayers, four designated members of the congregation (usually Mr. C. among them) begin to move through the church taking the collection, or "offering". They move from the front to the back, so that when they have finished, they can meet at the back of the church. There, the contents

of the collection plates are amalgamated and two of the four go forward together to where the minister now stands waiting in front of the table. The plates with collection are placed to one side of the table and the collectors return to their seats. During the collection, instrumental music is played by the organist, or, sometimes, a hymn is sung.

The congregation still seated, the minister now returns to her place behind the table and stands to read the announcements from her binder. Most of these announcements are printed in the bulletin, but the minister elaborates on them rather than reading them verbatim. This is especially so in cases where she wishes to encourage some action on the part of the congregation in response to the announcement.

After the final notice, the minister announces the final hymn and the congregation and choir stand to sing. This is followed by the "blessing", which is also frequently sung. Finally, the organist plays a last piece of music. During this, the congregation and choir sit while the minister walks to the back of the church. A number of the congregation sit to the end of the music, but others begin to gather themselves and their belongings and leave. They do so in one of three ways. Some leave by the back corner door, either leaving to the street, or going down to the church hall to socialize. Others leave by the main doors at the back of the church, directly through the vestibule. Others do this, but use the other (south) aisle and so stop to speak briefly with the minister who is waiting at the back of the church at this place. Each person speaks with the minister for only a few moments. Nevertheless, this results in a line-up of people waiting their turn. In some cases, it is clear that this is the person's only (but possibly, regular weekly) contact with the minister. In other cases, the person and the minister clearly know one another from other contact.

Finally, Mr.C. goes to the front of the church, to snuff out the candles and turn off the sound-system. The organist has finished her piece. The choir members have left their places and are now changing back into their street clothes. The service has lasted about one hour and twenty minutes.

The worship service and the elements of which it is composed can be specified from a number of perspectives.

According to the weekly printed bulletin, the service is composed of four parts. These are:

1. We Approach God (corresponding to #1-6)
2. We Listen to God's Word (#7-11)
3. We Respond to God's Word (#12-14)
4. We are Commissioned to Ministry in the World (#15-17)

In most regards, the service at First United Church is similar, not only to the other United Churches observed during this study, but also to many other Protestant (especially liberal Protestant) services. By way of example, Roberts (Roberts 1994) provides two comparable Orders of Service. The first, from a United Presbyterian Church is made up of:

1. Service of Praise
2. Service of Confession
3. Service of Proclamation
4. Service of Commitment

The other, from a United Methodist Church, is tripartite:

1. The Preparation
2. The Proclamation
3. The Response

In each case, reading and preaching of the Biblical scriptures form the central and pre-eminent part. In consequence, it is commonplace that the minister takes the dominant ritual role. In the case of First United, Sharon Moon has made a conscious effort to change this. In conversation, she told me that the positioning of the pulpit (on the church floor, to one side, rather than mounted centrally above the body of the church) was done by her in an attempt to break down the symbolic dominance of the ministerial role. Other changes have been implemented with the same intent. At First United, the scriptures are always read by a member of the congregation, rather than by the minister as occurs in some other churches. (One should note, however, that explanatory introductions to each reading that are read beforehand, are written by the minister). Likewise, it is not unusual for a member of the congregation to come forward during the announcements to make a brief presentation about some particular aspect of the church's activities. Most, if not all, of the announcements (the "Life and Work of the Church") are, however, usually read by the minister. Finally, Sharon Moon sometimes relinquishes her ministerial role to someone else, either a visiting minister or a member of the congregation who is in training for the ministry. Nevertheless, one should note that whenever Sharon Moon takes the ministerial role during the service, she also preaches.

Another way in which the elements of the service may be analyzed is in

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF WORSHIP SERVICE IN TERMS OF SPEECH ACT-TYPE

RITUAL ELEMENT	FRAME	GENRE	CHANNEL	PARTICIPANTS Sender/Receiv.	FORM OF INTERACTION
Pre-Service Greetings	Greeting	Ritual Greeting	Normal conversational tone, low volume	Members of Congregation	Sitting, standing; handshakes, embraces.
Organ Music	Silence			S: Organist R: Congregation	Sitting
Opening Hymn	Singing	Song	Singing	S/R: Congregation	Standing
Call to Worship	Read monologue then unison	Prayer	Rhythmic pattern of unison recitation	S: Minister R: Congreg. then S/R: All	Standing
Hymn	Singing	Song	Singing	S/R: All	Standing
Prayer of Approach and Confession	Recitation - unison	Prayer	Rhythmic pattern of unison recitation	S: Minister R: Congreg. then S/R: All	Standing
Passing the Peace	Ritual exchange	Ritual formula	Normal speaking tone	S/R: All	Standing, handshakes, embraces
Anthem	Singing	Song	Singing	S: Choir R: Congreg.	Choir: Stand Other: Sit
Scripture Reading	Reading aloud of Sacred text	Reading	Reading aloud	S: Reader R: Congreg.	Reader: Stands Others: Sit
Theme Conversation	Conversational tone	?	?	S: Minister R: Children & congreg.	All sit

RITUAL ELEMENT	FRAME	GENRE	CHANNEL	PARTICIPANTS S/R	FORM OF INTERACTION
Sermon		Preaching	??	S: Minister R: Congreg.	Minister stands, all others sit
Offering					All sit exc collectors who stand, moving
Life & Work of the Church	Announcements	Announcements	Read aloud	S: Minister R: Congreg.	Minister stands, all others sit
Hymn	Singing	Song	Singing	S/R: All	Standing
Final Blessing	Ritual Formula	Blessing		S: Minister R: Congreg.	All stand
Organ Music				S: Organist R: Congreg.	Sit
Departure	Conversation		Normal speaking voices	S/R: All	Sit, stand, walking

terms of their nature as speech acts.

With one exception, the congregation is silent unless they are singing a prescribed hymn or reciting a set text which is printed in the bulletin. The exception is when they turn to greet one another with the Sign of Peace during the "Passing of the Peace". Likewise, the reader of the scriptures recites prescribed texts only.

Only the minister makes speeches consisting of utterances other than recitation or song. This is especially true in the case of introductory remarks which are made to introduce new ritual elements and also in remarks made to manage the progress of the ritual (eg. instructions to the congregation with regard to posture etc.). Indeed, all other ritual actors who do make utterances do so only after having been given a cue (usually verbal, but sometimes gestural) by the minister.

It is only when the worship service at First United is compared with those at other churches that the significance of Sharon Moon's changes are apparent. In most United Churches, there is a strong traditional recognition of the value of music in worship. Therefore, it is usual that, wherever the resources of the congregation allow this, music involving a choir and musicians is an important modality of the ritual. The other traditionally dominant form that worship takes is the reading of the scriptures and preaching based on them. In practice, these latter roles are usually monopolized by the minister.

Irrespective of the distribution (or lack) of roles during the ritual, it remains true that the reading of the scriptures and the preaching of a sermon are the most important elements that make up the worship service. This is true

historically and theologically as well as in the perception of those who participate in the ritual. It is also true, however, in terms of the function of the readings and sermon as determinants of the structure of the ritual.

As has already been noted, the congregation studied makes use of the Common Lectionary. According to Sharon Moon, this is a practice that is becoming more common-place in the United Church, though it is still far from universal. The traditional practice (followed, for instance, at DC) is for the minister to choose the scripture passages for their relevance to his sermon, the topic or theme of which he chooses independently. The minister at DC, for instance, habitually preaches in series, over a number of weeks. For example, during the time that this study was carried out, he preached a series entitled "Questions that Jesus asked". There were over ten sermons in this series. The scripture passages (in this case, all from the Gospels) were, therefore chosen because they contained an account of Jesus asking a question to some audience. It is in this sense that the sermons determine the scriptures rather than vice versa.

In the case of First United and other congregations that follow the Lectionary, the scriptures determine the sermon. However, it should be noted that in Sharon Moon's case, at least, this leaves the preacher a great deal of freedom. In my interview with her, she stated that she feels no obligation to preach on the Gospel passage and indeed, as has been noted above, on some occasions not all the prescribed readings are used. On one occasion during the time of the study, the psalm was the scripture passage used as the basis for the sermon.

For any particular Sunday Service that exemplifies the general order given above, most of the elements differ from week to week in particular while, nevertheless, exemplifying a shared general form. So, for instance, the hymns occur at the same relative places in the service. They are sung by a standing

congregation accompanied by an organ. The individual choice of hymns, however, differs: specific words and melodies are different. Again, the words of the "Call to Worship" and the "Prayer of Approach" may vary, but their tone, the posture and behaviour of the congregation and the general semantic and grammatical morphology of the texts are common from week to week.

Generally, the variations in these elements are determined by the variations in the scripture readings and not vice versa. Further, they are determined by the sermon in its relationship to the readings. For example, the hymns are chosen because they "fit" (thematically, textually) with the subject matter of the scripture readings. However, the "subject matter" of the readings is something that is constructed through the sermon, not something that is "given" as self-evident (though it may appear so).

For example, on one Sunday the Gospel passage was from Matthew 25:31-46 (known as the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats). The sermon on this day was preached by a visiting minister (who also lead the service, in the absence of Sharon Moon). From the total text of this passage, the preacher chose one phrase ("I was in prison and you came to visit me" - Matt. 25:36) as the "key" to the text and, therefore, as the subject of the sermon. The visiting minister was, in fact, a Prison Chaplain and preached on the prison service in Canada. In fact, the passage could equally have been used as the basis for a sermon on hospital visiting and chaplaincy or, indeed, on any other aspect of "Christian charity". The point here is that the sermon determined, in an important sense, the "meaning" of the scriptural texts and, also, the choice of hymns and the content of the prayers used during the service.

Another example is a Sunday when the Gospel passage was from Matthew 25:1-13 (known as the Parable of the Ten Virgins). On this occasion, the "key"

aspect of the passage that focused upon was the fact that the women in the passage had to tend and keep alight a flame that had been entrusted to them. The preacher interpreted this as a metaphor for memory and the way in which it is important that people keep memories alive. This sermon was preached on a Sunday in November when "Remembrance Day" was celebrated in the church (with a wreath of poppies at the front of the church and several of the older male members of the congregation wearing campaign ribbons and medals. Again, the sermon determined the "meaning" of the scripture passage and also the other elements in the service (the hymns chosen and the prayers said).

The sermon, one may say, therefore, is critical within the organization of the worship service. It serves to determine and make explicit the "theme" or "meaning" of the other elements for that occasion. In general terms, the sermon provides the worship service with a specific character and, also, with unity. It determines the other elements as parts of this particular ritual performance and unites them to produce a ritual which is experienced as unified rather than as a random or conventional succession of parts. One may say, in fact, that one function performed by the sermon is to produce a "textual coherence" for the ritual of Sunday worship.

It seems to me that this general function (performed by any sermon, irrespective of occasion) is a necessary precondition for the possibility of any other function being served. As I have suggested and will seek to argue below, one of the functions of the sermons preached by Sharon Moon is as a resource in the production and maintenance of a particular perception of the self. Further, however, it must be recognized that this is but one of a number of functions performed by these sermons. They exhibit a "functional multiplicity" in their inter-relationship with the various members of the congregation who hear them.

Nevertheless, the very possibility of their performing a variety of functions is, I feel, dependent upon the fulfilment of this more basic, ritual function whereby the sermon provides the ritual performance itself with unity, identity and coherence. This also helps to explain why the sermon remains the dominant ritual element, irrespective of other changes made to the service.

A necessary element in support of this assertion is the description of a general morphology of the sermons preached at First United Church. This, given below, is based not only on participant-observation of the worship services and the sermons preached during them, but also on a close analysis of a sample of these sermons, the texts of which were collected during the study.

All the sermons preached by Sharon Moon were observed to exhibit the same general form. This is not a formal plan that she follows in her sermon preparation and, I suspect, it is something of which she is not conscious. Nevertheless, it is hardly surprising that someone, part of whose professional role is the weekly preparation and delivery of an extended piece of rhetoric has developed a habitual way of proceeding in this task. Neither is this form unique, though it differs significantly from the form of sermons preached at the United Churches observed in the course of this study. As will be seen when Sharon Moon's views on preaching are examined in detail (below), the form of the sermons that she preaches is, in part, a result of what she thinks preaching is and what she thinks it should achieve. The general structure of the sermons is as follows:

1. Contextual Remarks
2. Reference to the scriptural texts
3. Statement of Theme/Meaning of the text(s)

4. Development of theme/meaning
5. Application of this theme/meaning, showing its relevance, through various strategies
6. Resolution of sermon.

Most, though not all, of the sermons begin with some ex tempore contextual remarks, whereby the preacher begins by referring to something that has just happened during the worship service, or to some external circumstance (for example, the weather). In some cases, these opening, contextual remarks "lead into" the sermon which then proceeds by making direct reference to the scripture passages that have been read previously. On other occasions, the contextual remarks are separate in subject matter and vocal style from the rest of the sermon.

Usually, each of the readings is treated in turn, often only briefly, and described in such a way that the theme or meaning, which is then stated, appears as what the readings have in common. In some cases, this places greater demands on the imagination of the preacher and her audience than in others.

The theme is then developed, either by further exegesis of the scripture passages, or by the use of examples.

The application of this meaning or theme, as developed, provides the most substantive part of the sermon. By a number of rhetorical strategies (considered in detail below), used singly or in combination, the preacher seeks to show that the theme, and therefore the text of the scripture, is relevant in some critical fashion to the lives of the members of the congregation. This section, which, it must be noted, often has a decidedly didactic tone, is followed by the resolution of the sermon, whereby it is brought to a close. Again, this last section varies

in its length and elaboration.

The structure of the sermons and the nature and functions of the various rhetorical strategies employed in them will be considered in greater detail in the following chapter. However, before that, it is necessary to supplement this description of the sermons with a description of the preacher's own understanding of the task of preaching. In this way, the claim that the preaching act is the pre-eminent ritual element may be supported.

As has already been noted above, Sharon Moon perceives preaching to be but one element among many in worship and this suggests that preaching does not predominate in her understanding of the ministerial role. This may be contrasted, for example, with Allen Churchill's description of his ministerial role. In his understanding, his call to ministry was a call to preach and it is (strictly speaking) incidental that this involves other ministerial and pastoral responsibilities as well.

However, in the interview conducted with her, Sharon Moon gives evidence that preaching and its preparation play a very important role in her ministerial (and, indeed, religious) self-understanding. About worship, she said

I would think that at least 30% of my time goes into worship and worship preparation.

(A21)

Asked specifically about sermon preparation, she said this.

I start on Monday mornings reading the scriptures, for the next week and I allow that scripture to kind of just, I get up, Monday morning I take off, so, before I come to work on Monday morning, I've read the scriptures for the next week and I, kind of, let it just burble around... its like the computer or something, I just put it in and let it mess around in there. And then I live

my week through the scripture. I sort of live my week with that, kind of, as a backdrop. And then, I never write a sermon before Saturday. And, I usually know what I want to do Saturday, in terms of, I don't do as much research as... I don't do a lot of research, I do some. Um... I have a couple of, I look at, I have a couple of publication things that I get, I get "Celebrate" and "Homiletic something-or-other" from the States. And, er, I have the "Whole People of God", which is the Sunday School Programme, its a lectionary based one, so they go through the scriptures and lift up themes and give me a sense of what the kids are doing. So I read all that stuff.

(A21)

I then asked Sharon Moon how she understood preaching in the most general terms. She replied by saying:

Well, its about... proclamation. So, its taking the scriptures and bringing that word for the now as it interacts with people's lives. That's why its so important that it goes through my life during the week. Because whatever's deepest in my life is... most universal, y'know, I don't mean personally, but I mean, whenever we hit down to the deepest stuff of ourselves, we're touching into something that's of a universal nature. So... as I listen to people... during the week... you see, the question is, how do you get, what is the Good News? Like, what is God trying to say to us through these scriptures now?

(A21/22)

On this view, the primary function of preaching is to explain the meaning of the scriptures. However, this is not to be understood in terms of linguistic or historical meaning (though these may form parts of the process). Primarily, preaching is the means by which the Biblical scriptures are shown to have meaning which is relevant to the present-day, personal lives of its hearers.

In order to achieve this, the preacher has two tasks. The first is to relate the scriptures to her own life-experience. This is what Sharon Moon seeks to

accomplish by "living her week through the scriptures". In this way, her day-to-day experiences are interpreted in terms provided by the scriptures. Likewise, the meaning of the scriptures is disclosed through this process of their being shown to be relevant to everyday life. This is possible and appropriate, not because her life-experience is in any way more significant or profound than that of anyone else. Rather, it is because at a fundamental, "deepest" level, "we're touching into something that's of a universal nature".

The second aspect of this process relates to her other ministerial work as a pastoral agent. She says:

I'm always trying to listen... as much as I can put myself in the experience of another person. I hear so many stories and... one of the jobs of being a minister is being a story-keeper of the congregation, keeping and not telling. But, I get the privilege of... kind of, the mythic dimension of it, the kind of epic... the archetypal, I guess. I'm just constantly being inundated with people's stories. And so, this is a wonderful resource for preaching.

(A22)

Preaching seeks to show that the scriptures are personally meaningful and relevant to the lives of the congregation because Sharon Moon is able to apply them directly to the life-experiences of others and not just herself.

In addition to this "hermeneutic" function, preaching also has, on this view, a "transformational" function.

I have quite a high theology of Word, I think. I think the word becomes Word when... capital W when it lives, when it comes alive, when it becomes enfleshed, when it becomes real for somebody. So that I can read a scripture twenty-five times and I'm reading words with

a little weeny "w" and then, someday a big "W"
 will come and it will be something like, you
 know, it will be something that will go right
 through me and it'll touch some deep place, not
 always feelings, it can touch lots of different,
 it'll be somewhere. It'll touch me in some way
 that changes me. That changes in the way that I
 see things... Somehow, it comes alive in a way
 that I didn't hear it before or God becomes more
 real for me. And I have a sense of that. And so,
 that's what I hope happens. So that, I hope that
 I'm a vehicle and I guess that I see myself as
 a channel in a way.

(A27)

Preaching fulfils its functions more fully when the hearers' life-experiences are not merely re-interpreted and shown to have meaning through the proclamation of the scriptures. In addition, these life-experiences are transformed, made new, "God becomes more real for me", by becoming the "enfleshed" Word of God.

There are no respects in which Sharon Moon's views on preaching are unique. However, a number of the emphases set her apart from the general liberal Protestant position of which she is, in some degree at least, an example.

The legacy of nineteenth century Continental biblical scholarship is a mixed one. The "rich dividends of biblical scholarship" (McNairn quoted above) have deeply affected both the belief and practice of the church. Further, what is possible for a preacher is, in many ways, directly governed by this legacy. Biblical scholarship has determined that a familiarity with the texts of the scriptures is insufficient for an understanding of them. The historical background, socio-cultural context and the literary genre of the Biblical stories are now all necessary preconditions for any meaningful appreciation. However, the very possibility of this meaningful appreciation is now fundamentally questioned. What Biblical scholarship has achieved is to distance the modern reader (to a

degree greater than ever before) from the experiences recorded in the Bible. Biblical characters, once exemplars of a common faith, are now seen to inhabit a world of different customs, morals and, indeed, beliefs. As a consequence, the very possibility of these stories being meaningful (in the sense of relevant) is problematic.

Consequently, it seems, the basic task that confronts any preacher of a liberal Protestant persuasion is, primarily, to establish the Biblical texts as meaningful. In a number of cases, this entails a high didactic and exegetic content to sermons. Congregations must be provided with a summary of the relevant historical and cultural background before they can be expected to appreciate the text. In all cases, this entails an assumption that the meaning of the text is something that can only be disclosed to specific forms of intellectual labour.

As an example, the interview conducted with the minister of GSJ provides an instructive incidence of this. The minister summarized the way in which he preached on the subject of the Ascension of Jesus.

I preached... the Gospel and the Acts reading, both of which are on the Ascension. And, er, the Ascension is one of things that, er, liberal 20th century Protestants would prefer just to white-out and skip over and I often do find a way around them, even on Ascension Sunday and there's usually a reading there that I can avoid preaching about the Ascension. I started my sermon off that way actually, by saying that this whole thing is something that we have a lot of trouble with and then I talked about, I told - got time for a story? I told a story. Er, that in my undergraduate class, there was a group, students came into, two students came into class one day, took over the class, it was a kind of tradition that students could do that every so often, and said the reason they had taken it over is that they had just figured out the

Ascension. And they had maps and graphs and barometers and they figured out that at that time of the year in Israel, the temperature would be such and such and the high pressure area and they had all over the black-board, they had, er, calculations and eventually, they concluded by saying that they figured that the Ascension was indeed possible, if Jesus was 8'6" and weighed 46 pounds. [LAUGHTER] And so I used that story. And that, er... and concluded by saying that the reason I'd used that story was not to say that the story of the Ascension wasn't a meaningful story, but if it was a meaningful story, we had to look in other directions than the physical one. And then I read, a lay person read the scripture, but I read a bit more of that story, including where it said that it happened forty days after the resurrection and I talked a bit about forty days being a clue to it being a picture story, a poetic story. I pointed out the passages that have forty days. That Noah, Jonah, the temptation in the wilderness, that that's a poetic indication and er, so I looked at how the Ascension is a picture. And it says Christ has gone up there with God, even though we know that God isn't up there, God is everywhere, that it's a picture that we can and it makes a point and the point is that when we look at Jesus we see something of what God is like. The things that Jesus came to teach us here weren't just relevant in ancient, in the ancient Middle East for a few years, but that they have eternal relevance. So my purpose that week was just to look at the lectionary passage that we tend to avoid and find some meaning in it.

(C14)

In some ways, this example seems to provide an epitome of the liberal Protestant response to the scriptures. The stories are approached as being problematic and the preacher's role is to bring to bear the specialist knowledge and skills available to him in order to lay bare the hidden, theological meaning of the text. This theological meaning must then be shown relevant to the listeners.

Sharon Moon's preaching is liberal Protestant and so, to some extent, she shares in this problem. However, as has been shown in the material quoted above,

what raises her preaching above the mundane is her close attention to everyday experience. In the interview, she spoke of herself as having a "high theology of the Word". One might equally speak of her as having a "high theology of everyday experience. It is her belief in the potentially religious nature of everyday life that gives her preaching its particular cast. I suspect that this is due, in large part, to the ways in which her own religious experiences have been integrated into her everyday life.

Chapter Five: Preaching

The general structure of the sermons that has been already described briefly must now be dealt with in greater detail. The way that the various parts function must be examined. The structure is as follows.

Contextual Remarks

These remarks, prior to the sermon proper, serve to link the sermon to the elements that have preceded. On some occasions, they are absent altogether. In such cases, after the silence that follows the hymn sung while the children leave, the preacher begins the sermon immediately, with no preamble.

An example of these contextual remarks is as follows: "What a futile thing to hush them when they're so excited."

This is a direct reference to the children leaving ("they" are the children). The reference is to the noise made and the attempts of those accompanying them to control it. These particular remarks had no connection with what followed (only with what came before) and the break between them and the sermon was marked (especially by tone of voice). In regard to the sermon, these remarks serve only to focus attention on the person and speech of the minister after what has gone before. This is a function shared by all the contextual remarks.

Another example is from a sermon which will be considered in greater detail below.

Just as I look at these... sculptures,
I am aware that every one of them has
come from what we call the two-thirds
world. One comes from Kenya, the big one,
one comes from Korea, the wooden one,
and the onyx one comes from Mexico. The

creating Spirit that is, er, present
among the two-thirds world is often
quite amazing.

The reference here is to three sculptures that she had previously placed on the table behind which she sits and in front of which she had been for the "Theme Conversation" with the children. She had used them as a "visual aid" to a story that she had told the children during this. The story was about Michaelangelo. The primary reference of these contextual remarks was, therefore, to what had gone before. However, the reference to the "creating Spirit" serves to indicate what will come in the sermon, one of the themes of which was the creative nature of the Holy Spirit.

The same function, whereby the contextual remarks provide an indication of what is to come in the sermon, is also seen in this last example.

If you're following your bulletin, you may think I'm standing up too soon and I've missed the anthem. That's not the case. We would indeed need such a healer who could heal fevers and demons and illness today, illness has decimated our choir and also our Kidsing Choir and so our choir will be singing at a later time, a different piece from the piece they had originally intended.

The primary contextual reference is to the minister's own behaviour in standing up to preach, apparently too early, in terms of the Order of Service printed in the bulletin. (The "anthem" was to have been sung by the choir, accompanied by the organist. This was to have been preceded by a short piece, sung by a group of children from the congregation - the Kidsing Choir - which, on this particular Sunday, would have replaced the "Theme Conversation".) The contextual remarks also, therefore, serve as an example of ex tempore "ritual management" whereby the minister controls and directs the progress of the

ritual, in this case bringing the expectations of the congregation in line with the reality of the performance.

Further, as a preliminary signal of what will follow in the sermon, these remarks also refer back to the Gospel passage which had been read (from Mark 1:29-39) in which Jesus heals those who are sick and possessed by demons. This sermon was preached in a Sunday service held during a particularly cold part of the winter. Not only the choir, but also the congregation were smaller than usual due to the weather and sickness associated with it.

On the basis of this brief examination, one can appreciate the multiple functions performed by these brief, unscripted remarks. Within the economy of the ritual performance, they serve to focus attention on the minister after the previous elements of the service (whether these involve the children or the choir). Further, they may serve as the means of "ritual management", whereby the performance is controlled and re-scripted, if necessary. Also, however, they have a semantic function, where they help to fix the meaning of various ritual elements by linking them to the key element: the sermon.

Reference to the Bible texts

Statement of Meaning/Theme of the text(s)

The text of the sermon almost always begins with a reference to the scripture passages that have been read earlier in the service. Very occasionally, this is preceded by a short introductory passage (distinct from the contextual remarks). Frequently, the reference to the scriptures is very brief and is followed immediately by a statement of the meaning or theme of the text(s).

Examples are as follows:

Both of the scriptures that we just read
are scriptures that deal with pain and
suffering and also with healing.

Again,

All of our scriptures today are about
beginnings.

In both of these cases, this initial reference also contains a brief and decisive judgement of what the readings are about. They are about "pain and suffering" or about "beginnings". Immediately, and without equivocation, the sermons designate the scriptures as having one particular subject. In other cases, this is more elaborate. For example:

In our readings for the third Sunday of
Advent, our scriptures are words about a
God who acts powerfully, a God whose
presence turns life upside down to create
a justice that is waiting to be born in
the world.

This initial assertion of the meaning and theme of the texts is elaborated to some extent. The way and the degree to which this is done depend, in part, on how many of the prescribed lectionary readings have been read. Also, of significance is whether the sermon deals with all of the readings in turn or with just one of them. So, for instance, one sermon that was preached during the Advent season dealt only with the Gospel passage (which was the story of the Annunciation). In other cases, the scripture passages are dealt with one by one. In this way, the sermon reinforces the initial assertion of what they are about.

Clear examples of this latter strategy are provided by the "Remembrance Day" sermon and the "New Year's" sermon, both of which will be considered

below. Another example is provided by the following sermon. It begins:

Today both our Hebrew scripture and our reading from Mark invite us to reflect on the way we dare to face the unknown.

It continues immediately with:

We read in Genesis about a God with a sense of humour. Two elderly people, Abraham... and Sarah... are told by God that they will be ancestors of a multitude of nations.

In this example, there follows a lengthy and elaborate treatment of this story (Genesis 18:1-15), which develops the themes of change, particularly change faced by people as they grow older and have to face new and challenging life-situations. In order to illustrate this, the preacher referred to a person that she knew (a member of the congregation) who had recently had to give up her home and move into a nursing-home. She also referred to the difficulties faced by the elderly as they faced ill-health and had to deal with the severity of the Ottawa winter (this sermon was preached during the winter months).

Only after this, does the sermon turn to the second, the Gospel passage:

In the passage from Mark, we read of a different kind of unknown which Jesus is talking about.

There follows another lengthy and, this time, exegetical treatment of the gospel passage (Mark 8:31-35) in which Jesus predicts his own death and resurrection. It begins with the suggestion that Jesus did not, in fact, make such a prediction. Rather, these words were put into the mouth of Jesus by the author, and reflect the concerns and beliefs of the early church.

Following this, the sermon comments on the "destructive" use to which the

saying (contained in this passage) "Take up your cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34) has been put in the history of Christianity. The preacher does not contest this as an authentic saying of Jesus. However, she asserts that:

When this passage is used by people with power to keep people without power in their place, to keep people accepting oppressive suffering or to maintain an evil status quo I think it is being terribly distorted. I think Jesus would be horrified that his words had been used in these ways. Jesus was talking about the journey to transformation and the need to dare to face the unknown.

Here, the meaning of the passage is asserted and developed by contrasting it with a more traditional exegesis, which is deemed false.

More exegesis follows. The gospel passage is related to its context, particularly to the story which immediately precedes it in Mark's gospel: Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27-30). This is followed by an extended and remarkable "re-reading" of the passage, which is worth quoting in full.

Jesus then goes on to speak of a process in which one needs to face into dying and rising, to let go of one's ego self, in order to follow. The word used for cross in Jesus' words "to take up the cross", is the same word that is used for tent pegs. I wonder if later translators who knew about the crucifixion used the cross translation. It may have meant something like this: If you will follow me, you need to stop running your own life and let God invite you to pull up stakes and follow. You have to give up security and control of your own lives in order to risk moving into the unknown with me. You can hang on to what you've got, but if you do, you will be missing being fully alive. You'll lose living the Reign of God

in your life. There is some real letting go that has to happen. There is a process of transformation, of letting go in order to find your God-self, your sacred self whom you are meant to be. You have to risk being changed, having your values changed, having your life-style changed, having your ways of looking at life changed, having the choices you make in life changed. If God-values are running your life, you may find yourself invited to walk paths you never thought possible, to lead your life in ways that seem foolish to those living with values formed by the culture.

Other aspects of this sermon are notable and will be considered below. However, for the present, the following may be noted.

In a sense, this sermon shows not only the way in which Sharon Moon's preaching exemplifies liberal Protestantism, but also the way in which she has distanced herself from it.

In her treatment of the Biblical passages, she draws on the resources of Biblical scholarship in order to produce an exegesis of them. Further, she is willing to assert (clearly in the case of the gospel passage; by implication in the case of the Old Testament story) that these stories are not literally true. Jesus probably did not utter the words ascribed to him. Rather, they are the product of the theology of the early church. In these regards, the preaching exemplifies certain characteristics of a liberal Protestant approach.

Typically, liberal Protestantism is concerned to deny the literal, historical veracity of the Biblical accounts in order to deal with their miraculous or supernatural character. In this way, any conflict with the "scientific" mindset, characteristic of modernity, is avoided. So, for instance, in the case of the Ascension (already noted above, in a sermon from GSJ), the literal truth of the occurrence is denied and its symbolic or theological significance asserted. Likewise, in this case, the veracity of Jesus' predictions of his suffering and

death are denied, so that miraculous foreknowledge of events need not be ascribed to him.

However, Sharon Moon's preaching goes beyond this approach, while assuming it. She goes further, while "taking as read" this basic orientation. So for instance, in this sermon, she not only assumes that the true meaning or significance of the passage lies in the moral discourse it contains (rather than in any question of literal or historical accuracy). Further, she bases her exegesis (and, therefore, her assertion of the passage's meaning) on the invalidity of the traditional Christian interpretation of the passage and the need to produce a new and different reading.

Within the Christian tradition, the saying "Take up your cross and follow me" is a key text. So much so, that "bearing one's cross" has achieved a status as proverb or maxim. Clustered around this phrase are a number of ideas (of which it is emblematic), to do with self-denial and suffering as virtues, and the value of deferring gratification to the future. All of these ideas have been, traditionally, strong elements in a "folk understanding" of what Christianity is as a source of moral discourse.

The usual liberal Protestant approach would be to re-interpret this moral discourse and make it "relevant" to the modern world. So, for instance, self-denial is re-read as altruism in general. This, in turn, may be asserted to be necessary for individual psychological health and so, in the end, be synonymous with enlightened self-interest. Mary Douglas provides an example of this approach (in a Catholic context) in her consideration of changes made to church rules about fasting and abstinence (see Douglas 1970).

Sharon Moon, on the other hand, rejects rather than re-interprets the traditional understanding and attempts to produce an alternative by radically re-

reading the passage. It should be noted, however, that she achieves this by using the traditional resources available to a liberal Protestant preacher.

She begins with an appeal to the ambiguities of translating the Biblical texts: a strategy which assumes the fundamentally problematic nature of scriptural interpretation and exegesis. She then produces an extended and imaginative re-reading of this key Christian text in terms which depend heavily on the concepts of depth psychology, as they have been popularized in terms of personal development.

This saying means not that self-denial and submissive behaviour are virtues. Rather, Christianity is a call to personal development through psychological transformation. By "letting go" of whatever constitutes mundane life, one can become "fully alive" and find one's "sacred self". The consequences of this will be a change in "values" and "life-style", which may lead to an adverse re-evaluation of the "values formed by the culture".

Fundamental to this re-interpretive project, is an underlying metaphor which is ubiquitous in modern, liberal Christianity. This is the idea of "life as journey". The various experiences that make up a life are thought of as so many "stages" on a journey. The metaphor of the journey is hardly new in Christianity (eg. St. Augustine's journey to the City of God, John Bunyan's journey of Christian in Pilgrim's Progress; Abrams 1994 provides a valuable overview of this history). However, the success of its modern incarnation depends on a conjunction of two separate ideas. One is secular, where "journey" is a metaphor for psychological development, which is deemed necessary (at the very least) for mental health, if not (in its religious form) spiritual regeneration. The other results from an interpretation of the Bible in terms of "salvation history", in which the idea of the journey is a figure for the experience of God's dealing

with people (individual and communities) through time (a motif that is developed in the "New Curriculum", noted above).

These considerations have formed a digression from the preliminary account of the structure of the sermons, which must now be resumed. The above considerations do, however, illustrate the ways in which the meaning of the scriptures is produced and developed in the sermons.

Application of the meaning of the text(s) to the lives of the hearers

After the sermon has stated and developed the theme or meaning of the scriptures, this meaning is then applied to the lives of those who hear it. This is achieved by a variety of rhetorical strategies, four of which will be identified and described below. While these are by no means the only such strategies employed, they are, nevertheless, identifiable on a number of occasions in the sermons examined.

The foregoing has suggested that a major characteristic of liberal Protestantism is exhibited in its preaching. This is the assumption that scriptural interpretation is fundamentally problematic and that the meaning of the Biblical texts, while discoverable, is not self-evident. The existence of a class of preachers who are religious specialists trained in and possessing knowledge specific to their field is a partial explanation for this, but hardly a sufficient one. Religious specialists are also found in other Christian groups (eg. some fundamentalist churches) where the Biblical texts do not have a comparably problematic status.

It is possible that the necessity, faced by liberal Protestant preachers, of producing/discovering the meaning of the Biblical texts is peculiar to liberal Protestant forms of Christianity. It is, further, probable that this is a result of liberal Protestantism's relationship to "modernity" (a relationship that is, generally, one of accommodation, to use Witten's term). This relationship has been worked out through the quasi-secular discipline of late 19th and 20th century Biblical studies.

One of the traditional sources of authority for the Bible has been its assumed literal and historical truth. The possibility of its moral and figurative (metaphorical, allegorical) truth has rested upon this prior truth. In the absence of such a basis, the Bible stories become no more (or less) significant repositories of moral truths than (for instance) examples of "great literature". Indeed, Biblical criticism has demonstrated that the Biblical stories are culturally and historically foreign and, thus, do not "speak to the modern condition" in a way that literature or art is sometimes purported to do. As a consequence, the liberal Protestant preacher is challenged not only to assert the meaning of any given Biblical text, but also, then, to establish its relevance. The idea of relevance is itself not unproblematic, but is understood, generally, as the applicability of the moral discourse discoverable in the biblical texts to the everyday lives of the members of the listening congregation. It is this that the rhetorical strategies to be examined below seek to achieve.

i) Creating a Problem

One of the strategies employed, in fact, capitalizes on this very state of affairs. In order to demonstrate the relevance of the Biblical story, the preacher

asserts, draws attention to, its problematic status. By so doing and then resolving the problem in the course of the sermon, the resulting sense of "closure" created serves as a means by which the text is made to appear significant.

An example of this strategy is provided by the sermon already considered above. The consideration of the gospel passage (Mark 8:31-35) that contains the saying "Take up your cross..." begins with the assertion that "This is a very difficult scripture for many reasons."

This is followed, as has already been discussed above, by two elaborations. First, the preacher casts doubt on the authenticity of Jesus' prediction of his suffering and death. Secondly, she goes on to discuss the "destructive" uses to which the saying has been put within the Christian tradition. In these ways, the text (in this case, a key part of it) is established as problematic. The resolution to this problem is achieved by the re-reading of the saying that the preacher produces, in terms of personal development as a kind of "facing the unknown".

Another example of this strategy is provided by a sermon preached at the time of Remembrance Day, in early November (and which I have referred to, consequently, as the "Remembrance Day" sermon, though this is not a title given by anyone else). In the course of this sermon, the preacher asserts that

There are some in this congregation who
fear that this generation will not
remember [the war].

She goes on to pose the question "What does it mean... to remember?"

In doing so, a problem is created out of the idea of remembrance and the resolution of this problem is the source, not only of the rhetorical strength of

the sermon, but also the means by which the relevance of remembrance is established.

It should be noted that both of these sermons provide examples of Sharon Moon's preaching at its most striking. Further, this rhetorical strategy is typical of much liberal Protestant preaching. The problematic nature of the text is specifically brought up by the preacher, so that the sermon can provide a resolution to the problem thus created. Often (for instance, a story that contains miraculous elements) the resolution is achieved by denying the literal truth of the story in order to assert and develop its moral or figurative truth. What is notable about the examples from the preaching of Sharon Moon is that she uses this strategy, not to establish the pre-eminence of the moral content of the texts, but rather to reject the traditional interpretation of the text as a moral discourse and develop a new, alternative interpretation of her own.

ii) Describing an exemplary situation

Another rhetorical strategy employed by the preacher is to describe a situation that somehow exemplifies the application of the meaning of the text. So, for instance, one sermon contains a treatment of a passage from the book of Isaiah (Is. 40). About this passage, the preacher says

The reading from Isaiah is a promise of freedom and justice and of restoration. But remember to whom it was originally addressed - to those who had been defeated and led out of their homeland into exile in Babylon...

She continues:

They were a people who no longer looked toward the future... for they were in captivity - both from external forces, and increasingly from internal forces - despair, hopelessness, resignation.

What begins as a straight forward didactic exegesis of the passage turns into an imaginative elaboration of it. Based on this elaboration, the preacher then says

I don't know about you, but I meet a lot of people like that - people in captivity. Some are in captivity to poverty or violence or childhood traumas. Some are in captivity to consumerism or meaninglessness, or powerlessness or fear.

In this way, the preacher shows how the meaning of the text is applicable to the lives of people today - how it is relevant. Beginning with an unexceptionable exegesis (the original historical circumstances of the passage), she asserts and develops its meaning (a portrait of the forms of "captivity" that people can face, especially "internal" ones: forces of negative emotion). She then lists a number of contemporary cases (people she meets) who exemplify these forms of "captivity". Implicitly, her listeners are invited to (first) accept this reading and application of the passage as legitimate and (secondly) to apply it to themselves by the same act of imagination that the preacher has performed.

Another example of this strategy is provided by her treatment of the story of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18:1-15) as an example of "the way we dare to face the unknown".

The stories about Abraham (and, to a limited degree, Sarah) have, traditionally, been an important source of Christian moral and theological discourse. Abraham is an exemplar of faith, the prototypical recipient of a covenant with God, a precursor of the Christian's relationship with God.

In this treatment, however, the preacher emphasizes one particular aspect of the Abraham stories (which, in fact, has little to do with the actual text that was read). This is the idea that Abraham was called by God to leave the familiarity of his homeland and begin a journey "into the unknown". The preacher emphasizes, also, the advanced age of Abraham and Sarah when this occurred. The preacher then applies this story to the situation of her congregation by combining these two elements of the stories that she has isolated as constituting their meaning. The overall project of the sermon of which this is part is to produce a characterization of Christianity in terms of personal development involving psychological transformation. However, in doing so, she produces a portrait of part of her congregation which both fixes the meaning of the Old Testament passage while, at the same time, portrays the mundane trials of her aged congregation in almost epic terms.

I think of people I have known in this community who have had to live with many changes, and to risk going into the unknown. Change can be quite fearful for anyone. But aging brings its own unknown. Having to make a choice to leave one's home to go into accomodation that requires less work, or that has a care component to it, can be a real facing of the unknown. There can be a lot of grief at the change required. Having to learn to live with the loss of a partner, one's friends, to have power in one's own life and of one's own health, is also part of the unknown one faces as one ages. The circle becomes smaller, the capacity to choose and to control diminishes. What one can look ahead to changes with age. This was brought home strongly to me this week when in visiting a seniors' residence to do a worship service, many of the people told me that they had not risked going out most of the winter because of the very icy conditions on our sidewalks this winter. They were

virtual prisoners in their own apartment building. It is strange to think that venturing out to church or to the grocery store becomes the unknown, when one's balance is precarious.

iii) Direct Appeal to Imagination

The appeals made by the preacher to the imaginations of her listeners that are implicit in many of the examples considered above are, on occasions, made explicit.

Direct appeals to imagination, while by no means unique to the preaching of Sharon Moon, are, perhaps, one of its most distinctive features. In such cases, the preacher invites her listeners to engage actively in imaginative (re)constructions of events, situations or feelings. In some cases, she attempts to guide the congregation through a series of imaginary situations, based upon an interpretive re-reading of one of the scripture passages. In these cases, this becomes an exercise in what is known as "guided imagery" meditation. While this activity is common enough in some contexts, its incorporation into the activity of preaching is unusual.

An especially striking example of a direct appeal to imagination is found in the "Remembrance Day" sermon. In the course of this sermon, the preacher says:

I have in this past week been trying to imagine what it would be like to have been the minister of a congregation where on Sunday, I might have to come in to announce that so-and-so had been killed in action...

Having introduced the idea of imagination as a means by which the experience of others may be grasped and dealt with vicariously, the preacher immediately invites her congregation to do just this.

Imagine what it would be like for you as a community to hear that we had lost one of our own children...

What follows this instruction (which, it may be noted, is one of the only occasions when a sermon contains a direct instruction expressed in the imperative form of the verb) is a series of elaborations which take the form of rhetorical questions. The function of these is to assist the congregation in their exercise of imagination.

What would it be like for us to know this young man's mother and father?... What would it be like for us to know that his fiancée was sitting in the pew in front of us?...

In this particular sermon, this exercise of imagination is a strategy employed in an attempt to deal with a problem raised by the celebration of Remembrance Day. In directly addressing the question of commemorating war and those who have died fighting in it, the preacher raises a fundamental issue regarding the nature of her congregation. The problem is that some have first-hand experience of things (here, specifically, war) that others do not. The immediate solution to this lack of uniformity of experience among her congregation is, as has been noted, through the exercise of imagination. However, underlying this immediate problem and its expression, is a more general one. This is that the congregation is divided, primarily by age, because the differing generational life-experiences result in differing socio-cultural outlooks. This problem, common to many communities, is especially evident in this congregation, whose self-understanding involves the experience (for the older members) of a congregation facing dissolution due to age, being renewed through an influx of younger people. Further, these age-related differences are not exhibited, primarily as theological

differences: all members perceive themselves to belong to "the same" liberal congregation. Rather, they are exhibited as differences in attitude to socio-political issues and behaviours expressive of social mores. These divide people who belong to the same socio-economic stratum along generational lines.

This issue and the rhetorical strategies employed to deal with it will be considered further, in a more detailed examination of the "Remembrance Day" sermon which follows below. For the present, it is sufficient to note that it is experience, real and imaginary, collective and individual, that is the means used to resolve the situation.

A further example of a direct appeal to imagination is provided by another sermon. This was preached during the season of Advent. Its subject was the story of the Annunciation, in which an angel informs Mary that she will have a child, Jesus. In the course of this sermon, the preacher says:

I'm going to invite us to do a guided
imagery meditation around the
Annunciation.

This is followed immediately by:

I invite you just to shut your eyes and
to make sure that you're in a really
comfortable place in your body...

and later by:

...I invite you to imagine yourself in
a sacred place...

As in the previous example, this is followed by a series of rhetorical questions and suggestions intended to guide the listeners through the imaginative experience. Thus: "Mary felt afraid when the angel came to her, what feelings arise in you?"

And:

What might happen if you were to bear the seed of God in your own life story? Let yourself imagine what might happen...

Because this use of "guided imagery" technique in the context of a sermon struck me as unusual, I asked Sharon Moon about it. She said that this was something that she did infrequently and only with topics that lend themselves to the technique. Each Sunday evening, she leads a "Guided Imagery Meditation Group", in which the scriptures of that Sunday are treated "at a much deeper level". According to Sharon Moon, some of the images from the scriptures (for instance, in the case considered here, the image of pregnancy) "work at an unconscious level". In the terms of depth psychology, which she espouses from her study of C.G. Jung, such images are, presumably, archetypal and, so, communicate at a universal level to the human psyche. Specifically about this sermon and the image of pregnancy, she said the following:

I felt, pregnancy's a really important image for me, obviously, from my own experience and... I was trying to make sure that those who, men and... I was trying to make sure that pregnancy was seen as, spiritual pregnancy, was seen as something that didn't exclude men, so that it was for everybody. And... trying to set that as an image, I was trying to encourage people to let the Spirit enseed them.

(A25)

iv) The text as figure of experience

A final example will be considered. This last rhetorical strategy employed in the development of meaning is ubiquitous in the texts of the sermons. So much

so, that many of the passages already cited as examples of other strategies can be cited again. This ubiquity is, in fact, an indication that this is a most fundamental strategy. Indeed, it may be regarded as exemplary of the liberal Protestant approach to the scriptures, as this is exhibited by preaching. This strategy is the interpretation of the biblical texts as metaphors for individual psychological experience.

The figurative interpretation of texts is not unique to preaching, let alone liberal Protestant preaching. It is as old as preaching itself and has a model in the exegesis of Old Testament texts found in the Pauline epistles. However, the function that this strategy performs in liberal Protestantism sets it apart. This point may, perhaps, be supported by considering some contrasting examples.

The preaching of Augustine of Hippo is full of examples of, sometimes, virtuoso ex tempore interpretations of the scriptural texts. To a modern sensibility, some may seem positively fanciful. However, the sermons of St. Augustine consistently seek to produce a vocabulary of Biblical images for a moral discourse in which Christians can describe themselves and, especially, distinguish themselves from their pagan neighbours. So, for instance, they are "the children of light" as opposed to "the children of darkness"; the "wheat" or "good grain" as opposed to the "weeds" or "chaff". This vocabulary of moral discourse is always clearly connected with prescriptions for behaviour. Augustine leaves his listeners in no doubt as to the practical and behavioural consequences of his rhetoric. On occasions, this can be simple. In a sermon preached during an Easter Vigil, he instructs the newly baptized as follows: "Be good" ("Boni estote").

Another, different example, can be drawn from the preaching of the English Reformation. In a sermon included in the 1547 Book of Homilies, Cranmer preaches

against the common medieval practice of the veneration of images as idolatrous. This is done by drawing a parallel between the idolatrous practices of the ancient Israelites and the contemporary practices. The latter is described as being "the same as" the practices condemned in holy scripture. Here, scripture is applied directly, without the intervention of figurative interpretation. The interpretation is a direct judgement that a present practice can be described in the same way as one recorded in the Bible. Like the previous example, the injunction is clear: a particular practice is condemned, a moral judgement is made about behaviour.

The same result is achieved by different means in an example of Islamic preaching recorded by Richard Antoun in his study of contemporary, rural Jordan. In this case, the khatib makes use of the linguistic similarities between religious and cultural concepts ("rahm": womb, blood kindred, "rahma": pity, compassion, "al-rahman": the Compassionate, the Merciful; see Antoun 1989 p106f.) in order to produce a vocabulary for the moral evaluation of village life. Again, it is behaviour that is described and judged.

Comparable examples are not found in the sermons examined in this study. In these sermons, the moral discourse produced does not judge behaviour. Rather, it describes persons in individual, psychological terms.

For example, in a sermon in which the gospel passage is the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), the preacher says:

The women in this story have been given the role of tending and guarding the light. Since fire and light was one of the most precious gifts, it was a tremendous responsibility to guard it, to keep it burning, to care for it, to make sure that it would be there for those who would come later.

Already, in her exposition of the gospel parable, the preacher invests the story with a heightened (and novel) significance. The light (which in the story is a practical means of seeing in the dark) becomes something precious, something with moral and spiritual value. Later in the sermon, the preacher asserts that

As Christians, we need constantly to be
living in hope for peace. We need to be
holding up that light...

Consequently, the phrase "holding up the light" refers back, not simply to the gospel parable, but, rather, to the gospel parable as already interpreted. "Holding up the light" (of hope for peace) is, therefore, a moral and spiritual, a Christian virtue. One should note, however, the essentially passive nature of this Christian virtue. "As Christians, we" are not enjoined to do anything in particular: there is no behaviour prescribed or proscribed. No special activism is encouraged. Rather, the virtue is more general: it is to live hopefully, to cultivate a particular affective disposition.

This same shift from moral judgement to psychological description is seen again in a second example. Here the scripture passage (which had just been read, accompanied by a mimed enactment by some of the children) is the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-20). Here, the preacher is talking about the third servant, who hid the talents and was chastised by the returning master. The preacher says:

... and so, as a result, she closed herself
off and closed off what she could do with
what she had. I think a lot of us are like
that with God.

In the parable, the third servant is chastised for not using what had been

entrusted to him. The traditional interpretation of this parable (influenced, in part, by its gospel context of other parables, Matt. 25) is that the use of talents is to be understood as the exercise of Christian virtues in daily life, based on the individual's situation and abilities. In the re-reading proposed here, this is changed. According to the preacher, the third servant fails to live up to her potential, by "closing herself off" because she fears punishment and judgment from an angry and judgmental God. Her beliefs about God cause her to live in a limited, "closed off" way. This is because

...when we're able to feel God as the one
who empowers us... then we're able to
flourish and when we're afraid that God
is looking over our shoulder... then we do
become very closed in...

To be "closed in" is not to use or celebrate one's gifts. However, it is a state of being, not a mode of activity. Once more, the original discourse of moral obligation and activity is seen to be shifted to one of affective disposition and personal development.

Another example is provided by a passage already quoted, but given in full here.

I don't know about you, but I meet a lot of
people like that - people in captivity. Some
are in captivity to poverty or violence or
childhood traumas. Some are in captivity to
consumerism or meaninglessness or
powerlessness or fear. And I know that there
have been times in my own life when I have
recognized myself as an exile - a stranger -
with hope running low.

As has already been noted, the idea of captivity (in the Biblical passage,

physical captivity, experienced by the Israelites in Babylonian exile) is "personalized" as

captivity - both from external forces [but]
increasingly from internal forces - despair
hopelessness, resignation.

In this way, it is asserted that the real captivity is not physical restraint from freedom, but, rather, the psychological effects that such restraint has on the individual. As in the previous cases, the preacher's exegesis of the Biblical text forms a bridge between the literal reference of the text and the metaphorical one created by the preacher's rhetoric. This latter is carried over into the litany of forms of captivity that can be experienced by "people in captivity". Some of these, at least, seem to refer to real, physical conditions that limit the freedom of individuals (poverty, violence). However, as has already been done with the Biblical text, emphasis is placed, not on these states of affairs, but on their psychological effects. This - their ability to cause negative affective dispositions (despair, hopelessness)- is what they have in common.

This same strategy is seen in another passage, which again considers the Babylonian exile.

And that's what Isaiah 40 is about. [These words] are spoken to the heart of a defeated and a despairing people who are in exile in Babylon... They're words spoken right into that pain and suffering ... Into that profound experience of homelessness... Many of us have a sense of spiritual homelessness.

Resolution

The development of meaning and its application to the lives of the listeners form the main body of the sermon. When this is completed, the preacher usually brings the sermon to a close by means of a brief concluding section which resolves it. This often takes the form of an invitation to prayer or silent reflection, so that the congregation remains seated in silence for some time after the end of the sermon. The resolution varies in length and elaboration, but, generally speaking, is always quite brief. For example, the "Remembrance Day" sermon ends in this way:

Let us take time to remember and to reflect;
especially those who have lost their lives.
Let us keep silence before this awesome
history.

The "New Year" sermon ends with a prayer to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit having been one of the themes of the sermon.

The Holy Spirit renews our lives, it renews
the earth. It helps us to rebirth us,
ourselves, to be rebirthed. Come Holy
Spirit, rebirth us in your life-giving
waters. Breathe hope and possibility into
our chaos. And sustain us with your
affirmation that we too are your beloved
and your delight. Amen.

Chapter 6: A further aspect of preaching:
narrative

The preceding survey of the sermons preached at First United demonstrates the ways in which they are both typical of and different from liberal Protestant preaching. They are typical in their relationship to the Biblical texts, assuming the problematic nature of their meaning and the necessity of continual symbolic labour to recover and create this meaning. They are unusual in the ways that they question not only the literal and historical bases of the texts, but also frequently question the traditional interpretations of these texts that form the moral discourse of Christianity. Further, it seems, they are unusual in the ways that they concentrate on the imaginative (re)creation of experience, both real and fictional.

The ways that these ends are achieved have been indicated by an enumeration of some of the rhetorical strategies employed. So far, this has been done in general terms. In what follows, the texts of selected sermons will be examined in greater detail. However, before doing this, I wish to examine one further general characteristic of the sermons. This is the occurrence of narrative in them. Given the apparently limited role that narrative plays in these sermons, this requires some justification.

Like most sermons, the ones examined in this study are not narratives. Sometimes, however, they contain small narrative sections, often little more than fragments. Occasionally, they contain longer, more elaborate sections. However, all the sermons bear an important relationship to a narrative: the narrative of the Biblical texts. This relationship is a significant one and seems, in fact, to determine the nature and function of the sermons in an important way. It is clear that the Biblical texts - those specific portions of the Bible read during the service - are frequently not narrative in form. The Bible is heterogeneous in

terms of literary genre and this is reflected in the parts included in the Common Lectionary. However, in one way, the sermons are always related to Biblical narrative. This is because, as has been noted above, one of the common-places of the liberal Protestant approach to the Bible is to conceive it as a unified record of "salvation history": the single narrative of the relationship between God and humankind unfolding through history. This is a theological assumption, not a judgement about literary form. It is in this sense that the sermons are related to a narrative, albeit that this narrative is imaginary and the relationship between sermons and it is assumed, implicit rather than explicit.

In passing, one may note a relatively recent development in Biblical theology. This is the interest expressed by some theologians in narrative and the development of "narrative theology" (an introduction and overview of which is given by Goldberg 1981). According to Elizabeth Say,

... the premise of narrative theology is
 ... that it is through our stories we come
 to create and understand ourselves...
 (Say 1990 p4)

In a sense, this approach makes explicit what is implicit in the assumptions of liberal Protestantism, as noted above. Further, as will be seen, it is closely related to some of the positions asserted by other (non-theological) scholars of narrative. Be this as it may, the claim advanced in this study about the relationship between preaching and narrative is different. It is based upon observation and analysis of the sermons which form the substance of this study. It makes no claim to any universal or a priori validity and does not rest upon a theoretical (theological or otherwise) premise.

Another point may be made to justify this attention to narrative. Narrative is one of the most extensively studied literary genres and is heir to a vast

literature (a critical survey of which is provided by Toolan 1988). One recent development within this literature is the consideration of the way in which narrative may be implicated in the production and maintenance of the "self", understood as a psycho-social construct. For instance, in his study of narrative and the self, Anthony Kerby goes so far as to claim that

...[narrative] generally seeks closure (totality) by framing the story within a beginning, middle, end structure. Closure of this sort, I contend, is not only a literary device but is a fundamental way (perhaps the fundamental way) in which human events are understood...

(Kerby 1991 p6)

He goes on

Self-understanding and self-identity will be dependent in certain important respects upon the coherence and continuity of one's personal narrative.

(ibid.)

Kerby writes primarily as a philosopher and, consequently, his argument remains at a high level of abstraction and generality, taking no account of historical or cultural factors.

This view is endorsed by Charlotte Linde in her study of "life stories":

Narrative is among the most important social resources for creating and maintaining personal identity...

(Linde 1993 p98)

This view of narrative is also tacitly assumed in the work of Elaine Lawless on Pentecostal women's preaching and witnessing (Lawless 1988 and 1991). In fact, in her more recent work, she turns away from preaching altogether to consider the significance of narratives of self-description among a group of

women involved in ministry in mainline American denominations (Lawless 1993).

While clearly significant, this view of the relationship between narrative and the "self" requires to be nuanced by a recognition of its socio-cultural specificity. In an important paper, Georges Gusdorf has argued that a precondition of autobiography is "a conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life" (Gusdorf 1956 p 26) and that this awareness is, in turn, associated with the development of Western society in the last few centuries. Autobiography is a peculiarly self-conscious form of a narrative of the self and has been described as "a means by which to create images of "self" through the writing act" (Benstock 1988 p5).

Recent studies of autobiography draw attention to the ways in which this (and other) forms of narrative are related not only to the conception of the self, but also to the self as gendered, and as positioned in public and private space.

Such points must be taken into account in any further considerations, but for the present, it is sufficient to note the significance of narrative here.

A final point will introduce the consideration of narrative that follows. In a recent work, Robert Wuthnow (Wuthnow 1992) has drawn attention to the utility of discourse analysis as a tool for examining the moral discourse presented in the preaching of mainline Christianity. He specifically considers the work of Susan Rubin Suleiman on the romans à thèse of nineteenth and early twentieth century French literature. Suleiman's work is relevant because, in order to develop a theoretical perspective from which to analyse these "ideological novels", she examines New Testament parables. These latter she considers to be a form of "exemplum" and

The exemplum is the earlier, simpler form;
one can think of it as a distant ancestor
of the roman à thèse.

(Suleiman 1983 p28)

It is worthwhile to briefly summarize her arguments and conclusions, because, by indicating the ways in which she is in error, it is possible to highlight the aspects of Biblical narratives that are significant here.

The problem that Suleiman sets out to consider is as follows: "how can a story... demonstrate anything pertaining to the real life of its audience? (op.cit p27). More generally, "how can a story become the bearer of unambiguous meaning?" (ibid.)

On the basis of her analysis of New Testament parables, her answer is that

... the rhetoric of the roman à thèse is founded on redundancy...[and] redundancy functions as a means of disambiguation: if meaning is "excessively named" it is in order that it should be understood without ambiguity.

(op.cit p55)

What is claimed about the romans à thèse is claimed a fortiori about the New Testament parables. Further, however, about these latter, she says

every parable... is sooner or later designated by the parabolic text itself, as needing interpretation, that is, as containing a meaning other (or more) than the immediate meaning of the events it recounts.

(op. cit p30)

However, this other, greater meaning, because it is implicit, gives rise to ambiguity and the danger of misunderstanding. Consequently,

... in order to palliate this danger... didactic narratives usually propose, in more or less evident fashion, their own interpretation, which fixes the meaning of the story and eliminates (or tries to) the possibility of multiple interpretations and meanings.

(p25)

A number of points can be made about Suleiman's argument. The first is that she is mistaken about the nature of the New Testament parables. Using the Aristotelian definition of exempla as consisting of parables and fables, she says

... many of the best-known parables of the New Testament are fables – invented stories whose function is to provide a concrete example from which a general conclusion can be drawn.

(p27)

In fact, only very few of the New Testament parables are fables. The vast majority are parables (in the Aristotelian sense). C.H. Dodd's classic work on parables ("Parables of the Kingdom") remains the best introduction to this topic. This is so even in the case of the parable of the sower, which Suleiman uses as an illustration of a didactic narrative. It is a common-place of Biblical criticism that the interpretative section of the parable is an addition, the product of the early church that produced the gospels. The parable itself has more in common with other "parables of the Kingdom", most of which are shorter, and which propose one image as a means for comparison.

Suleiman, in fact, recognizes that most of the parables in the New Testament do not fit her model (Suleiman 1983 p36) and this leads her to a significant amendment of her initial hypothesis. It is not the texts themselves that determine their own interpretation, but rather "the audience becomes... an agent in the elaboration of the text" (p36).

The cues that are the means by which this agency is fulfilled are found, not within the texts themselves, but in their "intertextual context". In the case of the New Testament parables, this intertextual context consists of the total gospel text. In fact, the totality of the gospel is insufficient. Rather, it is the gospel as it has been interpreted and defined theologically and doctrinally through history.

This conclusion, which Suleiman seems to reach only unwillingly, serves to confirm the utility of the approach to textual analysis adopted by this study. Her conclusion is more significant if one more step is taken.

According to Suleiman, the audience is co-opted to the process of "disambiguation" whereby the meaning of an ideological discourse is fixed. The cues, which the text and its intertextual context provide, force the audience to appropriate one interpretation as their own and as the sole legitimate one. While didactic texts may tend to do this, I suspect that as a literary scholar, Suleiman underestimates the productive autonomy that an audience (whether a lone reader or a listening congregation) brings to the process by which meaning is created and established. In fact, especially in the case of the sermons studied here, it is the very lack of "disambiguation" that assures the success of communication. Rather than coercing the audience to accept one meaning, the discursive multiplicity of the sermons (of which the use of narrative is a part) enables the individual listeners to appropriate for themselves differing understandings and yet perceive themselves as members of a single audience that has listened to the "same" sermon.

As has already been noted, many of the sermons contain small, fragmentary sections of narrative. The most common of these are short summaries of a scripture passage, either one of those previously read in the service or another all together. For example, in the sermon which talks about the Annunciation, the following passage occurs:

You know the rest of the story. She was
going to get put aside quietly rather than
as the normal, the normal thing that
could have happened was that she could have

been stoned. Joseph was going to be nice and put aside quietly. It created the kind of tension probably in her family and in her own home town, a small town where she had to get out of town and go on a trip to Europe, go visit the aunt, in order to bear this child anonymously.

Here, and in other cases, the narrative is not merely a summary, but is also an evaluative interpretation, an exegesis, of the original scripture. In one sense, Suleiman's assertion about the function of narrative is partially supported. The exegetic recounting of the scriptural narrative in summary form allows the preacher to introduce evaluation and interpretation that is not present (or not explicitly) in the original. In this way, the preacher seeks to establish a passage as having a particular meaning.

In the next example, the narrative is used to explain a scriptural reference that is itself not narrative. Speaking about a passage from the Book of Isaiah, the preacher says:

Then comes the amazing image. I just love this image, its one of my favourites from scripture: God will raise you up on eagles' wings.

This is followed immediately by an explanation of the image's meaning:

I was told recently of the story of how a mother eagle teaches her young to fly. She pushes them out of the nest. Not very ceremoniously. She just pushes them out of the nest and they struggle to fly. She watches very, very carefully. She cares whether they're going to be able to fly. And if they don't fly, she soars, goes underneath them and catches on her wings and carries them back up because they're not quite ready. She takes them back to the nest. But she's going to push them out again.

Having employed a narrative to explain the meaning of this scriptural image, the preacher then goes on to apply this to the lives of her listeners.

I think its a beautiful image for the way God works with us. A beautiful, beautiful image, that we do need to fly, but there are wings to catch us when we can't. And there are wings on which we can be rescued and held back to safety...

One of the most extensive occurrences of narrative is in a sermon that has already been discussed. This is the sermon that deals with the theme of "facing the unknown". It contains the passage about old age and also the passage in which the preacher reinterprets the saying "Take up your cross". Since the sermon has already been discussed to some extent, I will reproduce only the pertinent section. However, in order to set this in the context of the whole sermon, a summary of the whole sermon follows.

Summary of Sermon "Facing the Unknown"

1. The scriptures today invite us to reflect on the way we dare to face the unknown.
2. In Genesis, we read about Abraham and Sarah in old age, being told by God that they will be ancestors of multitudes, and laughing at this idea as ridiculous.
3. Earlier, Abraham had been called by God to leave his home and head off into the unknown with no guarantees. He was challenged to be hopeful when it seemed ridiculous.
4. There are many people in this congregation who have had to risk going into the unknown.

5. Change can be fearful for anyone, but especially for the aged.
6. There are many changes one must face as one ages. Even simple domestic arrangements can become difficult or impossible for the old if they are frail or in ill-health.
7. Another example is of a young woman who had suffered physical abuse as a child. She fell in love and had to trust someone else as she was loved and accepted by her partner and his family and friends. This is an example of facing the unknown.
8. Another example is of a 55 year-old man whose life is changed when his wife left him. As a result he left his job and went on a long trip. This changed him fundamentally and he connected with his spiritual self and began to seek out his religious roots. He returned home to make over his life-style completely. The future is still unknown and risky.
9. In the gospel passage, Jesus talks about another kind of unknown.
10. This is a difficult passage and it is unlikely that these are authentic words of Jesus.
11. They have often been used to persuade people to accept abusive situations or to put up with suffering.
12. This is not what Jesus is talking about. He is talking about the journey to transformation and the need to face the unknown.
13. The passage comes immediately after the episode at Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus says to Peter "Get behind me, Satan".
14. Jesus then speaks of a process in which one needs to let go of one's ego self in order to follow.
15. The meaning of Jesus' words is "If you will follow me, you need to stop running your own life and let God invite you to pull up stakes and follow".

16. In this Lenten period, all of us can be part of letting go of a kind of self-centred control of our lives and allow God's Spirit to unlock who we really are. This will lead us into the unknown.

The narrative section of this sermon is in the form of two short stories, both about people (one female, one male) facing change in their lives. From an examination of the summary of the sermon, it can be seen that these stories (summary points #7 and #8) occur between the treatment of the Old Testament passage and that of the gospel. Thus, in some way, they function as a link or bridge between them. Further, they occur immediately after the section that speaks of the elderly as facing the unknown. The stories are presented as other examples of people facing the unknown. They serve to extend the range of application that the theme has, from the aged to, potentially, all people. The passage is as follows:

But there are other journeys into the unknown one face too. a 27 year old woman had experienced physical abusive treatment as a child and constant put-downs, has learned that the best way to meet people is to hurt them before they get the chance to hurt you. She has learned "You can't trust anyone. You need to be on top, the smartest, the toughest, and never let anyone near enough to hurt you". And she kept proving her truth that everyone was out to get her by the reality she created by her behaviour. But to her great shock, she is in the process of falling in love for the first time and is meeting not only a partner, but a community of her partner's friends and family, who not only do not want to hurt her, but actually seem to like her. Learning to trust, daring to risk taking off, or at least loosening the armour so she can breathe is absolute hell. It is completely unfamiliar

territory. It feels as if everything familiar is being taken out from under her. It is hard for her to dare to face into the unknown, but she is beginning.

A 55 year old man who has always had his life fall into place, comes home one day to find his wife really was serious when she had been telling him that she could not take their marriage any more. She has gone and his life goes through a turning inside-out and upside-down. He quits his job, goes on a trip around the world and is cracked open by what he sees. He connects with his spiritual self on this pilgrimage and returns home to completely make over his life and his life style. He begins a 12-step programme, some therapy and begins to seek out his religious roots. He is looking for a job that can use the skills he has in ways that are in harmony with his values. But the future is still quite unknown. It is a risky, costly business to make such change.

A number of points can be made about this passage. The first is that, contrary to Suleiman, these narratives serve not to establish meaning, but rather, to extend its application. The meaning of the Biblical passages in question (the stories about Abraham and Sarah) has already been established by a number of strategies. In the first sentence of the sermon, the meaning has already been asserted. Then, in a brief paragraph, the stories about Abraham (not just the one read during the service) are summarized as being about God's call to Abraham "to head off into the unknown". This is then followed by the passage (already examined) about aged people in the congregation. Among other things, this passage serves to reinforce and establish the meaning of the scriptures. However, in doing so, it focuses attention on one group among the congregation and, therefore, the two narratives serve to extend the application of this meaning.

It is necessary to resist the temptation to say that the passage about the aged focusses attention on one group, to the exclusion of others. Though,

perhaps, the more obvious view, this is not the case, as may be seen if one consider, not only the preacher's text, but also the congregation's experience of the sermon.

To an elderly member of the congregation, the preacher is "talking about me". The preacher is describing my experience, honoring me, in a sense, mythicizing my life experience. The aged person is, strongly, the subject of the sermon at this point. For others in the listening congregation, their experience of this passage must be different. For them, the aged are the object of the sermon. The experience of another is presented to me so that I can sympathize, gain understanding, appreciate and value this experience vicariously. The preacher can be understood as "speaking on behalf of" one group to another. In this way, experience is shared through its imaginative representation.

The narrative examples function differently, serving not to focus attention, but to extend the possible range of application.

One way that they seek to achieve this is by their lack of specificity. By comparison to the passage about the old people which is made up of a series of detailed descriptions, these narratives lack specific detail. They are about two unnamed individuals who are identified in only the briefest manner: a 27 year old female, a 55 year old man. No other precise information is given about either of them in order to identify them and yet, in the span of a few brief sentences, their whole life history is placed before the listener. A young woman suffered abuse as a child and has learned not to trust anyone. She falls in love and finds she must unlearn this pattern of behaviour. A middle-aged man is left by his wife and, as a consequence, goes on a journey of self-discovery. He returns and attempts to recreate his life on the basis of new values and rediscovered spirituality.

This lack of narrative detail and development is not a result of their position in a sermon. Lawless, for instance, (Lawless 1988) gives examples of witnessing and personal testimony during sermons that exhibit a great deal of narrative detail (albeit conventional, stylized detail). The "sketchiness" of these two stories serves to broaden their range of possible reference and also to emphasize their exemplary character. They are "thumb-nail sketches" of people we might know.

This broad application is appreciated best, however, if the perspective of the congregation is taken once again. For some listeners, one or both of these stories may seem to apply directly to some facet of their own life-experience. It is the lack of specificity that facilitates this (in, perhaps, the same way that a newspaper horoscope works by remaining at a high level of generality). For others, the stories may seem to apply to someone they know. For others again, they may seem to apply only to someone they can imagine. Again, it is their lack of development as narratives that encourages this. The listener is drawn to accept the suggested application by being required to actively engage in an imaginative "filling out" of the bare bones of these hypothetical individuals' life stories. The listener can then actively sympathize with someone who has been given only the most minimal fictional life by the preacher.

This rhetorical strategy, which is implicit in these examples, is one used frequently by the preacher. One example where it is made explicit is as follows. In this case, a scripture passage which has been developed and described as about various forms of captivity, is then applied to the lives of the listening congregation. In this case, this is done by a direct appeal.

I invite you today to listen to these words from the perspective of one in captivity. You may want to be thinking of whole people, like the refugees from Guatemala, who are in a very real exile in Mexican camps, longing to return home. Or you may feel connected to the sense of exile in yourself or the experience of someone you know. Where does this image of the stranger in a strange land connect most for you? Where can you most connect with loss of hope, being dispirited, being in captivity? Indeed you may want to spend some time reflecting on what holds you in captivity. What keeps you in exile? And then from being in touch with this experience, to hear the word of hope the prophet offers to those exiles, but also the words that Jesus announces as his mission and ministry.

A further point may be made about the way in which these narratives function within the economy of this sermon. Both are presented as examples of "facing the unknown". The (as yet) unstated assertion is that "facing the unknown" is to be understood as a process of personal, psychological change brought about by the changes of life-experience. Therefore, these narratives serve to "set up", in advance, the interpretation of the New Testament passage that will follow, that will reinterpret a key Christian theme ("Take up your cross") in terms of psychological development through personal changes.

The nature of this connection between narrative and the liberal Protestant project of recasting the Christian message in terms of the psychology of personal development may become clearer in what follows.

As has been noted, most of the occurrences of narrative in the sermons are short, fragmentary and refer to the scriptures. Further, because they are often exegetic summaries, it is sometimes difficult to judge what counts as a narrative and what does not. Rather than attempting to do this, one can examine the

significance of narrative by looking at the occurrence of the word "story" in the sermons. A partial inventory is as follows.

Occurrence of the word "story" in sermons

1. "... importance of telling the next generation the stories and the community experience"
2. "The women in the story..." (B)
3. "... this next generation will not remember this story... and the story and the memory will disappear."
4. "That story isn't about capitalism. That's a story about trust." (B)
5. "... the stories I've been hearing have been stories of excitement..."
6. "The gifts also include all of the stories and all of the experiences..."
7. "We've heard in our story..." (B)
8. "In most churches, that story isn't going to be read today." (B)
9. "I always like to bring the Annunciation story..." (B)
10. "They may have told you that story."
11. "Some of you may know the story of your adoption."
12. "I have two birth children and both of the pregnancies have totally different stories to them."
13. "You know the rest of the story."

Almost half of the occurrences are ones where the story is a Biblical one (noted with (B)). All the others are ones where the story is a narrative of personal experience. This is often made explicit by means of a syntactic

redundancy, for instance: "the story and the community's experience" and "the story and the memory".

The assumption, here implicit, is that narrative is a primary means of expressing personal experience (individual or communal). Further, such stories are intrinsically valuable, for the reason that personal experience is intrinsically valuable. As has already been pointed out, the imaginative recreation of experience - in this case recounted as a narrative - is a way in which the listener can vicariously enter into the life-experience of another (real or fictional). In this way, personal experience, which is essentially private, can be shared and become the basis of community. This imaginative recreation of experience is an especially important rhetorical strategy in the sermons, used to establish the meaning of Biblical texts and the application to the lives of the listeners. Further, narratives of experience are also used to valorize - indeed, to sacralize - the mundane life-experience of people.

This suggests that the recasting of life-experience as narrative is an important aspect of the expression of the Christian message in this context. In fact, if, as is the case here, narrative refers to "narrative of the self", then one can see how the bond between the Christian message and the vocabulary and ideas of "depth psychology" is forged. Narrative becomes the means by which personal experience is transformed into a "sacred" account of the individual's "salvation history" (their relationship with the divine). A narrative of the self is the means by which experience may be understood, evaluated and recognized as significant and meaningful rather than as transitory, valueless and without meaning.

This is made explicit in a number of places, not least throughout the text of the "Remembrance Day" sermon. Another example is provided by the remarks

made by the preacher to mark the conclusion of the "Every Member Stewardship Visitation", in which a group of volunteers from the congregation undertook to visit all the members of the congregation. In part, this was in order to secure pledges of financial support for the church. Speaking of this exercise, the preacher said:

... the stories I've been hearing have been stories of excitement about getting to know each other and finding out who the people are that you're... worshipping beside and I think... that that may in fact be the greatest gift that has been discovered...

So, besides all the monetary donations and pledges of financial support,

[t]he gifts also include all of the stories and all of the experiences that went with the visitation.

The preacher also spoke about the importance of narratives of experience in the interview that I conducted with her. Speaking about preaching, she said:

... its not just me, because I'm listening, all the time. When I'm preaching I have in mind certain people, two or three people that I've met that week or that I know their situation is and, OK, what's the Good News for this person? And, I mean, it changes totally how you preach...

(A22)

Further,

I'm always trying to listen through the eyes and ears, as much as I can put myself in the experience of another person. I hear so many stories and... one of the jobs of being a minister is being a story-keeper of the congregation, keeping and not telling. But I get the privilege of... kind of the mythic dimension of it... the archetypal. I'm just constantly being inundated with people's

INVENTORY OF OCCURRENCES OF FIRST PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN IN
CORPUS OF SERMONS FROM FIRST UNITED CHURCH

1. The pulpit from which I preach	CI
2. I have been trying to imagine	VMP
3. I can only enter such a reality	VMC
4. as I feel we have in recent years	VMC
5. I think a lot of us are like that	VMC
6. so I encourage you	IC
7. I think it may be the greatest gift	VMC
8. I would ask	IC
9. I would invite	IC
10. I'd like to thank	IRC
11. I don't know about you but...	VMP
12. so I always like	VMC
13. and I wonder why	VMC
14. I see a few smiles	CI
15. I wonder what it was like	VMC
16. I think we had our Advent	VMC
17. I have two birth children	CE
18. as I hear of Mary's anxiety	TR
19. I can relate to some	TR
20. Oh, I love that image	TR
21. I'm going to invite us all to	IC
22. I invite you to imagine yourself	IC
23. I used to feel that John	VMP
24. I find him more	VMC
25. I have been using those numbers	CE
26. I don't know about you but I meet	VMI/VMC
27. I know there have been times in my own life	VMC
28. when I have recognized myself	VMP
29. I invite you today	IC

30. as I look... I am aware	CI
31. I guess	P
32. I've been dealing with	VMP/CE
33. I've also been spending time	CE
34. I coulda done with	TR
35. I told my kids I was writing	CE
36. I hope they may work in your life as well	VMI
37. If I came up to you	IRC
38. I don't know how you would react	IRC/VMI
39. I usually find	VMC
40. whether I'm	VMC
41. I guess for me	P
42. with my own life and what I see	VMC
43. I love that word	TR
44. I just love that imagery	TR
45. when I speak a concept might be born	
46. I don't find it a problem because I think	VMC
47. I like that... I think that	VMC
48. I love that image	TR
49. I have heard Jewish friends say	CE
50. I don't know	VMI
51. I'm standing up too soon	CI
52. I've missed the anthem	CI
53. I had the privilege of hearing	CE
54. I just love this image	TR
55. I was told recently of the story	CE
56. I think its a beautiful image	TR
57. in what I think is a disastrous way	VMC
58. I'm surprised again	VMI
59. I have in my office a poster	CE
60. I've noticed	VMP
61. I've spent a lot of time wondering	VMP
62. I wondered if	VMP
63. I don't buy that	TR
64. I have to say it	TR
65. I wonder	VMC
66. I don't know	VMI
67. I'm always impressed	VMC

69. I think of people I have known	CE
70. I have trouble imagining	VMC
71. I think some of these words	TR
72. an abused wife I know	CE
73. a gay man I know	CE
74. I think it is being terribly distorted	VMC
75. I think Jesus would be horrified	VMC
76. I wonder if	VMI
77. I invite member of the congregation	IC

stories. And so, that is a wonderful resource for preaching. Because if I can't speak to those people, it doesn't speak to the person who's just lost his wife, or to the guy who's just found out he's got AIDS... then what have I got to say to anyone? So that's what I'm trying to do, is make that link, make that connection between what's really going on in people's lives and what the scripture is saying.

(A22)

The way that the scriptures are shown to be meaningful and applicable to people's lives - to be Good News - is by being "connected with", being interpreted in the light of people's experience as it has been recast as narrative at a "mythic" level.

So far, this discussion of narrative and the preacher's own remarks about its use have centred on the way it is used to recreate the experience of the members of the congregation (both as "self" and as "other"). Another important strategy by which this is achieved must be examined now. This is the way in which the preacher herself provides a model of a self that can be subjected to and transformed through narrative recreation. Fragmentary glimpses of the preacher's own life surface occasionally throughout the sermons and the way that this occurs and its significance will be examined below.

It should be noted that the occurrence of the first person singular pronoun is not uniform throughout the sermons. In some sermons the occurrences are much fewer than in others. However, these occurrences are significant and characteristic of these sermons. By way of comparison, in a comparable number of sermons preached by the minister at DC, there are only two occurrences of "I", both of which occur in a brief personal reminiscence that is used to

illustrate an exegetic point made about a particular Biblical theme. On the other hand, in this same set of sermons preached at DC, the first person plural ("we") occurs very frequently, referring (with consistent ambiguity) to those present and/or people in general.

The occurrences of "I" in the sermons analyzed here (and listed above) may be classified as follows.

1. Instructions to the Congregation (IC) - 7 occurrences

These include directions concerning posture during the ritual, but also instructions that occur during the sermon.

eg. I invite you today...

...so I encourage you to...

2. References to an immediate context (CI) - 5 occurrences

The preacher refers to some particular of the immediate spatial or temporal environment.

eg. The pulpit from which I preach...

... I'm standing up too soon...

3. References to some exophoric context (CE) - 11 occurrences

The preacher refers to some particular of a social or personal context, not spatially present, but clearly understandable to the hearers.

eg. I have two birth children

I have been using these numbers in public speaking...

4. Parenthetical (P) - 1 occurrence

... I guess...

5. Text-related references (TR) - 12 occurrences

These are direct references to the Biblical texts.

eg. Oh, I love that image.

I love that word

6. With a verb of mental state in the continuous present (VMC)

22 occurrences

eg. ... as I feel we have in recent years.

... so I always like to...

I wonder why?

I know there have been times in my life...

7. With a verb of mental state used in the past tense (VMP)

7 occurrences

eg. I have been trying to imagine...

... when I have recognized myself...

... I've spent a lot of time wondering...

8. With a verb of mental state used in the immediate present (VMI)

7 occurrences

eg. I don't know

I wonder if...

9. Refers to the immediate relationship between preacher and congregation (IRC)

2 occurrences

I'd like to thank...

If I came up to you...

Certain points are immediately apparent. One is the occasional, "everyday" nature of the linguistic forms in which the occurrences take place. The first person singular pronoun does not occur in contexts where the subject is dramatically or emphatically in focus, as is the case, for instance, with Pentecostal or fundamentalist "witnessing". Rather, just the opposite is the case.

Further, three of the categories identified account for over half of the total occurrences, when taken together. These are "context-exophoric" (CE), "text-related" (TR) and "verbs of mental state in the continuous present" (VMC).

Context-exophoric

The term "exophoric" is used here in the sense suggested by Halliday and Hasan (1989). The referent of "I" in these cases is external to the text of the sermon. Further, it is, in a sense, external to the immediate spatio-temporal context of the utterance. These occurrences refer, not to the preacher qua preacher, nor to the subject as minister leading a worship service here and now,

but to the subject elsewhere and at another time. They refer to a mother, a public speaker (a figure in the community at large), a pastoral agent. They function, therefore, to contextualize the speaker and her speech in a wider socio-cultural context.

As has been argued above, it is a characteristic of the type of Christianity exemplified by this preacher and her congregation that there is no stark contradiction between it and the culture of which it is part. It seems, therefore, that one function of these context-exophoric occurrences of "I" is to maintain a connection between a liberal Protestant faith and the secular culture of which it is part.

Further, and significantly, these references serve to adumbrate, in the briefest manner, the life of the preacher. Like the examples of narrative considered above, it is their generality, their lack of specificity, that lends them their effectiveness. By their occasional, unemphatic character, they seem to allude to a life that could be "spelled out" in greater detail; that could, indeed, be narrated but is not. Some in the listening congregation may know, from their personal experience of the preacher, to what some of these allusions refer. They may know this individual, not only as a preacher and leader of worship, but also as a pastoral counsellor or as a public speaker and activist on social issues, possibly as a mother and wife. On the other hand, many know the preacher only from their weekly visits to the church on Sunday. For these, probably the majority of her audience, the self-references in the sermons serve a comparable purpose to the narrative sections of the sermons. They invite the listener to take part in an exercise of imaginative creation whereby a non-existent narrative of self, in this case the "exemplary" self of the minister, can be brought to life.

Text-related

These occurrences are especially striking. On these occasions, the preacher refers (often in an aside) to the scripture texts, not theologically or exegetically, but as objects to be valued for their own sake. The Bible texts are presented as objects of possible aesthetic appreciation, to be savoured and enjoyed. This stands in especially marked contrast to a more commonly found relationship between preacher and the Biblical text. Frequently, the preacher attempts to illustrate the relevance of a particular text (or the Bible as a whole) by asserting that the texts "speaks" in an especially personal fashion to a particular aspect or situation of their own life (and so, by implication, may also do so to those who listen). This is not the case here. Rather, the texts are presented as something to be enjoyed, to be appreciated like a piece of music or art.

The effect of this is, I suspect, to suggest the possibility of a familiarity with and enjoyment of the scriptures that is unknown to most of the listening congregation. For most, familiar with it or not, the Bible is conceived of as a source of knowledge, moral and spiritual, of lessons to be learned and precepts to be obeyed. Here, the implicit suggestion is made that it may equally be a source of images that can be individually appropriated, not only for their moral and spiritual value, but also for their beauty.

Verbs of mental state

Since the sermons are not narratives, it is not surprising that occurrences of "I" are not found qualifying verbs of action. Nevertheless, it is notable that "I" frequently qualifies such verbs as "wonder", "feel", "think" (rarely "know"

or "believe"). Further, the tense of the verb in these cases is one which suggests a permanent, long-term state or disposition.

One effect of this (true also of the other two types of occurrence noted above) is to present the self of the preacher as an exemplary object for the listeners. Through these forms, the sermons function as models of self-description and self-understanding. Specifically, the self is presented, implicitly, as an appropriate object for reflection and description. Further, it is presented as an appropriate object, not only of scrutiny, but also of labour. The self is presented as a possible "project": something that can be developed and transformed through symbolic labour and, importantly, this is understood as a religious activity. In this understanding, the texts of the Bible are conceived of as a resource to be used in the achievement of self-definition and self-description rather than as a source of doctrine and moral instruction.

This last point is clearly illustrated by the "New Year's" sermon, which will be examined in detail below. In this sermon, the Biblical texts are interpreted in relationship to a particular presentation of the preacher's self-understanding of liberal Christianity. However, before proceeding to this examination, one last aspect of the sermons' lexical character may be used to add support to this contention.

"In my own life"

This phrase and a number of other, similar ones (eg. "in your own life", "our own selves" etc.) occur several times during the sermons. They are not especially frequent, nor are they enunciated in a way that makes them particularly noticeable during the verbal performance of the sermons. In fact, it

is only when the texts of the sermons are examined closely that they stand out.

Occurrences of "own life" phrases and similar ones

1. ... [pregnancy] when we start to think about our own experience
2. ... maybe it will be disruptive to our lives.
3. ... invite you to take into the core of your being at this time of your life.
4. [Voices from the wilderness] come from the edge, from the dry places in the world and in our own lives.
5. ... from the powerless places both in the culture and in our own psyches.
6. And I know that there have been times in my own life when I have recognized myself as an exile...
7. Are there ways you experience oppression or captivity in your own life?
8. So much desecration still in our world, in our lives...
9. ... this is not just for our own selves, but it is part of a vision of a God...
10. [these words] may work some of that creating power in your own life as well.
11. ... what the Holy Spirit is doing in my life.
12. ... how the Spirit interacts with creation and with my own life.
13. ... what's going on in your own life.
14. ... to have power in one's own life...

The most notable aspect of these phrases is their lexico-grammatical redundancy. At this level, most could be omitted altogether, or at least replaced by a simpler locution. For example, in the following occurrence:

And I know that there have been times in
my own life when I have recognized myself
as an exile...

the phrase "in my own life" could be omitted without any apparent alteration to the sense.

Again, "Are there ways you experience oppression or captivity in your own life?" Here, the phrase "in your own life" could be omitted.

It appears, therefore, that these phrases function merely as emphases, as unnecessary, rhetorical flourishes. However, one may still ask what it is that is emphasized and why?

It seems that these phrases perform the same function noted above in the case of the occurrences of the first person singular pronoun, but that they do so in a more explicit fashion. One's "own life" is the ongoing progression of the "self" through time. As such, it is an appropriate object of reflection. Indeed, the "project" that the self becomes as the object of this symbolic labour is a religious task. Again, the underlying assumption here is that personal experience is not only intrinsically valuable, but, in a sense, provides the "raw material" whereby a religious self-identity and self-understanding may be created.

Chapter Seven: Remembrance and Renewal:
a close look at two sermons

A number of the points that have been argued so far can be illustrated in greater detail by considering sermons in their entirety. In what follows, two sermons will be examined. In particular, the occurrence of personal pronouns will be examined in order to illustrate the ways in which they are implicated in the portrayal and construction of persons, both as individuals and as members of collectives.

The first sermon to be examined is the one that has been referred to so far as the "Remembrance Day" sermon. This sermon was preached during a service in early November, on a Sunday closest to Remembrance Day (November 11th).

The ritual of worship for that Sunday reflected this in a number of ways. A wreath of poppies was displayed on a stand, placed on the same level as the organ console, to one side of it. A small number of the male members of the congregation (all elderly) wore military campaign medals and ribbons. One of these was the reader of the scriptures that day. It is the usual custom for the reader to bring a Bible to the lectern/pulpit, as there is no permanent Bible or lectionary placed there. Most seem to bring the Bible that is in the pew rack. This is the New International translation. On this occasion, though, the reader used the King James Version, presumably having brought his own personal Bible from home. This was the only occasion during my fieldwork that I observed this translation of the scriptures used.

After the second reading, from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians, the reader then recited the poem "In Flanders' fields, the poppies grow".

This service was held on a bright, late fall morning. The minister had been away on personal business during the week and had returned only late on Friday. Perhaps as a consequence of this, more people than usual tried to speak

with her before the beginning of the service and she gave the impression of being somewhat harried. Later, she confirmed this impression, though the reason for this was her anxiety over the sermon.

... I was skating on a razor's edge that day. That was the most tense sermon I've preached for years in this congregation.
(A27)

The text of the sermon should be referred to at this point.

Text of the "Remembrance Day" sermon

In our scriptures today we are reminded in the Psalms of the importance of telling the next generation the stories and the community's experience of how God had been with them through trying times in the past. And it is clear in that psalm that not only the happy, successful parts are to be told, but also the dark sayings of old. Remembering was seen as an important way of teaching for the future generations.

In the letter to the Thessalonians, the confused people are told that they are not to grieve as others, as those who have no hope. Grieving with hope, remembering with hope is how Paul says the community is to encourage one another. Grieving in a way that does not only look backwards, but also looks to the future with hope.

In Matthew, again the theme of being between times is present. The women in the story have been given the role of tending and guarding the light. Since fire and light was one of the most precious gifts, it was a tremendous responsibility to guard it, to keep it burning, to care for it, to make sure that it would be there for those who would come later.

A few blocks from here, in the Peace Tower in the Parliament buildings,

there is a special room with a special book with the names of all the Canadian men and women who died in the First World War. Beside it is a Bible. And above it is a light that never goes out. This light is tended and is a reminder to all our leaders and to all who visit of what has happened in the past, so that we can remember and learn to live in peace.

In our own church, we have a Rose window that is a memorial to those from this congregation who died in World War Two. As well, we have plaques at the front of the church which have names of those who used to sit in these very pews who have been killed in wartime. The pulpit from which I preach was a gift in memory of an airman from this congregation who was killed.

There are some in this congregation who fear that this next generation will not remember this story, will not value the courage and the sacrifice, will forget and the story and the memory will disappear.

Some of us in my generation find it hard to remember something that we never experienced and fear anything that would glorify war as a good way of solving conflict. What does it mean for this congregation, with its diversity of experience, to remember with hope, to remember to the future?

I have, in this past week, been trying to imagine what it would be like to have been the minister of a congregation where on Sunday I might have to come in and announce that ---- had been killed in action - a euphemism for having his head blown off with shrapnel, or being blown to pieces by a bomb, or had been lost at sea when his ship or his plane went down. Imagine what it would be like for you as a community to hear that we had lost one of our own children at 18 or 20 or 22 years of age; a young man we had all watched grow into an adolescent and join our youth group, a young man whom we had watched fall in love and wondered if we might all be hearing about a wedding soon. What would

it be like for us to know this young man's mother and father, brothers and sisters? What would it be like for us to know that his fiancée was sitting in the pew in front of us, her future dashed? What would it be like not knowing when the war was going to be over, if ever? What would it be like not knowing which side was going to win? What would it be like to be in that horrible waiting, grieving, hoping time?

I can only enter such a reality in my imagination. Some of you have lived through exactly what I have been talking about in your own experience. Some of you have come from countries where war is still going on, and this kind of violence and death and fear have been part of your life still in this decade of the twentieth century. For, although there has not been a World War since 1945, there have been more localized conflicts which have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

Remembrance Day is celebrated at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month each year because that was when the guns stopped firing in World War 1. It is remembered with silence, because it was the moment of silence that could be finally experienced. It is a celebration of peace and of the longing that this war would be the last war, the war that would end all wars. Veterans of World War 1 could not imagine, after the horror that had experienced, that they would ever be insane enough to go to war again, if only they could remember... if only they could remember. If only they would take some silence to reflect and let the meaning of war and the cost of war sink into their souls. World War 1 was the war that destroyed any romanticization of war. No one who experienced the stench and rot of trench warfare and poison gas (as did my grandfather) ever came back unchanged. Many were destroyed in spirit, even if their physical bodies returned.

The human race is only beginning to learn that war and violence are not the way of solving problems. Canadians involved in both wars hoped that the war they were fighting would be the last one, would be the one that would end war forever. World War 2 veterans hoped that this war would end tyranny and oppressive regimes. Would that hope had turned out to be true. Since World War 2, Canada's main military role in the world has been in a peacekeeping role, working mostly with United Nations trying to diffuse situations, trying to verify arms control and distribution of humanitarian assistance, trying to create the kind of climate in which peaceful solutions can be negotiated by politicians. Canadians have put their lives on the line monitoring cease-fires between Iraq and Iran, between Arabs and Israelis, between Afghans and Pakistanis, between warring factions in Cyprus, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, between Croats and Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, between warring clans in Somalia. Tens of thousands have been involved since 1947 in this and other peacekeeping work and eighty-eight Canadians have died while serving in this work.

We are still, as a world, struggling to understand what peacekeeping will mean for the future. We will make mistakes, as I feel we have in recent years in Iraq and Oka; as General Lewis MacKenzie feels the UN is doing now in the former Yugoslavia, and we do this because we are so new at this process and sometimes have not changed our thinking as a species far enough to be truly people of peace. But we have also moved in very positive directions since the beginning of the century.

As Christians, we need constantly to be living in hope for peace. We need to be holding up that light and working for the kind of justice that will create the climate for peace to flourish. The best tribute that we in these times can pay to those who have had their lives and their futures taken from them as a result

of war, is to work to build the kind of world where this will never have to happen again, for anyone, anywhere. We live in between times, between memory and hope. We live with the longing for peace, and the reality that for many in this world that has not yet arrived. But if we ever get cynical and lose Peace with Justice as the goal for which we struggle, we are in peril of losing our souls and of trivializing the memory of those who have gone before. Let us take time to remember and to reflect, especially those who have lost their lives. Let us keep silence before this awesome history.

[End of Text]

While acknowledging Goffman's remarks about the naivety of asking "What's going on here?" a valuable starting point is nevertheless provided by asking of this sermon "What is it about?"

A simple answer is that it is about Remembrance Day. Specifically, it is an attempt to show that this ceremonial is relevant and meaningful in the modern world, though the events it commemorates are almost 80 years ago. From this point of view, the sermon can be summarized as in the following precis.

PRECIS OF REMEMBRANCE DAY SERMON

1. The readings are about the importance of telling stories about the past to future generations.
2. The Peace Tower on Parliament Hill reminds us of the war dead so that we can learn to live in peace.
3. This church has several memorials to members of the congregation that died in the war.
4. Some members of the congregation fear that these memories will not be passed on to the next generation.

5. Others, of my generation, fear anything that might glorify war.
6. I have been trying to imagine what it would be like to be a minister in war-time.
7. Imagine what it would be like to be a member of this congregation in war-time.
8. I can only imagine this, but some here have experienced war first-hand.
9. Remembrance Day commemorates the end of World War I, in the hope that war would not be repeated.
10. Humans are only beginning to learn to live in peace.
11. Canada has been active in peace-keeping.
12. Human-beings still struggle to understand what peace-keeping means.
13. As Christians, we must hope constantly and work for peace.

This sermon follows the same general form as do the others preached at First United Church. It is unusual in that the subject of the sermon is an event rather than a text and an event external to Christianity (albeit culturally associated) at that.

The sermon begins, as do the others, with a direct reference to the scriptures that have been read as part of the worship service. The readings are not so much summarized as briefly characterized in such a way as to highlight one particular aspect and to suggest something that they have in common. In some cases, this leads to a very clear statement of a theme. This is not the case here, though it is made clear enough that the theme is memory of past events and their commemoration for future generations. In this rather imaginative way, the preacher produces a connection between the lectionary readings for this Sunday and Remembrance Day (the actual date of which is some days hence).

Having dealt with the scriptures in this fashion, the sermon now turns to

its real subject - Remembrance Day. Further exegesis of the scriptures, typical of other sermons, does not occur. They have been treated as a means to an end and, that end achieved, they are left aside.

What follows (in terms of the General Functional structure, the "Development of the Meaning") is a series of contextual examples used to illustrate what has already been stated as the theme of the sermon. Examples (the Peace Tower at Parliament Hill, the Rose window and the memorial plaques in the church) are given of artifacts that serve to commemorate past wars and those who have died in them.

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERMON

General Functional Structure with Linguistic Realizations

<u>Contextual Remarks</u>	ABSENT
<u>Reference to Bible Texts</u>	"In our scriptures today..." "In the letter to the Thessalonians..." "In Matthew..."
<u>Theme/Meaning of texts</u>	"Remembering was seen as an important way of teaching..."
<u>Development of Meaning</u>	"... in the Peace Tower..." "In our own church..."
<u>Application of Meaning</u>	i) <u>Creation of a Problem</u> "There are some in this congregation..." AND "Some of us in my generation..." ii) <u>Direct Appeal to Imagination</u> "Imagine what it would be like..."
<u>Resolution</u>	"As Christians we need..."

In all sermons, the theme that has been designated as the meaning of the text (in this case, an event) and which has been developed by way of example (or in other cases by way of exegesis) must now be shown to be relevant by being applied to modern life; specifically, to the lives of the congregation. This is achieved through a variety of strategies, as already described. One common strategy is to state the meaning as problematic. For instance, the gospel text may be described as giving rise to a theological problem (eg. the baptism of Jesus - if baptism is for the remission of sins, why was Jesus baptised? Or, the creation account in the book of Genesis - how can this be reconciled with a scientific understanding of the origins of the Universe?)

This is the strategy adopted in the Remembrance Day sermon. A problem is described and developed in three successive sentences, the third of which is in the form of a question, demanding a solution for the problem.

There are some in this congregation who fear that this next generation will not remember this story, will not value the courage and the sacrifice, will forget, and the story and the memory will disappear. Some of us in my generation find it hard to remember something that we never experienced, and fear anything that would glorify war as a good way of solving conflict. What does it mean for this congregation, with its diversity of experience, to remember with hope, to remember to the future?

The problem that the preacher states - in fact creates - by her rhetoric, is complex and has a number of dimensions. In part, however, it specifies the question of the relevance of Remembrance Day for the modern world. How is it possible for a generation with no experience of past events to continue to commemorate them, to continue to perform a ceremony which is without meaning?

The answer proposed is a rhetorical tour de force. The new generation can enter into the experience of the past through imagination. The two generations

can, in fact, be united into a single community through the exercise of imagination. The preacher instructs the congregation to do just this ("Imagine...") after providing them with a model from her own behaviour ("I have in this past week been trying to imagine...").

Further, however, when the ceremony of Remembrance Day has been rehabilitated through this imaginative experience, it is redefined as a perpetual reminder of the necessity of continuing the (new) tradition of military "peace-keeping". This latter is presented as the modern response to the reality of warfare.

This rhetorical exercise is particularly powerful and, in a sense, dangerous, because it depends upon the recognition and description of real divisions within the congregation. The congregation of First United church is divided along lines of age and, to a certain extent, socio-political opinion. The preacher draws attention to this fact by stating the problem in terms of a division between groups within the congregation. Further, she seems to align herself with one rather than the other ("Some of us in my generation..."). The danger of this as a rhetorical technique is that only if the rhetorical resolution of this division is convincing enough can the preacher avoid bringing to light a situation that otherwise could be denied without providing a solution to it. Part of the way that she achieves a resolution is by redefining - by shifting - the division. She does this by recognizing (and bringing the congregation to recognize) that this division between "we" (of my generation, with no experience of war and a suspicion of possible glorification of it) and "them" (older, with experience of war and a regard for the ceremony of Remembrance Day) is false. In fact, "my generation" as represented by the congregation, contains those who have first-hand experience of war in their countries of origin. So, "some of us in my

generation" who depend upon an empathic understanding of the horrors of war, turn out to be a small minority after all.

I [and my cohort] can only enter such a reality in my imagination. [But] some of you have lived through [war] in your own experience... For although there has not been a World War since 1945, there have been many localized conflicts...

Remembrance Day is still relevant and meaningful because of the continuing reality of the warfare that it invites us to remember. The division that the preacher created has been dissolved and is replaced by another more general one (between those who have experienced war and those who have not). This new division is not based upon age or any other factor that corresponds to real and significant divisions within the congregation. The danger involved in this rhetoric is averted by returning the divisions to the realm of the imagination, where solutions can be purely rhetorical.

The foregoing is but one experience of this sermon - one "reading", or, better, one "hearing" of it. The real subject of this sermon is, in this interpretation, that group of hearers for whom Remembrance Day is problematic. Those with no experience of war and with contemporary scruples about its possible glorification. These are the "we" of the imagined war-time congregation, who, together with the preacher, "can only enter such a reality" through imagination.

However, just as this group is a partial representation of the congregation, so likewise, is this a partial hearing of the sermon. Evidence for this is provided by what the preacher has said about the sermon and it is valuable to consider this now.

QUOTE FROM INTERVIEW WITH SHARON MOON (A24/25)

P: What were you attempting there? What was...

S: We have had a history in this church around Remembrance Day that is... its ironic, its where the most conflict in this church happens, and we do... on gays and lesbians and there wasn't as much conflict around that as there's been around Remembrance Day, flags and issues around military and things like that. Um, and last year we had, I thought, we had really tried very hard to address, to ensure that the people that'd got, we've got both ends of the spectrum here, 80% of the congregation for whom Remembrance Day and the World Wars is not high on the hit parade and they would be people who would be more likely to be at a peace march than (P: 80%?) ... 60 to 80, its very high. I've got a small, quite a small group of people - it doesn't all go by age - some of the older people would be people who would be in that camp. I've got a small group of people for whom its a very, very key, important day and for them the people that have died are a, very much, they're up and walking around inside of them that day. And, I can have some experience of that, because every December 6th I go through a, all my ghosts are up walking that day, so I have some, my own personal experience of what that might have been like and I was really trying very hard to... make... I was trying to address the more conservative end of my congregation and make them feel that their stories and their experiences mattered and to do that, um, without losing my own integrity, of my stand around war and not to try to justify the role of war, the World Wars were a good thing, so it was a real challenge to, um, to, I was trying to be very pastoral, to the people who, for whom this was very important and I was, it was a real reaching out to make them feel validated and heard and included because if we believe in an inclusive congregation then that doesn't, then I have... then that doesn't just mean my end of the spectrum. Y'know, that means that, not where I'm at, which means the more conservative end and they're very important and I don't want to lose them, because none of them are, I mean they're all good, I mean, I don't have, there's nobody on that side that I wouldn't want here, they're really good people and who am I to have the right to say who belongs in this church. But, um, so I was really trying pastorally to reach out to them and at the same time trying to do something that would allow... it was... the folks in the congregation who... don't take that stuff seriously, who are down on that kind of stuff, to try and give them a way of entering it in such a way that it could become more real for them, so that they would have more compassion and more understanding for where the other people were coming from... as well as preach a sermon about peace [LAUGHS]. So I was, I thought I told you, I was skating on a razor's edge that day. That was the most tense sermon I've preached for years in this congregation. I felt under the most pressure, I agonized, agonized, agonized over it... and it worked.

P: You perceived it to work or..?

S: Oh, yes. Well it worked and also, everyone of those people and they were all men, for whom that was a big, big issue, everyone of them made a special point of either speaking to me afterwards or calling up the next day or, to tell me how much they really appreciated and to thank me for it.

For present purposes, the key statement here is the preacher's description of her purpose in preaching this sermon. "I was trying to make them feel that their stories and their experiences mattered..."

In one sense, the preacher's remarks confirm the interpretation just given. In preaching the Remembrance Day sermon, she was attempting to speak "on behalf of" the small group of older people for whom it is important and state their point of view to the other, younger members of the congregation. She was speaking for one part of the congregation to another.

However, one may ask whether this was how these older members, on whose behalf she spoke, construed the situation. There is evidence (clear, though indirect) that they experienced the sermon positively and considered it a success.

Well it worked and also, everyone of those people
... for whom it was a big, big issue, everyone
of them made a special point of either speaking
to me afterwards or calling me up the next day
or, to tell me how much they really appreciated
and to thank me for it.

(A25)

For these people, this sermon cannot have been "about" the same thing. In their experience of it, the sermon cannot have been about the problem of an irrelevant ceremony and the need to re-interpret it for the modern world. For these people, there is no need to re-interpret Remembrance Day. It continues to be meaningful and relevant for them because of their personal experiences.

If these people did not, therefore, "hear the same sermon", what was the sermon "about" for them? Because of the preacher's imaginative ability, these people's personal experience was communicated and also validated to others. Personal experience was made common to all members of the congregation. The sermon was, therefore, the communication of the personal experience that makes

the ceremony of Remembrance Day meaningful.

If one returns to the way in which the preacher stated "the problem of the meaning of Remembrance Day", it is possible to discern how these alternatives are achieved in one and the same sermon.

There are some in this congregation who fear that
this next generation will not remember... Some of
us in my generation find it hard to remember...

In the initial analysis, "There are some in this congregation..." was interpreted as an implicit "they", opposed to the "we" of "Some of us in my generation..." This is not necessarily the case. One could just as easily interpret it as an implicit "we": "There are some [of us] in this congregation..."

If one belonged to the section of the congregation of whom this is an accurate description, this would be the natural way to hear this phrase. Further, this perception would govern one's hearing of all that follows. The imaginative description of the war-time congregation would be understood as a presentation of my experience to those others who have not shared it. In this alternate "hearing" of the sermon, the true subjects of the sermon would be I and my fellows, old enough to remember experience of warfare first-hand.

The success of this sermon thus depends upon a fundamental ambiguity of reference, whereby different hearers can legitimately experience the sermon in different ways. Nevertheless, all present share the common and uniting experience of hearing "the same sermon" which is "about" the same thing: the meaning of Remembrance Day and its continuing relevance.

The "fundamental ambiguity of reference" is not to be understood as an

artifact produced by the preacher's rhetorical art. It is, rather, a "natural" characteristic of the function of the language used. This point bears elaboration and can be considered in more detail through an examination of the ways in which personal pronouns function in this and other sermons.

The occurrence of personal pronouns in the Remembrance Day sermon is quite particular. The second person plural "you" occurs only twice (both occurrences are in the same immediate context). The first person singular "I" occurs on three occasions. By far the largest number of occurrences are of "we".

The apparent referent of this pronoun is obvious. It is indexical of all those present and engaged in the speaking/hearing of the sermon. "We" comprises the preacher and the congregation. Close examination of the text, however, discloses that this obvious referent is far from the whole story. The very first occurrence of "we" includes, at least potentially, not only the present congregation but also all other Christians who are, conceivably, engaged in comparable activities, considering the same lectionary texts as part of Sunday worship services.

The next occurrence, which continues the theme of memory, expands the reference to include all Canadians (potentially) who may visit the Peace Tower in the Parliament Buildings. In the next occurrence, where the textual coherence is maintained by comparable subject matter (memorials to the war dead), the reference is, once again, the congregation.

A more complete analysis of the uses of "we" in this sermon is presented in the chart below. It is clear that the referent of "we" shifts back and forth throughout the sermon: now narrowly conceived as the members of the congregation, now more widely as all members of Canadian society.

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERMON: Analysis of Occurrence of Pronouns

Text

Referent

1. "In our scriptures, we are reminded..."

Potentially, all Christians;
specifically, the congregation.

2. "This light... so that we can remember..."

All Canadians

3. "... we have a rose window..."

The congregation

FIRST OCCURRENCE OF "I"

4. "There are some who feel..."

Group within the congregation

5. "Some of us in my generation..."

Group with congregation + minister

SECOND OCCURRENCE OF "I"

6. "Imagine... we... "

Whole congregation

THIRD OCCURRENCE OF "I"

7. "We are still as a world..."

all humans, but specifically

8. "We will make mistakes..."

those in Western society,

9. "We do this because..."

perhaps just Canadians

10. "We have moved in positive directions..."

11. "As Christians, we..."

All Christians

12. "Let us..."

The congregation

This shifting is something that is apparent only through close examination of the text. It is not apparent to the hearer of the performed sermon, nor is it a conscious part of the preacher's art. Rather it is a characteristic of the function of personal pronouns in natural language: functioning now indexically, now anaphorically, now exophorically. However, because of this, a significant rhetorical effect is achieved. In this way, the nature of the "we" is defined. The diverse and heterogeneous groups and individuals that make up the congregation are, at least rhetorically, unified into a homogeneous community. Further, this community formed by the congregation, albeit an ideal, imaginary community, is defined as being consistent with society at large. The community of worshippers is not defined by opposition to Canadian culture, as is the case with some Christian groups (eg. fundamentalists; another example is Augustine's opposition between "Christiani" and "Pagani" which occurs frequently in his sermons). Rather, in a fashion that, I suspect, is characteristic of liberal Protestantism, the sermons define the Christian community in terms that are compatible with the larger society. In Marsh Witten's terms, the sermons preached at First United Church adopt a strategy of "accommodation" vis a vis the culture. The community to which the believers belong - which is created and maintained in part through the rhetoric of the sermons - is different from, yet in no fundamental way incompatible with, the larger society.

It is apparent that for many present day church-goers, membership of a church congregation and participation in its worship provides an important means by which individuals experience themselves as members of a "community". The term "community" is ill-defined. However, it may be conceived of as a significant group which mediates (by size and in terms of characteristic interactions)

between the small, family and family-type relationships (the "private sphere") and the larger, anonymous society (the "public sphere") of which individuals are "citizens".

It has been argued by a number of scholars (for example, recently, by David Cheal) that conventional, church religion continues to perform an important function in this regard. However, as has been stated, the nature of this mediation, or rather its symbolic expression, varies from overt opposition (eg. cult groups, fundamentalist sects) to complete assimilation (eg. established churches). The form that this mediation takes among North American liberal Protestants is typically in terms of a community that is distinct but fundamentally in agreement with society.

The achievement of the Remembrance Day sermon is to create such an imaginary, rhetorical community out of the diverse and opposed groups and individuals that make up the real congregation that gathers on a Sunday at First United Church.

As was noted above, the first person singular occurs rarely in this sermon. However, when it does occur, it performs important functions within the rhetorical economy of the sermon. These will now be examined briefly. A more detailed consideration of "I" will be undertaken through an examination of the "New Year's" sermon.

The occurrences of "I" in the Remembrance Day sermon are noted in the chart already referred to (*supra*). They occur at important junctures in the sermon and play a significant part in the development of the sermon.

The first occurrence is during the contextual examples which the preacher gives of memorials to the war-dead within the church. The structure of this

section is a typical example of a common modern-day rhetorical form: a version of "progressio". Three related phrases or sentences build one upon the other to a rhetorical "conclusion" that often has the force of a logical conclusion in argument. In this particular example, the extra, concluding rhetorical force is provided by the use of "I". Thus:

...we have a rose window...

...we have plaques...

and the pulpit I preach from...

As a memorial, there is nothing more significant about the pulpit than any other. In fact, in terms of cost, size and visibility it is the rose window that is the most significant. The special significance of the pulpit is a purely rhetorical creation and one that lasts only as long as its utterance during the sermon.

The second occurrence of "I" (a double one) comes after the preacher has stated the "problem" of the sermon. It occurs, therefore, at the outset of the development of this "problem of meaning", which is also the beginning of the preacher's solution to the problem. The solution has been described above. It involves an extended exercise in imagination, with the preacher's instruction to the congregation to "Imagine what it would be like..." to live through war-time as a member of the congregation. This invitation/instruction is, however, prefaced by a description of the preacher's own exemplary exercise of imagination.

I have in this past week been trying to
 imagine what it would be like to have been
 a minister of a congregation when on Sunday
 I might have to come in...

Here, "I" functions in an exemplary fashion. This whole section functions as an example - a model - which the congregation is then asked to emulate. The emulation is the means by which they can take part in the preacher's recovery/reconstruction of the meaning of Remembrance Day.

The instruction to the congregation to "Imagine..." is elaborated through a series of exemplary scenarios, each of which is presented using "we" and "us". The third and final occurrence of "I" (double again) is at the conclusion of this section. Here, the preacher is, once more, presented as an example:

I can only enter such a reality in my
imagination [But] Some of you have lived
through exactly what I have been talking
about...

As already described, this section marks a shift in the rhetorical strategy of the sermon. Through this figure, where a new group within the congregation is addressed ("Some of you"), the original opposition between "we" and "them" is dismantled and replaced by the more inclusive and less oppositional distinction between "we" who have experienced war and "we" who have not.

It seems that, even in this sermon, when occurrences of "I" are rare, their occurrence nevertheless marks rhetorically significant junctures. These functions may be examined at greater length through a consideration of a sermon in which "I" occurs much more frequently: the "New Year's" sermon.

Text of "New Year's" Sermon

Just as I look at these sculptor, sculptures, I am aware that every one of them has come from what we call the two-thirds world. One comes from Kenya, the big one, one comes from Korea, the wooden one and the onyx one comes from Mexico. The creating Spirit is, er, present among... the two-thirds world is often quite amazing. All of our scriptures today are about beginning and that's, I guess, appropriate as we, some of us anyway, struggle to begin a new year, to get kind of geared up, to meet this January... and as we begin to start to unlock the meaning of this birth that we have just celebrated... some of you know, I've been dealing with more of the other end of the spectrum in the last little while, for since Christmas Eve, I've been dealing with an Aunt who is, remains in critical condition because of a brain aneurism and she's holding her own but she's still, remains in critical condition. I've also been spending time with a lot of folks this week who have been dealing with various kinds of deaths. Physical or emotional, spiritual and y'know, I coulda done with an old "Yea, though I walk through the valley of death" scripture today... and yet rather than that, what do we get but scriptures about beginning. Nothing that allows me to focus on endings or on "ain't it awful" or on Christmas blues, post-Christmas blues, or on frozen cars or frozen feet. Instead, these scriptures challenge us to be in touch with the God of beginnings, the God of newness of life. The God of creating, the God of re-creating. And it has been a real challenge for me. I told my kids yesterday I was writing this sermon that I was, um, giving birth to something and it was a breach birth and you know what that means because they were calling me to connect with power and with possibility rather than with chaos and with hopelessness. And they've done that and I hope they may work some of that creating power in your life as well.

The passage from Acts speaks about the beginnings of the church and Paul's question to them about the Holy Spirit: "Had they received the Holy Spirit when they believed?" Now, many of us wouldn't really know how to answer that question. If I came up to you and said "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" um, I don't know how you would react. I usually find that question ends up being asked by, to me, by people who really could not give one hoot about what the Holy Spirit is doing in my life in terms of creating me, rather its usually asked by people who are trying to see whether I'm an inner or an outer. Whether I'm somebody to be excluded or somebody to be included in the real category of Christian or whether I'm just one of those wishy-washy liberals pretending. And usually, whether we've received the Holy Spirit by people who are asking that kind of question, there's a set of very narrow rules about how, what the Spirit is and how we know one has received the Holy Spirit. I guess for me, the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit interacts with creation and with my own life and with what I see in other people's lives is something much more elusive. Its much more difficult to explain, its much more difficult to stick in a little box. Its deeper. Its more creative. And its much more radical in the sense that it goes right, more to the core and the depths of who we are. The Spirit's about the capacity to be fully alive. Fully alive in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. And that truly is a gift of God. Its about that energizing, creating, sustaining power at work in the very core of creation... and its the source and the power for life that one is able to draw upon when absolutely everything seems hopeless and chaotic. And when you don't even know what it is that you need to ask for, its as if the Spirit, Paul says, groans through you with a prayer too deep for words. And its that same Spirit that was at work in the Priests' account of Genesis that was read today.

The irony is that the Priestly account of Genesis, the very first words of the Bible are written much later than the Second Story of Creation which comes in the second part. It's the same spirit that was present at Jesus' baptism. In the Genesis story that---- read from today we're reminded that in the beginning God and in Hebrew that's "Beginnings God", "Beginnings God creatingness". That's the way those words, it's like word pictures and they're parallels: beginningness, newness, Godness, sacredness, holiness and creatingness. Those are the three pictures that are in that verse. In the beginning God was and God was creating and God was bringing order out of chaos. God, that's comforting. God was bringing order out of chaos. Out of what had no form and what was just emptiness and void, without light. Order out of chaos. For this late 20th century generation there's a strange majesty and mystery about this language that other generations haven't been able to grasp. We didn't know anything about Chaos Theory when they wrote this book, the Bible. But we also can hear a different element to it, a kind of warning or threat because it is possible we know in this generation as no other generation has ever known that that formlessness and that void to be again and indeed for us as a generation, as a species, to bring that about. And so the fragility of creation... And it was the ru'ah, I love that word, every chance I get to use it I do because that's the word in, in Hebrew, the ru'ah, the Spirit of God, the breath of God, the wind of God. And this was moving over the waters. Just love that imagery. And we can be thankful that that is also true, eternally true. And it's not just some vision of something that happened in a remote past, in some mythical dream world but this God who created the heavens and the earth is still in the process of creating and still moving over the deeps. For every moment a million stars are being born in the wombs of the great galaxies. That's a good thing to remember when you think

that your life is so important and what's going on in your own life is, um, is where its really at. That a million stars are being born every moment in the wombs of the great galaxies. And as we think about the Spirit moving over the waters preparatory to calling forth land and other forms of life, we're reminded also of the oceans that are still the source and guardian of life on this planet and how fragile we're beginning to realize they are. For if the oceans are destroyed, then we too will be. And yet... the creating Spirit still moves over them. As an instrument for further creation. And we, as never before, are being invited to play our role as co-creators rather than destroyers. And the voice of God called light into being. And there was light. Not only God called light, but there was light. For when God speaks in Hebrew its a word-action. When I speak a concept might be born. When God speaks, the reality of thing is born. Creation in the Genesis story is really the spoken thought of God. And the more we know of new physics and some of the new mysteries of, of scientific theory around creation, the more the universe begins to resemble a great thought rather than a great machine. Indeed, there are those who postulate that its one living organism called Gaia and it has a finite power to heal. Now the priest who wrote this account of creation were certainly not scientists in the 20th century understanding of this word and they were certainly not historians or journalists interested in some kind of so-called accuracy, reporting of provable facts. They were concerned with meaning and with mystery and with sacred power. The kind of thing that can only be grasped through myth and through story. Not only were they concerned with saying God was the source of it all, but that both light and dark, both order and chaos are part of an integrated creation. Are companions of the creation and of the creator. That the universe is not alien and unfriendly. But that at its very source is the creating breath of love and that

Spirit is the one in whom we all live and move and have our being. And there's another thing they were concerned with saying. They were concerned with saying that what God had created God saw was good and God said it was good. It was good. And that's a fundamental attitude in Judaeo-Christian, Christianity which is different from a lot of other religious traditions. And indeed in our own tradition its been lost and distorted for many centuries. The created matter that earth, that flesh, that blood, that body that creation is good. That matter is not something less than spirit. That matter is not something evil as some philosophies would have portrayed it. That matter is not some prison in which the spirit is imprisoned and from which it tries to escape to become fully potential. Matter is God's creation. And therefore it is sacred. And it is good. And it is matter that creation continues. And that's a fundamental idea that changes the whole way we approach the earth and our bodies. In this seasons of, season of waters breaking in the God-forsaken town of Bethlehem and of new life emerging out of the chaos of that time of, the darkness of the political turmoil and the military threat and the economic mess and physical discomfort that was all part of that birthing we're reminded yet again of God's love affair with creation and with embodiment. For in spite of all the obstacles to and at his birth, Jesus did survive, he had to become a refugee but he was a survivor and he did grow up... and he did begin his ministry. And in our scripture today, that --- read, we found him at the river Jordan, that sacred river through which the Israelites had had to pass to enter the new life of the promised land, that healing river in which Naaman had bathed to cure him of his leprosy. Jesus had chosen to leave familiar places and to go out into this wilderness. In the wilderness he meets up with people who are looking for a different way who are trying to find more integrity in their personal living. Trying to find a different way of being in harmony with

God and with themselves and they're following a man John, a prophet, the one who leaped in Mary's womb, er, Elizabeth's womb when Mary's mother went to visit him. We're told in another gospel. He's John, Jesus' cousin. He told them that... that life had to change right to the very core and that cosmetic changes on the surface were not enough. That radical, root transformation had to take place and his message was both abrasive and also very attractive. Jesus was baptized with this baptism that he used to symbolize the dying of the old and the rising to the new, that kind of radical turn about that's required in lives. Its seen as a new beginning. Its seen as a commitment to turn one's life around and to chose a different way. The baptism of John was not an end but it was rather a beginning of a process for choice for life. For life that would attune itself to God. For God's unfolding word in our times. And Jesus chose to be baptized by John in that historic, sacred river... that's been a problem for a lot of the church who have seen it as a cleansing of sin and who are coming from that place. I don't find it a problem at all because I think Jesus chose to put himself in transformation in, um, solidarity with people who were seeking transformation of life. The kind of, er, new transformation that John was preaching about. In this time of baptism and if you can hear the echoes of the Genesis account of creation, Jesus received the Spirit which hovered over the water. The Spirit was hovering this time symbolized as a dove. And God's creating word, the same as in the Genesis account, words of affirmation. "You are my beloved, in whom I delight." I like that so much better than "in whom I am well pleased". I think that's much better translation. "In whom I delight." Jesus finding himself as God's delight - the beloved in whom I delight. I love that image. God saw that it was good. Same thing. From this baptism as from all baptisms came a new beginning, a new sense of ministry and calling and

empowerment. It wasn't a road map all laid out with a plan of dots that if Jesus just followed he'd get to the treasure. It was a, not a beginning that came without suffering or without struggle, the very next words if you read your Mark account, are that Jes, the Spirit immediately led him out into the wilderness and he went through a time of great trial. And struggle as he tried to figure out what the meaning of all this was. What did it mean? To be God's beloved? What did it mean to be the one in whom God delighted? Sometimes he might have said, like, y'know, you've heard the, I have heard Jewish friends say, so why don't you choose somebody else, eh? He might have felt like that sometimes. I don't know. But... he had to work with what the meaning was of his experience and the Spirit was continuing to create. Creation was continuing in Jesus' life. The Spirit was moving, making new. Unlocking possibilities. Baptism for each one of us is a beginning, a time of letting go of old values and of taking on of new ones. Rooted in being a child of creation. And as in Jesus, we too have to struggle with that call to discipleship and to kind of wrestle with discovering the special thing that is hidden in us. What special gift it is that we were created to be. What angel has been locked in us? given to us? That we are called to bring to birth, to have created, to allow the Spirit of God to create... Its the creating Holy Spirit that helps us release those angels locked in what looks like the chaos and the raw materials that have been given. Its the Spirit that allows us to see possibility for something new to emerge. Its the Holy Spirit that sustains us... with possibility when we don't feel that any possibility is there. Its the Holy Spirit that allows us to dance with joy and hope when there seems so little to celebrate. And to feel new life deep within even when so much of the old way is dying... The World Council of Churches has as their theme "Come Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth". The Holy Spirit renews our lives, it renews

the earth. It helps us to rebirth us, ourselves to be rebirthed. Come Holy Spirit rebirth us in your life-giving waters. Breathe hope and possibility into our chaos. And sustain us with your affirmation that we too are your beloved and your delight. Amen.

[End of text]

Precis of "New Year's" Sermon

1. All of our readings are about beginnings.
2. This is appropriate as we begin a new year.
3. Personal circumstances have made it difficult for me to relate to these readings and have made preparing this sermon difficult.
4. The reading from Acts is about receiving the Holy Spirit.
5. This is frequently used as a yard-stick by which people are judged to belong to certain religious groups.
6. Contrary to fundamentalists, liberal Protestant understanding of the Holy Spirit has to do with the capacity to be fully alive in all circumstances.
7. The reading from Genesis is about God creating the world by bringing order out of chaos.
8. The Biblical account is compatible with scientific understandings of the origins of the Universe. The Biblical account is a mythical one.
9. By emphasizing sin and its association with matter and human bodies, the Judaeo-Christian tradition has distorted the message of this mythical account, which is that all matter is God's creation and is therefore sacred and good.
10. This positive relationship between God and matter is also stressed by the story of Jesus' birth.
11. Today's gospel is about the baptism of Jesus.

12. Conservative Christians who understand baptism in terms of cleansing from sin have a problem with Jesus' baptism. A liberal understanding has no problem, because it interprets baptism as a sign of transformation and solidarity.
13. For Jesus, baptism marked the beginning of a time of struggle and suffering.
14. This is the case for all who are baptized.
15. It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to deal with the challenges and uncertainties of Christian life.

What I have referred to as the "New Year's" sermon was preached during a Sunday service on a bitterly cold early January morning. The congregation was somewhat smaller than usual. In part, this was probably due to the weather. Also, however, this was the first "regular" Sunday service after the special celebrations that had taken place over the Christmas holidays. As a consequence, there was a sense that some people had not yet readjusted to their usual, weekly routines after the break from these occasions by the holidays, and were absent as a result.

By comparison to the "Remembrance Day" sermon, the "New Year's" sermon is less unusual, since it is altogether more exegetical. The main body of the sermon is a commentary on each of the three scripture readings and the "theme" of the sermon is developed through a consideration of these texts. The "New Year's" sermon exhibits the same general functional structure as do the "Remembrance Day" sermon and others.

The text of the sermon begins with contextual remarks that refer to a number of sculptures that were on display at the front of the church. The preacher had just used these as a "visual aid" in the "Theme Conversation" just

concluded with the children, prior to their dismissal to their own programme.

Immediately after these remarks, the theme of the sermon is stated: "All of our scriptures today are about beginning..."

However, the contextual remarks contain reference to the "Spirit". This forms, as it were, another, sub-theme (of a theological nature) that recurs throughout the sermon. The stated theme of "beginning" is immediately developed through a series of contextual examples which all refer to the immediate social and personal circumstances of the congregation ("we") and the preacher ("I").

"We" have just celebrated the holiday season and so "struggle to begin a new year, to get geared up..."

Further, as Christians (a more specific, limited "we"), "we begin to start to unlock the meaning of this birth we have just celebrated..."

The sermon then gives two examples from the preacher's own immediate, personal experience. The preacher has been dealing with the impending death of an elderly relative. Also, in her pastoral role as minister, the preacher has

been spending time with a lot of folks
this week who have been dealing with
various kinds of deaths. Physical or
emotional, spiritual...

The point made is that the scriptures, with their theme of beginning, do not correspond to the mood or the experience of either the preacher or the congregation. Therefore, the scriptures "challenge us" to change our mood and re-evaluate our experience. As has been noted, this is the very core of the rhetorical strategy employed in the sermons. They seek to provide an interpretation of texts and/or events that will make possible the hearers' re-interpretation of them as meaningful and relevant in terms of their present experience (social, personal or credal).

The sermon then embarks upon a consideration of the three scripture passages (beginning with the second reading from the Book of Acts, then with the one from the Book of Genesis and, finally, with the Gospel passage).

In each case, the meaning of the passage is explained in the same fashion. Reference is made to the Spirit as the most significant aspect of the passage. Further, each passage is presented in terms of a theological question that distinguishes liberal Protestants from more conservative Christians. The preacher is clearly identified (and so, by implication, is the congregation) as exemplary of the former.

In the first reading (the one from Acts), the preacher contrasts the way that conservative and fundamentalist Christians use the Holy Spirit as a criterion for inclusion and exclusion with the liberal point of view. According to the preacher, the fundamentalist conception of the Spirit involves

a set of narrow rules about how, what the
Spirit is and how we know one has received
the Holy Spirit...

By comparison, the liberal conception of the Spirit is

much more difficult to explain... Its deeper.
Its more creative. And its much more radical
in the sense that it goes right, more to the
core and the depths of who we are. The
Spirit's about the capacity to be fully alive
... in whatever circumstances we find
ourselves...

An important point to note here is the use of the phrase "in my own life", used as part of the description of the liberal understanding of the Spirit. The complete linguistic context is as follows:

... I guess for me, the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit interacts with creation and with my own life and with what I see in other people's lives is something much more elusive.

This forms the beginning of her statement of the liberal understanding of the Holy Spirit. It comes immediately after and stands in direct contrast (contradiction) to the fundamentalist view.

The significance of this phrase (and comparable variants: in our own lives, in your own life, in your own experience, at this time in your life) has been considered in detail above. The use of this phrase is closely connected with a particular set of uses of "I". Both are connected with the presentation of the self in the sermons. In this case, it seems to function as a means of focusing on personal experience. In this context (of contrast between fundamentalist and liberal), personal experience is presented as authoritative. It is the basis of the veracity of the liberal conception of the Spirit as contrasted with the "narrow rules" of the fundamentalists.

This point seems especially noteworthy. One of the usual "key" indicators of fundamentalism is an insistence on the importance of personal religious experience. A "personal experience of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord" is frequently a common, conventional expression of fundamentalist Christianity (another being the characteristic attitude to the Bible and its inerrancy). It sometimes seems that liberal Protestantism is defined as an antithesis of fundamentalism: defined negatively, in terms of what it is not. This is the case not only in its critical, questioning attitude to the scriptures, but also in a characteristic scepticism about religious experience, especially of an "enthusiastic" nature.

In this sermon, however, personal experience is presented as the basis of

liberal Protestant religiosity. Nevertheless, it is carefully distinguished from the kind of experience characteristic of fundamentalism (defined by "narrow rules"). By contrast, the personal experience presented here is altogether more general and, indeed, ill-defined. Potentially, any personal experience is religious experience, insofar as it can be reflected upon and integrated into a self, understood as the object of conscious, ongoing labour. Further, the nature and role of the Spirit is left carefully unexplained (in a way that seems to echo the reticence of Pastor Nield over his call to ministry).

The second scripture passage is the creation story from the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. This is the longest and most elaborate of the exegeses. Here, the contrast between conservative/fundamentalist interpretations and a liberal one is implicit. Nevertheless, it still forms the basis of the exposition. In the liberal view, the Biblical account of creation is compatible with scientific accounts of the origins of the universe because

... the priests who wrote this account of
creation were certainly not scientists...
[or] historians or journalists interested
in some kind of so-called accuracy...
They were concerned with meaning and with
mystery and in sacred power...

The biblical account is a story, a mythical presentation of fundamental truths about God and the universe. This is why, essentially, the biblical texts require explanation - why, in fact, the preacher must always labour to explain the meaning and demonstrate its relevance.

The controversial point is introduced when the preacher notes that "our tradition" (historical Christianity) has lost sight of the meaning of this account.

The true meaning of the biblical story of creation is that

...matter is not something less than spirit
 ... Matter is God's creation. And therefore it
 is sacred. And it is good...

This meaning has been lost or obscured by the Christian doctrines of sin associated with the Story of the Garden of Eden and the "fall" of Adam. While this is not mentioned explicitly, the sermon clearly points out that this distinction between a positive, "creation-centred" approach and the traditional account of sinful humanity in a fallen creation is another way in which liberal Protestantism is distinguished from conservative and fundamentalist Christianity.

This theological question is raised again in the brief remarks about the Gospel reading which concerns the baptism of Jesus. This has

been a problem for a lot of the church who
 have seen it as a cleansing of sin... I
 don't find it a problem... because I think
 that Jesus chose to put himself in...
 solidarity with people who were seeking
 transformation of life...

The traditional understanding of baptism "for the remission of sins" is rejected in favour of the liberal understanding of baptism as a sign of initiation and incorporation and as a sign of "ongoing transformation" of the person, psychologically and spiritually.

As well as being more formally exegetical than the Remembrance Day sermon, the New Year's sermon also contains more occurrences of "I": fourteen compared to three. They are as follows:

... as I look...

... I am aware...

I guess

I've been dealing with...
 I've also been spending time with...
 I could have done with...
 I told my kids I was writing...
 I hope...
 If I came up to you...
 I don't know
 I usually find that...
 I guess for me...
 ... what I see in other people's lives...

At first sight, these occurrences seem extremely heterogeneous. However, they exemplify some of the forms that have been analyzed in the previous chapter. It is, notable that many of these occurrences of "I" qualify such verbs as "wonder", "think", "feel" (rarely, "know" or "believe"). Further, they do so where the tense indicates a permanent, long-term psychological state.

As has already been argued, one of the important effects of these forms is the way in which they present the self of the preacher as the object of vicarious experience for the hearers. Through these forms, the sermons function as models for self-description and self-understanding. Specifically, the self is presented as an appropriate object for reflection and description. Further, it is presented as an appropriate object not only of observation, but also of labour. The self is presented as a possible "project": something that can be developed and transformed through symbolic labour. Particularly significant is the way that this change and development is conceived of and presented as in relationship to a text (that of the Bible). In this understanding, the texts of the Bible become a

resource to be used in the achievement of self-definition and self-description.

This last point is illustrated clearly by the New Year's sermon. Here, the biblical texts are interpreted in relationship to a particular presentation of the preacher's self-understanding as a Christian. The meaning of the texts (in the case of the text from the Book of Genesis, the recovery of its true meaning) supports the concept of self presented throughout the sermon. This is a self which undergoes continual change and renewal. One that experiences repeated new beginnings under the promptings of the Spirit that enables human beings to be "fully alive". This self is defined in opposition neither to the material world (creation) which God has created as sacred and good, nor to the socio-cultural world with which Jesus has chosen (by his baptism) to be in solidarity.

By these means, this and other sermons seek to define the Christian faith and also the persons who are subjects of that faith.

Chapter Eight: Talking to the Children

In addition to the sermons, there is another especially significant kind of verbal performance that forms part of the ritual of worship. This is the "Theme Conversation" which takes place between the minister and the children of the congregation. The nature of this and its position within the ritual has already been described briefly.

The "Theme Conversation" takes place after the reading of the scriptures and before the preaching of the sermon. It is separated from the sermon by music, usually a hymn. It begins when the minister invites the children to leave their seats among the congregation and gather in the area at the front of the church between the pews and the table behind which the minister sits. The children, some of whom are very young, sit on flat cushions or on the front pew while the minister, having come from her seat behind the table, kneels in front of them.

The "Theme Conversation" takes the form of a prepared (on the part of the Minister) but unscripted dialogue in which the minister gives the children a brief instruction about some aspect of the scripture readings. At its end, the children leave the church for their Sunday School, accompanied by those adults who assist in this.

A "Theme Conversation" takes place only if the children leave the service. Occasionally, there is no Sunday School and then they stay for the whole service. On such occasions, when no "Theme Conversation" takes place, some other element is included in the ritual that involves the children. For example, the children's choir, "Kidsing", may sing a special piece of music.

From this, one may conclude that, functionally, the "Theme Conversation" serves as a means to dismiss the children of the congregation from the service.

However, as yet, the reason why the dismissal takes this form is undetermined.

It is to be noted that the term "Theme Conversation" comes from the Sunday School programme followed in this congregation ("The Whole People of God"). According to this programme, the "Theme Conversation" is an example of the "intergenerational" nature of worship proposed by the programme. However, the dismissal of the children prior to the sermon is a common practice among United Church congregations (and, indeed, those of some other Christian denominations). Further, in other United Church congregations, this dismissal is usually marked by some special verbal performance by the minister, directed particularly to the children. So, for instance, in one of the other congregations observed during this study, the minister preaches what might almost be described as a "mini-sermon" to the children before they leave the service.

It seems that one may further conclude that the sermon is considered appropriate for adults only, in a way that, for instance, the reading of the scriptures or the singing of hymns is not. The assumption behind this is that the sermon is a form of instruction and instruction is age-specific. This reflects the notion that while many social experiences are appropriately shared by children and adults (who are clearly distinguishable from one another), teaching is not. In passing, one may note, for instance, that while the programme "The Whole People of God" recommends what it calls an "intergenerational approach" to worship (by which is meant an approach which encourages the active participation of people of different generations), nevertheless, it assumes that the children will leave the service at the time of the sermon.

One may note, also, that these assumptions are historically and culturally specific. In some cultures, children and adults are traditionally both present at times of instruction. Again, in some Christian congregations, the Christian

message presented in preaching is believed to be so completely different from all other messages that it is, therefore, communicable irrespective of age or social status. Be this as it may, the question of the way in which they leave remains.

The "Theme Conversation" (or its equivalent in congregations that do not follow "The Whole People of God" programme) serves to focus attention on the children of the congregation and to recognize that they are in some way important or significant within the symbolic economy of the congregation.

In my conversations with the ministers that I contacted during the course of this study, all were eager to volunteer information about the Sunday School programme in their church. The impression was given that the ministers all considered this to be an important aspect of their congregation's life. Indeed, the impression was strong that for the minister, a viable children's programme was a clear and visible indicator of the vitality of the congregation as a whole. This was irrespective of the degree to which the minister was actively engaged in the programme. Sunday School is usually run by volunteers from among the congregation or, in larger more prosperous congregations, delegated to the assistant minister or to a "youth worker".

On the other hand, the demographics of the congregations studied, including First United, indicate that the members of the congregation who have children of elementary school age (the target age group for the Christian Education programmes) are a minority (approx. 37% of respondents to the questionnaire reported having children of school-age). This is, likewise, true of the United Church of Canada as a whole (the United Church Observer of July 1988 reported a summary of the results of a survey by Decima Research: 60% of United Church members are 55 years old or more).

Further, whether or not members of the congregation have children of this

age, the evidence of the questionnaire suggests that very few perceive the provision of programmes for children to be an important aspect of the life of the congregation (only 7% of respondents say that programmes for children are an important factor in their choice of this church as their congregation). The children themselves, of course, contribute little, in terms of economic support or volunteer labour, to the congregation. Likewise, their parents are, perhaps, less likely than other adults among the congregation to be actively involved. High degrees of commitment are more likely to come from older members whose children (if any) have grown.

It seems, therefore, that the significance of the children of the congregation lies in their function as a symbolic indicator of, rather than as a real contributor to its vitality.

In fact, in real terms, there is evidence that the children can be a cause of tension within the congregation, especially across generational lines. This can be illustrated by an incident that I witnessed during my participant-observation of worship at First United.

As has been discussed above, members of the congregation arrive over a period of time before the beginning of the service. On one occasion, perhaps ten or fifteen minutes before the service began, when relatively few people were present, one couple in their sixties was present to greet people as they arrived and to hand out the weekly bulletins containing the Order of Service. This couple have been members of the church for many years and are both very actively involved in its life. A number of other people were sitting quietly in the pews. Some came and went through the door at the back corner of the church, attending to some business or other, or seeking an opportunity to speak with the minister before the service. Perhaps as a consequence of this, a child of 8 or 9

years old was left unattended by his parents in the church. The child took this opportunity to investigate the front of the church including the piano and the microphone at the lectern/pulpit, doing so in a noisy fashion. After this had gone on for a few minutes, the woman of the couple said to her husband: "If his mother won't be a mother, then I will."

By this she meant that, if the child's own parents were unwilling or unable to discipline the child and control his behaviour, then she would step in and do so instead. In the event, some distraction caused the child to move away from the front of the church and so any intervention on her part was unnecessary. It was also unclear whether the child's parent(s) were aware of the behaviour or not.

The point that this vignette throws into relief is the difference in expectations that adults of different ages have regarding the behaviour of children in church. My experience of this incident (which occurred soon after I began the study) alerted me to this point and I became more aware of it. Consequently, I noticed other incidents and an occasional tension that was not necessarily verbalized but was often evidenced by a look, or some other body language. Further, the minister expressed a recognition of this tension on more than one occasion. During her sermons, she would sometimes interrupt herself, drawing attention to noise made by small children in the congregation, saying that the noise, which clearly disturbed some of the congregation, did not disturb her. By this she attempted to put at ease the parents of these children who, otherwise, might have felt obliged to leave the service, in deference to the opinion of other, older, members.

It is not necessary to claim greater significance for these incidents than is due. However, they are indicators of a more extensive state of affairs. This is the tension caused by children between adults of different generations, resulting

from changes in parenting practices and expectations that occur over time. More generally, this tension and the changes of which it is an indicator, are related to shifts that have occurred in the distinction between public and private spheres. For, as many have noted, these are related. For instance, as Philippe Aries has stated,

The progress of the concept of the family
followed the progress of private life, of
domesticity.

(Aries 1962 p375)

While there is a large and varied literature on this relationship, it is rarely acknowledged that in contemporary society, church attendance is one of a small number of social occasions which bring together the public and private domains in sharp relief, because it is an occasion for the public display of the domestic unit. The reluctance to intervene exhibited by the woman in the incident related above is due to the fact that, while the child's behaviour was publicly displayed, the control and discipline of children's behaviour has become more and more firmly part of the private, domestic sphere.

If, therefore, the presence of children in the congregation is significant both as a symbol of the congregation's vitality and as an occasion of tensions between adults of different generations, then the minister's relationship with the children is, likewise, significant. It is clear that all the ministers that I spoke with, including Sharon Moon, not only consider the presence of children to be important, but also feel that their ability to interact with them successfully (and further, to be seen to do so) is important. In spite of the fact, already noted, that very few members report that programmes for children are especially important, it is also clear that a minister's ability to interact with children is a valued quality. It is perceived as something that a minister ought to be good at.

Again, the explanation for this seems to be that this ability is, somehow, an indicator of something else, rather than something valued for itself. I suspect that it is related, at least in part, to the liberal Protestant conception of the Christian message as problematic. The problematic nature of the Christian message, which is a fundamental of this type of Christianity, is all the more evident when the audience is young. The question of relevance and the difficulty of communicating the message in a meaningful way is all the more pressing. Further, this is associated with, though not synonymous with, liberal Protestantism's acceptance of the current secular ideology of education as something that must needs take account of the psychological development of the individual.

The minister who can communicate effectively with children has a valuable skill and, in exhibiting this skill before the congregation, is demonstrating an ability in something especially difficult. Further, this skill is a particular example of a more general skill that is prized in ministers: the ability to create and communicate a meaningful and relevant Christian message by means of symbolic labour expended on the sacred texts of scripture.

In summary, therefore, the "Theme Conversations" are significant within the ritual of worship, because they exhibit the value of the children as symbolic capital within the economy of the congregation. Further, the "Theme Conversation" provides an occasion when the children, source of intergenerational tension, can be attended to, and in a manner such that the minister can exhibit skills that deal with these factors.

In terms of structure, the "Theme Conversation" is more heterogeneous than the sermon. Sometimes, it consists primarily of a narrative by the minister

directed to the children. On other occasions, it consists primarily of an interrogation, the minister asking questions and the children responding. At other times, because the decor of the church alters in keeping with the progress of the liturgical cycle, direct reference is made during the "Theme Conversation" to this. The children are questioned and instructed about this.

One constant within this variation seems to be the inclusion of some interrogation of the children by the minister. By this means, perhaps, it is ensured that it remains a "conversation" rather than a monologue.

A further constant is the speech characteristics of the "Theme Conversation" when compared to those of the sermons. Comparatively, the "Theme Conversations" are lexically restricted and grammatically consist largely of clauses built up by repeated use of conjunctions. It is tempting to conclude that, in this regard, sermons and "Theme Conversations" compare in much the same ways that functional linguists claim written and spoken language do (see, eg., Halliday 1978 and, especially, MacAulay 1990). One should note, however, that this distinction is a contended one. Several scholars have attempted to characterize it (McCarthy 1993 gives a summary of these) with limited success. Further, it is important to note that, while the "Theme Conversations" exemplify some of the characteristics of "spoken language", the sermons are a special kind of "written language". The sermons are written in order to be spoken. It is arguable, therefore, that in this regard, they distinguish themselves from other forms of written language. In a study which considers the difference between unscripted, spoken language and written text which is read out loud, Jurgen Esser (1988) concludes that there are no distinguishing markers of a sufficiently striking character between these two forms. In general, however, on the one hand,

The reader has to derive his text interpretation, which is manifest in the intonation score, from the lexical and syntactic structures of the given text. The speaker, on the other hand, is more often concerned with the interaction of his communication situation.

(Esser 1988 p91)

The "Theme Conversations" also, as might be expected, exhibit characteristic prosodic patterns of discourse containing numerous interrogatives. Their prosodic character is further distinguished from that of the sermons by the fact that they are addressed by an adult to young children. However, as will be discussed below, this is not the whole story.

All the "Theme Conversations" begin in the same way. The minister comes to stand in front of the table behind which she has been since the beginning of the service and invites the children of the congregation forward. She does so using one the following expressions: "Would the children come forward?" or "Would the young people come forward?"

This utterance is the cue for a number of things to happen. The most immediately obvious of these is the movement of the children who leave their places beside their parents and make their way to the front of the church. This takes only a few moments. It takes longer, however, to settle into a relatively compact group in front of the minister. It is the minister who takes control of making sure that all of them sit (either on the flat cushions or on the front pew) and remain still so that they can attend to her.

While this movement and organizing takes place, changes also occur among the adult members of the congregation who remain seated in their pews. In addition to the initial shifting of position as small children squeeze by on their way out of the pews, the posture of the adults changes. There is a noticeable

relaxation. They sit back in their seats and take a breath. In an important sense, they become "disengaged" from what is occurring. This does not mean that they are no longer paying attention. Rather, the kind of attention paid changes and their relationship to the ritual action occurring in front of them changes. In this way, the minister's utterance which cues the children acts as a marker of a change in "framing" in the sense suggested by Goffman (1974) and Tannen (1993).

The adjustments made by the adult members of the congregation are a recognition and indicator of the fact that for this part of the ritual they are not the direct object of the minister's attention or of her utterances. They are, in a sense, a passive audience to a performance (within the larger performance of the ritual as a whole) which will occur at the front of the church. This physical space now becomes a small enclosed stage on which the minister and children "perform", witnessed by an audience of adults. This is not to suggest that the adults are no longer part of the communication that takes place. However, they are spoken to now indirectly through the minister's speech to the children.

As has already been noted, a constant of the minister's speech to the children is her interrogation of them. This aspect of the "Theme Conversation" demands some attention.

There seem to be at least three distinct types of questions used by the minister in her conversations with the children. The first type are direct requests for factual information, intended to elicit from the children evidence of

their knowledge of relevant matters. Examples of this type are:

What does Advent mean?

What was God's promise to Abraham and Sarah?

Do you know what Isaac means?

The second type are rhetorical questions which demand agreement. Examples of this type are:

Hard work starting again, isn't it?

But it shows that God doesn't work
the same way that everybody else
works, you know?

The third type of question asks for some behavioural compliance on the part of one or more children. Examples are:

[Do] you want to come over here?

Two of you could share that cushion, OK?

Do you want to stand up and help me?

Their common grammatical form initially masks their differences. However, it is clear that the three types of questions perform different functions. These are what is of interest here.

The ways that questions function as part of discourse have been examined less frequently than have other aspects of discourse. However, there are some studies which are relevant to this context.

In her collection of essays Gender and Discourse, Deborah Tannen includes a discussion of the differences between men's and women's uses of questions as communicative strategies (Tannen 1994 p166f). She suggests that, at least at one level, women tend to employ indirect questions in order to elicit and maintain

involvement in communication more often than men.

In discourse analysis inspired by the functionalism of Halliday and his associates, much of the work on the use of questions has centred on how they function as part of classroom discourse. While the "Theme Conversation" does not take place in a classroom between teachers and pupils, there are a number of aspects that make the two situations comparable.

The most obvious of these is the pedagogic intent which is clearly stated as a major purpose of the "Theme Conversation". In the introductory material, the writers of "The Whole People of God" programme advise the minister to plan the content of the "Theme Conversation" carefully so that it complements the content of the Sunday School lesson which will take place afterwards.

We only ask that you look carefully
at ... lessons for the day so that
you are not ... leaving [the Sunday
School teachers] high and dry with
their lesson already taught...

(The Whole People of God C-Part A-14)

It is clear that the "Theme Conversation" is conceived of as comparable to a "lesson", having a "content" like that of a formally structured one taught by a teacher in a classroom. Further, the direct questions used by the minister seem to function in much the same way that those used by teachers in classrooms do. They attempt to elicit an appropriate response, the "correct answer", which indicates that the children have acquired a specific piece of knowledge, deemed relevant. In this regard, it is important to note that the minister uses strategies which have been identified as ones used by classroom teachers to ensure the effectiveness of direct questions.

In their study of questions and answers in an Early Childhood classroom,

French and MacLure (1983) identify two strategies used by teachers. They refer to these strategies as "preformulating" and "reformulating". They point out that the asking and answering of questions in a classroom is a special kind of communicative action, where

the participants are doing rather different sorts of interpretive work from that which usually goes on when people ask and answer questions.

(French and MacLure 1983 p209)

Particularly, they point out that in a pedagogic setting such as a classroom, not just any answer will do. The pupils must learn the kinds of answers that are appropriate. It is the responsibility of the teacher to guide the pupils in this and they do so either by trying to avoid the breakdown of the question-answer communication in advance ("preformulating") or by repairing the breakdown after it occurs ("reformulating").

In the strategy of "preformulating", the teacher orients the children to some aspect of the situation which will provide them with a cue to the appropriate, "correct" answer. In "reformulating", in the event that the children are unable to provide a correct answer, the teacher recasts the original question in order to help the children succeed.

Both of these strategies are used frequently by the minister during the "Theme Conversation". Two examples are given below.

A1 What does Advent mean?

A2 Some of you that have been here
before know this.

[CHILD'S RESPONSE]

Four weeks 'til Christmas.

B1 And what's four weeks 'til Christmas
about?

B2 Four weeks 'til Christmas is what?

[CHILD'S RESPONSE]

The play's going to be part of that.

C1 What else?

C2 It's when you're ...

[CHILD'S RESPONSE]

Waiting and waiting and waiting and
waiting and waiting.

The first question (A1) could be answered in several ways and so the minister immediately supplements it (A2) by a cue which focuses the children to a smaller range of answers among the possible ones.

The initial response ("Four weeks 'til Christmas") is accepted but the next supplementary questions (B1 and B2) cue the children to the fact that it is not an adequate reply and something else is required. The next response is also judged insufficient ("The play's going to be part of that [But] what else?"). Finally, the minister reformulates the question as "[Advent] is when you're ..." and is able to elicit the desired response, which is then reinforced by her repetition of it ("waiting and waiting and waiting...").

Another example is as follows:

I didn't hear anybody laugh when - read
the scriptures.

A1 But you know what?

[NO RESPONSE]

I think people should have been
laughing.

B1 Know why?

[NO RESPONSE]

C1 What was God's promise to Abraham and
Sarah?

C2 Did you hear it in the scripture?

[CHILD'S RESPONSE]

That they're going to bear children.
Right.

D1 How old are they?

[NO RESPONSE]

A hundred years old!

Here, the initial question (implicitly, "Why should people have laughed when they heard the scripture?") is immediately reformulated (C1). This reformulation is also supplemented (by C2), which provides the children with a cue to the source of the appropriate answer. When this is answered correctly, the minister then asks another question (D1) which is intended to guide the children to the answer to the original question (A1/B1).

These examples are typical of the strategies employed in the "Theme Conversation" in a number of ways. Frequently, the minister attempts to explain quite sophisticated ideas to small children in a simple fashion. Also, often she attempts to explain the meaning or significance of a scripture story in terms that are comprehensible to children of elementary school age. Sometimes, as in the examples cited, she does so by guiding them through a series of questions that they can answer, or that she answers for them. At other times, the idea is communicated through the use of rhetorical questions with which the children are expected to agree, even though they may be only partially comprehensible to them. For instance, the second example (above) continues in the following way.

You know that's a really crazy promise.

Isn't it?

But it shows that God doesn't work the
same way that everybody else works, you
know?

In this case, the children are guided to agreeing that God's promise of children to Abraham and Sarah is "crazy" and, further, that this is evidence of the way that God works in people's lives. Both of these ideas are difficult enough to communicate to small children, without the further assumption that they can somehow be derived from the scripture that has been read.

The significance of rhetorical questions as a pedagogic device has been noted, in another context, by Etienne Van Billoen in his study of Papal discourses

on authority. He says

Cherchant à caractériser le discours pédagogique, J. Dubois affirme que le propre du discours pédagogique est de n'accepter comme questions à propos de la langue et du savoir sur le monde uniquement celles qui peuvent trouver une réponse dans le texte du discours. Ce qui signifie que le discours pédagogique n'autorise finalement que des questions fermées, c'est-à-dire des questions qui contiennent directement ou indirectement leurs réponses.

(Van Billoen 1973 p408)

The rhetorical questions employed by the minister during the "Theme Conversation" are, clearly, "closed questions".

In attempting to communicate and explain the Christian message to the children, within the context dictated by the structure of the "Theme Conversation", the minister uses, probably of necessity, many of the linguistic strategies that are commonplace in the classroom. In partial consequence of this, the interaction between the minister and the children during the "Theme Conversation" takes on, not only the structural, but also the functional characteristics of a classroom interaction. Consequently, what is true of the one is true of the other.

Speaking of language in the classroom, Michael Stubbs says

Teachers exert control over different aspects of the communication system in the classroom. They control the channels of communication by opening and closing them... They control the content of the talk and define the relevance of what is said... They control the language forms used... [and] they try to control understanding.

(Stubbs 1983 p106)

This seems to be also true of the minister in her dealings with the children of the congregation. However, in drawing attention to the parallels between the linguistic strategies used in the "Theme Conversation" and those of the classroom, the significance of the former has not been exhausted.

As was noted, there is a third type of question used by the minister, which she uses to control the behaviour of the children. The examples (given above) show that this type is similar to the rhetorical questions. Both types of questions are "closed". Both seem to allow of a variety of responses, while, in fact, demanding assent. On the one hand, this assent is to a particular opinion or interpretation, on the other, it is the assent of behavioural compliance. As has been noted in regard to the nature of questions and answers in the classroom, this is a special kind of interrogation, the nature of which children have to learn. The similarity between this type of question (eg. "Why don't you two share, OK?") and the rhetorical questions is, therefore, probably significant. The children are given a cue that the one form demands the same kind of response as the other.

This form of behavioural control is further significant because, while children can and do learn to understand it, it is not a means that they themselves employ spontaneously, especially at an early age. This point, and its importance, is made by Cook-Gumperz in her study of the language of maternal control (Cook-Gumperz 1973) in which she attempts to test and also develop the concepts of elaborated and restricted code, originally suggested by Basil Bernstein.

Cook-Gumperz identifies three modes of linguistic strategy used by mothers to regulate the behaviour of their small children. They are the personal, positional and imperative modes. The first two are based upon a distinction

between types of family orientation. Broadly speaking, where control is personal, the particular attributes of both controller and the controlled are more salient for the controller than are generalized attributes (Cook-Gumperz 1973 p51).

"Person oriented" families are those

with open communication role systems
[in which] the roles are described by
the members in terms of the personal
qualities of the individual.

(Cook-Gumperz 1973 p14)

The "personal mode" of control (hypothesised to be most prevalent in such families) seeks behavioural control through linguistic strategies that express this. Example are:

Daddy won't like it.

That makes Mommy very upset.

You'll miss your friends if you don't go to school.

(ibid. p65)

The "positional oriented" family is one where

the communication role system is closed
... members roles will be described in
terms of their socially approved
position rather than in terms of
personal qualities.

(ibid. p14)

Likewise, the "positional mode" of control uses linguistic strategies

expressing these types of relationships. Examples are:

All children have to go to school.

Boys don't cry.

Children don't talk to their fathers like that.

The "imperative mode" uses direct commands, possibly qualified by threats of some form of sanction. Examples are:

Be quiet.

Stop it or you'll get a slap.

Come here.

Cook-Gumperz notes that all children, irrespective of family type or class background, tend to use "positional" or "imperative" modes when speaking with one another. They do not spontaneously use the "personal" mode. Her study compared mothers and children in different social classes to see if personal control was more effectively transmitted to the child than "positional" control among a particular group. She concluded that personal control was more likely to be acquired by the child when realized through elaborated codes (associated predominantly with middle class linguistic usage).

The distinction between elaborated and restricted code, the heart of Bernstein's position, is most problematic and has resisted repeated attempts at development and operationalization. However, this need not be of concern here. Cook-Gumperz's weak attempt to link maternal control directly to class difference by invoking Bernstein's distinction serves only to obscure the value of her

study. This is the way that she has identified different modes of control that are realized through different linguistic strategies and which are associated with different configurations of family relationships.

One of her most perceptive observations concerns the way that the concept of self is formed differentially in relation to family type as this is mediated through speech patterns. Quoting Bernstein, she notes that

The social structure becomes the child's
psychological reality through shaping
his acts of speech.

(ibid. p12)

but more specifically,

the concept of self [associated with
the person oriented family] will be
verbally differentiated, so that it
becomes its own object of special
perceptual activity.

(ibid. p13)

The questions used by the minister to regulate the children's behaviour are an example of Cook-Gumperz's "personal mode". By presenting the child with the (linguistic) semblance of choice, they suggest that the desired behaviour is (and should be) the result of autonomous and individual decision on the part of the agent, rather than compliance with covert coercion or fulfilment of role obligation. By their use, the minister provides a model of adult-child interaction which, in functional terms, is directed primarily to the adults who form the audience to this interaction. Specifically, the minister provides a model, a portrayal, of parental (particularly maternal) control through a specific type of linguistic strategy. Further, as the observation made by Cook-Gumperz suggests, this type of linguistic strategy is directly commensurate with the more general project, discoverable in the sermons, of the development and transformation of the self,

as object of symbolic labour.

It was noted above that during the "Theme Conversation", the adults of the congregation become, in a sense, disengaged from the ritual action. They become an audience to the interaction which takes place between the minister and the children, no longer the direct object of the minister's utterances. However, as has been seen, they are still very much the indirect object of the minister's speech, as she communicates with them through her interactions with the children. Specifically, this has been seen in two ways. The first is the adults' witness to the minister's demonstration of her ability to communicate the Christian message in ways that the children can understand. This seems to be a valued skill,, possibly because it is indicative of the more general ability to communicate a message which is deemed problematic. The second way is their witness to the minister's ability to deal with and control small children in ways similar to those used by teachers in classroom settings. Further, in doing so, she models for the adults a particular kind of parental control of children's behaviour, associated with a "person oriented" family and expressed through specific linguistic strategies.

There are other examples of indirect communication between the minister and the adults while she is ostensibly talking to the children. These will be considered next.

This "indirection", as it has been called, has received a certain amount of attention from scholars. In his article, "Shared territory: audience indirection and meaning", which forms the introduction to a collection of articles on this topic, Donald Brenneis (1986) identifies four varieties of indirection, which he defines

as those types of communication

where meaning relies on the active
participation of audience in making sense
- or a second sense - out of an utterance.
(Brenneis 1986 p339)

The key phrase here is "a second sense", since, at least in the view espoused in this study, the audience is considered to be an active participant in the creation of meaning in any communication. The special situation intended here is when an audience can identify another, second, meaning in addition to the one already identified as the primary, or most obvious one. As an example, one may consider the use of traditional proverbs in many Bantu cultures. Repositories of much traditional cultural lore, these proverbs are intended to communicate to children at one level, while the adults are expected to understand them at another level as well. The four varieties of indirection identified by Brenneis are as follows:

- i) Text-centred
here, indirection results from features of the message itself (eg. metaphor, allusion) both to suggest an intended second meaning and also to cue the audience to such a meaning.
- ii) Voice-centred
here, by techniques such as the use of reported speech, a suggestion is created that authorship and meaning are ambiguous or multiple. The use of a spokesperson to deliver a message sometimes has this effect (as in the example from the work of Corinne Kratz, below).

iii) Audience-centred

In this form, a distinction is created between a primary and secondary audience. The secondary audience may be those present, but not (apparently) addressed. This seems to fit the situation described in the "Theme Conversation" to some extent.

iv) Event-based

This refers to instances when the occurrence of an event itself is the most important message being conveyed. For example, the occurrence, at a particular location, of a speech by a political figure can be more significant than the "content" of the speech.

Brenneis presents a simple typology of indirection which is rather programmatic and which suggests (indirectly) the need for further development. A specific example of this kind of communication, described in detail and relevant to the present study is provided by Corinne Kratz (1991 and also 1994).

In her study of women's rituals of initiation among the Okiek of north-western Kenya, Kratz describes a ceremony in which the adolescent girls make a public confession of their social debts and transgressions. The girls do so while sitting inside an initiation hut, while their family members and other members of the community (including those to whom these debts are owed) stand around outside. The girls confess their transgressions in quiet voices, with down-cast eyes, using first-person pronominal forms. These confessions are immediately transmitted to the crowd outside through an intermediary who stands in the doorway of the hut and broadcasts the narratives of confession, recasting them in third-person form ("She says that she..."). According to Kratz, these simple, formal transformations serve to recast not only the narratives but also their interpretations. This recasting absolves the initiates of their wrongs, amuses the listeners and deflects any potential anger away from them.

These simple changes remove the narrative pivot from the individual girls, the "I" of personal narrative. The resulting shift in character prominence, verbally distances the girls from angry interactions. As they are removed from the foreground and an adult placed centre-stage, the anger begins to seem more trifling and inconsequential, less threatening.

(Kratz 1991 p841)

By being recast in an indirect form, a communication which could have been socially dangerous, or destructive of relationships, is rendered harmless. What could not be said directly, can be said indirectly.

There is evidence that the minister uses the "Theme Conversation" as an opportunity to say indirectly to the adults in the congregation that which could not be otherwise said directly. However, before describing this, one other aspect of the situation needs to be addressed, which is not noted sufficiently by either Brenneis or Kratz.

The whole of the adult congregation may be said to be disengaged during the "Theme Conversation" and to be the recipient of indirect communication. Nevertheless, it must also be noted that this disengagement lacks uniformity, due to the differences in the relationship of the adults to the children. This same lack of uniformity is, likewise, key in the situation described by Corinne Kratz. It is, in part, because the adults in the audience have differing relationships with the initiates and reactions to their confessions that they can be transformed from dangerous sources of anger into sources of amusement.

In their relationships to the children, the adults of the congregation form three groups. On the basis of the questionnaire returns, these groups seem to be approximately equal in size. There are those who are the parents of the children who take part in the "Theme Conversation" (approx. 37%). There are

those who have children, but whose children are grown (approx. 28%). Relative to the first group, these adults are of a different generation. Finally, there are those adults who are childless (approx. 34%). This group is not uniform in terms of age.

It takes little effort to appreciate that the relationship of the adults to what is going on before them varies depending on to which of these groups they belong. Those who are the parents of the children taking part in the "Theme Conversation" will witness it very differently from those who are not. Those who have no children may, likewise, be expected to witness it differently again.

However, the differences in state of mind among the adults are not of greatest significance. Rather, it is the different perception of the minister's interaction with the children which is most important. For those adults of the generation that has small children, the interaction is a directly relevant model of a particular form of behavioural control. The minister presents it for these parents to emulate. Those who interact with their children in this fashion are confirmed in it.

For those adults who belong to the older generation, the model provided by the minister's interaction serves to suggest not only the preferability of this form of interaction, but also, indirectly, the superiority of person-oriented relationships within the family rather than position-oriented ones. In this way, the tension, noted above, that exists between adults of different ages over the regulation of children's public behaviour is addressed, albeit indirectly.

The combination of the adults relative disengagement and the minister's attention to the children also allows the minister to make ironic or humorous asides. It is, therefore, possible for the minister to criticize the adults by means of these remarks in ways that would not be possible in direct speech. An example

of this is as follows:

A Do you like waiting?

[CHILD'S RESPONSE]

B1 Does anybody out there like waiting?

B2 No?

B3 You don't like waiting?

C They don't like waiting either.

Utterance A is addressed to the children. Utterances B1, B2 and B3 are, however, addressed to the adults, but in a humorous fashion. The adults are "out there", not part of the immediate communication taking part between the minister and the children. So, their reaction must be relayed to the children (Utterance C). The effect of this exchange is to allow the minister to judge the adults as like the children ("They don't like waiting either") in their inability or unwillingness to wait. This indirect, humorously expressed criticism of the adults is reinforced by the next series of utterances, in which the minister instructs the children about the virtue of waiting "with hope".

But, you know, there's different ways to wait.
You can wait as if nothing ever's going to
happen and as if you don't believe really
anything's going to happen. Or you can wait
with hope.

The sophistication of this idea suggests that it is direct towards the adults rather than to the children, the ostensible audience of this utterance. Another example, from the exchange about Abraham and Sarah, is as follows:

That's twice as old as most of
your grandparents.
And nobody laughed?
We're too serious in church.

Again, it is not the children who are too serious. Rather, it is the adults who are being gently criticized, once more.

In addition to allowing the minister to be critical of the adults, the "Theme Conversation" also allows much more direct (though indirectly expressed) moral exhortation than ever occurs in the sermons. This often occurs while the minister apparently explains some project to the children (a special collection to be taken up, requests for gifts during Advent or Lent for the poor who frequent one of the "drop-in centres" in the area). While appearing to inform the children about what is happening, the minister also exhorts the adults to respond to the appeal which is made.

Chapter Nine: Arguments and Conjectures

Recognizing liberal Protestantism

In his study of seventeenth century Protestant preaching in England, W. Fraser Mitchell records the following anecdote (Mitchell 1962 p367 n.1). Apparently, some members of the lay population gained entertainment by imitating for each other the preaching styles associated with various theological positions, "in tone and action": from the "high church" style of the Anglo-catholics to the rhythmical delivery of the strictly Biblical sermons associated with the Calvinists.

Nowadays, it would probably be difficult to find an appreciative audience for such entertainment. Nevertheless, such a performance is still possible. There are sufficient and varied examples of preaching broadcast on the electronic media (fundamentalist "tele-evangelists", Sunday Mass broadcast from a suburban parish) which attract large audiences.

Though relatively under-represented on the electronic media, liberal Protestantism is as easily recognizable as any other form of Christianity. Further, in terms of worship, it is distinguished, primarily, by the particularity of its linguistic usages. One is as likely to hear liberal Protestant sentiments from ornate pulpits in centuries-old churches as from wooden lecterns in spartan meeting rooms; from ministers in traditional vestments as from ministers in modern street clothes.

The question is not whether liberal Protestantism is recognizable, but, rather, how it is. What are the distinguishing characteristics of this form of religiousness?

Perhaps the most obvious, or at least, usual way to proceed is to attempt an identification of liberal Protestantism in "confessional" terms: by identifying characteristic responses and positions regarding traditional doctrinal and credal

issues. However, as has already been noted, there are two difficulties with this approach. The first is that such an approach often seems to result in a negative definition. Liberal Protestantism is identified in terms of what it is not rather than what it is.

So, for instance, while fundamentalism holds the Bible to be ultimately authoritative and literally true, liberal Protestantism does not. Unfortunately, while it is certainly and importantly true that liberal Protestantism denies the literal truth of the Biblical texts, the present study has illustrated how important they are as a source of this form of religiosity. In some sense at least, it seems that the Biblical texts are considered to be authoritative, but not in any fashion that makes direct appeal to them possible. In this case, therefore, even the possibility of a "negative definition" seems dubious.

Again, it might be expected that liberal Protestant attitudes to traditional Christological questions would be characteristic. Concerned more with the moral and social expression of Christianity than with its ritual or doctrinal expressions, liberal Protestants might be expected to be "exemplarists" rather than traditional fideists. However, as has already been noted, this does not seem to fit the facts. First, the idea of Christian exemplarism is more complex than appears at first sight. A believer can be a moral exemplarist without being a Christological one. Indeed, the majority of the members of the congregation studied here are like this. They are Christological fideists while being moral exemplarists. Further, the limited evidence provided by the present study seems to suggest that traditional "confessional" identifiers do not provide any straightforward means of developing a typology of belief whereby individuals or congregations can be placed, with any meaningful accuracy, on a spectrum of Christian belief (from liberal to conservative). Believers seem capable of being happily "conservative" in some

areas, while "liberal" in others.

Other attempts at recognizing liberal Protestantism seem, implicitly or otherwise, to assume that the "liberalism" is a socio-political one. Consequently, on this view, liberal Protestantism may be identified in terms of attitudes held to certain key "social issues".

So, for example, O'Toole et al. (1991) state that the United Church of Canada may be described as

an organization whose conception of theology
has been accompanied by pioneering liberal
positions on sexual ethics and gender
discrimination...

(O'Toole et al. 1991 p156)

Further, they claim that, while these liberal positions

are invariably justified and legitimated by
appeals to the message and spirit of the
Gospels,

(ibid. p157)

in fact, they derive more from a prevalent secular liberalism found in the general culture. However, as has already been suggested, a more satisfactory account may be given by recognizing the importance of the United Church's character as a bureaucratic organization (as is done by MacLeod 1980; see also Pratt 1972). This also draws attention to the differences between the official policies of the United Church of Canada and the beliefs and attitudes of its members. As is evident from the debates over sexual orientation (described in Riordan 1990), there is little uniformity of opinion regarding social issues among the United Church membership. Further, and of particular significance here, this lack of uniformity regarding social issues cannot be correlated in any simple fashion with attitudes

to theological or confessional issues. Rather, age of members and rural/urban location of congregation seem of greater significance.

Consequently, it seems that, while at first sight promising, this way of identifying liberal Protestantism is also problematic.

It is worth raising one other point in connection with the United Church's attitudes to social issues. While any account must do justice to the diversity of opinion within the United Church, there is one aspect of this question which seems remarkably constant. In Riordan's account of the debates over sexual orientation which took place during the 1980s, the degree of (frequently unacknowledged) agreement about what the legitimate bases for these debates were, is notable. At almost every level (from members of congregations and local presbyteries to commissioners at the General Council), it is assumed that the debate ought to be carried on in terms provided by the scriptures. So much is this the case that it frequently goes unremarked. Especially significant, therefore, is the anonymous remark made by a United Church member, and recorded by Riordan, that sexual orientation (or any other "social issue" for that matter) is not the most important question: "the big issue is the authority of the scriptures" (Riordan 1990 p119).

Somewhat complementary to this last attempt to identify liberal Protestantism, is an approach which attempts to characterize forms of Christianity in terms of their relationship to the general secular culture. An example of this approach is provided by Marsha Witten's work. She describes three kinds of relationship between Christianity and secular culture: resistance, accommodation and reframing. Liberal Protestantism is described as relating to secular culture through accommodation (see, not only Witten, but also Bibby 1987 p252f and O'Toole et al. 1991 p158).

This means of identifying the United Church as a liberal Protestant one, likewise, seems to fail to do justice to available information. As has been described and argued above, the congregation examined in this study indicates an altogether more complex reality. While in one, general sense, the religion of this United Church congregation is compatible with the culture of secular society, this is only true in a partial and contested sense. The Christianity preached at First United is one intended to enable people to take their places in and survive as members of the larger social community. However, this is not so uncritically. The Christianity preached and the community and society envisioned are contested. The minister referred to this in a clear fashion during my interview with her. She said:

... hopefully, something I say will be a vehicle through which this Word... can unlock something in them and help them on their journey... give them more courage, more hope, more encouragement for the week, more capacity to keep slogging when they feel like they're "Why bother?"... Worship for this congregation as I've never experienced it in another congregation is literally a life-line...[People] get so exhausted and start to lose hope. Where do you find the spiritual renewal to keep going? How do you, unless you keep the vision alive..?

(A27)

The attitude portrayed in these remarks illustrates a relationship between Christianity and society that exhibits aspects both of accommodation and resistance. Christianity equips people to live and work in secular society, but does so in a way that recognizes the (at least partial) incompatibility of that society with the Christian faith. Further, as has been argued above, the Christianity preached is one that is often critical both of traditional Christian

values and beliefs and of social values and mores.

This, perhaps, indicates an inadequacy in Witten's work. Based on a study of contemporary preaching, the three "discursive responses" that she identifies are, on close examination, ones that can be applied only at a high level of generality and not, strangely, at the specific level that a study of preaching practices demands.

It seems that, while the ideas considered above can provide partial characterizations of liberal Protestantism which apply at a general level, none provide the means by which a definitive identification may be made. I wish to suggest, however, that the relationship of the United Church of Canada to the Biblical texts as has been described above, may provide another, and more satisfactory, way of recognizing liberal Protestantism.

Historically, the Free Church tradition (in which the United Church identifies its forebears) has treated the scriptures as symbolically focal in a way distinct from other Christian traditions. What distinguishes the United Church, as a liberal Protestant denomination, from other churches in the Free Church family tree, is its espousal of theories and methodologies of Biblical criticism provided by the quasi-secular discipline of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The particular way that this has occurred within the United Church has been indicated above. By means of the Christian Education programme developed and implemented during the 1960s (the "New Curriculum"), these attitudes to the scriptures were successfully disseminated throughout the United Church membership. An example of the degree of this success may be given by referring again to the nature of the debate on sexual orientation. In the end, this debate was carried out among ordinary members of the United Church of

Canada (not theologians or Biblical scholars) who, nevertheless, shared a common knowledge of and attitude towards the Biblical texts and how they could be used within the debate.

One of the conclusions of this study has been concerning the effects of this espousal of critical Biblical attitudes. I have suggested that it results in the development of an attitude which considers the scriptures and their meanings to be problematical. Important consequences of this are that a major purpose of preaching becomes the "discovery" or the production of meaningful interpretations of the Biblical texts. Further, this is the work of a specialist (the preacher/minister) who must (or who is perceived to) bring to bear specialized skills and knowledge to accomplish not only the discovery/production of these meanings, but also their communication through the event of preaching.

It is important to note the similarities and differences between this liberal Protestant relationship to the scriptures and that of fundamentalist Christianity, since both have origins that may be traced to the Free Church tradition.

In both forms of Christianity, the scriptures and the preaching of them remain the symbolic focus of worship. Consequently, in both forms, preaching is the pre-eminent ritual action. Among fundamentalists, however, a preacher's abilities would be described as charismatic rather than the result of specialist knowledge and skills. A fundamentalist preacher is considered to be uniquely gifted by God. In terms of this study, such a preacher has acquired (quite possibly without any formal study: Rosenberg 1971 gives many examples of this) knowledge of a highly codified language (a "register" in Hallidayan terms) which provides the means by which selected Biblical texts may be interpreted in terms of a strict and limited set of theological concepts (eg. sin, judgement, salvation). In a number of general, "structural" ways, the relationship of liberal Protestant

preachers to the Bible is similar. There are, however, also numerous differences, two significant ones being the following.

However a fundamentalist preacher acquires his skills (and for many, they are no doubt acquired through arduous study, accomplished through conventional, literate means), they must be perceived to have been acquired gratuitously: bestowed graciously and miraculously by God. A liberal Protestant preacher may, on the other hand, be acknowledged openly to have acquired his/her knowledge and skills in ways comparable to doctors, lawyers and engineers: through the study and mastery of a discipline similar to those of other secular professions.

Secondly, while a liberal Protestant preacher may always admit to being open to the influence of secular disciplines (especially the human, but also the social, sciences), a fundamentalist preacher is much more limited in what may be part of, or form the basis of, the presentation of the Christian message. In an important sense, the linguistic register which expresses fundamentalist Christianity is "closed", rather than "open".

Preaching as symbolic labour

In this study, repeated use has been made of the term "symbolic labour" in regard to the work of the minister in general and preaching in the particular. It is time to explain and justify this. The concept will be examined as it is used by Pierre Bourdieu. Certain limitations in his account will be noted and it will be suggested that by correcting these limitations, the concept's utility will be greatly increased.

Throughout his work, Bourdieu is consistently ambiguous in his use of the

terms "symbolic labour" and "symbolic capital". On the one hand, he says that "symbolic capital" is not a form of capital per se, but only "capital - in whatever form - insofar as it is represented" (Bourdieu 1986 p255n3).

Symbolic capital is only the representation of economic, social or cultural capital. Symbolic labour, it is therefore implied, is that labour (of whatever form) expended in this representation.

Bourdieu gives this account when he attempts to provide a systematic and summary account of his views. However, when he is concerned with particular social situations (eg. gift exchange, education), he describes symbolic capital and labour in a different fashion. They are described as alternative and autonomous forms, comparable to the others. So, for instance, in his discussion of gift exchange (In Bourdieu 1971) he says the following:

... all the symbolic labour intended to transmute... the inevitable and inevitably interested relations imposed by kinship, neighbourhood or work into elective relations of reciprocity: in the work of reproducing established relations - through feasts, ceremonies, exchange of gifts, visits or courtesies, and above all, marriages - which is no less vital to the existence of the group than the reproduction of the economic bases of its existence, the [symbolic] labour required to conceal the function of the exchange is as important an element as the [other] labour needed to carry out the function.
(Bourdieu 1977 p171)

Here, Bourdieu says that in the continual maintenance of human and social relationships that goes on between individuals and groups, there is always an element of symbolic labour which is distinguishable from and equal to the other forms of labour which is expended.

The role of symbolic labour in the production and maintenance of personal

and communal relationships is significant for the present study. However, there is another aspect of Bourdieu's account which is also important and which needs to be addressed.

Bourdieu agrees with Marx that the distinction between physical and intellectual is fundamental to the division of labour. He asserts, in fact, that in this distinction lies the genesis of another fundamental distinction: between the sacred and the profane (Bourdieu 1971). This is important because it is connected with another of Bourdieu's concepts: that of the champ. The division of labour results in the development of various distinct, but overlapping and sometimes competing social fields (intellectual, artistic, haute couture, religious), each of which give rise to specialist agents who work within them. Importantly, Bourdieu says that

The autonomy of a field of restricted production can be measured by its power to define its own criteria for the production and evaluation of its product.
(Bourdieu 1971/85 p17)

The strong implication is that different fields will develop not only distinct criteria of production and evaluation, but also distinct types of specialist agents and a fortiori distinct types of labour performed by those agents.

The champ religieux is especially significant (not only for the present study, but also historically). Its development has seen the development of a class of religious specialists who have often exercised a monopoly over the production and distribution of symbolic goods. The process of secularization undergone by Western culture is to be understood, in this account, as the breakdown of this monopoly. Priests and ministers now find their place in

un nouveau champ de lutte pour la
manipulation symbolique de la conduite de
la vie privée...

(Bourdieu 1985 p257)

which they share with other kinds of specialists. Bourdieu says that

On passe ainsi aujourd'hui par gradations
insensibles des clercs à l'ancienne (avec à
l'intérieur tout un continuum) aux membres
des sectes, aux psychanalystes, aux
psychologues, aux médecins (médecine
psychosomatique, médecine lente), aux
sexologues, aux professeurs de gymnastique,
d'expression corporelle, de sports de
combat asiatiques, aux conseillers de vie,
aux travailleurs sociaux.

(ibid.)

Bourdieu makes two important remarks in this context. The first is his
observation that

[Tous ces] agents qui sont en concurrence
dans le champ de manipulation symbolique ont
en commun d'exercer une action symbolique...

(ibid.)

That is, these workers are to be understood as performing symbolic labour.
The second point is his description of the effect that the breakdown of monopoly
has had on the work performed by religious specialists. Bourdieu says that it is
especially noticeable in the way that the use of language has changed. The
rituals performed by religious specialists

s'intellectualise: il devient de plus en plus
verbal, c'est-à-dire réduit à des mots, et des
mots qui fonctionnent de moins en moins dans
la logique de la coercition magique, comme si
l'efficacité du langage rituel devait se
réduire à l'action du sens, c'est-à-dire à la
compréhension.

(op cit. p260)

Religious specialists cease to be performers of sacred rites, becoming, instead, producers of discourse.

The following points may be asserted on the basis of the preceding account of Bourdieu's ideas. The work done by individuals and groups to establish and maintain relationships between themselves is a form of symbolic labour. This involves not only the transformation and misrecognition of forms of capital, but also the transformation and misrecognition of social relationships (as inevitably or appropriately inequitable). Further, in a society which exists under the effects of the division of labour and the development of distinct champ, specialist agents perform symbolic labour.

How are these two kinds of symbolic labour (the "everyday" and the "specialist") related? The answer to this question may be found by considering the relationship between the specialist agents and their clientele. These various specialist agents find their clientele in the societies of which they themselves are products and members. They serve to provide their clientele with the means by which personal and social relationships can be produced and maintained (the means of "distinction") by performing symbolic labour on their behalf. This is equally true of agents in the champ religieux as of specialists in other champs. The way in which this is the case may be made clear by a consideration of Michele Lamont's work, in which she provides an elaboration and criticism of Bourdieu.

In a study focusing on members of the North American upper-middle class, Michele Lamont (Lamont 1992) explores the categories by which cultural styles are

defined. She argues that

... the signals used by individuals to assess high status often pertained to moral and socioeconomic standing as well as to cultural attainment.

(Lamont 1992 p4)

Identifying three means used by people to identify and assess themselves and others in terms of relative status and "distinction" (moral, socioeconomic and cultural), she concludes that

Bourdieu greatly underestimates the importance of moral boundaries while he exaggerates the importance of cultural and socioeconomic boundaries.

(Lamont 1992 p5)

Especially in the study described in Distinction (Bourdieu 1984), Bourdieu concentrates almost exclusively on cultural and socioeconomic markers of distinction. He fails to recognize that markers of distinction ("boundaries" is Lamont's term) may equally be formed in terms of moral discourse. Bourdieu discusses cultural markers such as taste in music, art, films. Lamont shows that markers may also be created on the basis of such moral qualities as honesty, work ethic and personal integrity. These latter are perhaps especially significant in a North American context, compared to the more politicized, class-aware societies of western Europe. North American culture (and Canadian society in particular) is notably lacking in an overt awareness of class divisions and is commonly (mis)conceived as uniformly middle-class. Societal divisions are more frequently described in terms of cultural or ethnic diversity or "regionalism". In such a situation, it is not surprising, therefore, that markers that mask class distinction by emphasizing supposedly "individual" qualities of moral character

play a more significant role.

Moral discourses of the person are easily recognizable as the traditional product of the specialist agents of the champ religieux, made available to their clientele by means of symbolic enactments (rituals of worship, sacraments), confession and preaching. The symbolic systems produced and elaborated by the champ religieux possess a high degree of autonomy, due, historically, to the development of internal criteria of production and evaluation. Nevertheless, they are related to the "everyday" symbolic labour of individuals and groups by the ways in which they provide self-descriptions and evaluations that can be appropriated by a clientele. These moral discourses of the self are rooted in a sacred discourse which provides them with a value and significance which exceeds the products of other fields.

The sermons examined in this study, in the way that they provide evaluative models and descriptions of the self, are, I submit, examples of just this.

The Private Life of the Middle-Classes

As interpreted here, Bourdieu's ideas provide a generalized account of the ways in which preaching may be understood as a form of symbolic labour, performed by specialist agents, but related to the symbolic labour performed by individuals in their everyday lives, as they seek to produce and reproduce social and personal relations. Specifically, preaching may be said to involve (in part) the production of discourses which provide symbolic legitimation for individuals, as subjects of particular socio-economic milieux.

Individuals are never subjects of society in general, but always of specific socio-cultural moments. Likewise, sermons are preached, not to people in general,

but to specific congregations at specific times. The sermons examined in this study are examples of liberal Protestant Christianity and are preached to a congregation consisting of members of the urban middle-class. It has been suggested during the course of this account that especially significant among the relations addressed by means of the preaching are those of gender and age. Further, it has been suggested that these are significant because of their place among the complex set of relations that make up and maintain the notion of "private", as opposed to "public", life.

This draws attention to the conundrum recognized by all those who have considered the question of social reproduction. In order to be successful, social reproduction must ensure the reproduction of subjects, not only as social actors, but also as bearers of specific psychological characters, which relate intimately with other individuals in specific ways. The significance of this is recognized and illustrated by the bodies of work that examine the social reproduction of individuals and their private relationships (eg. Chodorow 1978, Donzelot 1979 and Henriques et al. 1984). This helps to contextualize the finding of this study. Relations between individuals of different generations and, especially, between parents and children - paradigmatic of "intimate", private relationships - are a significant aspect of the ritual performance and are addressed (often covertly) through the sermons and other speech acts of the minister.

It seems appropriate, therefore, in order to provide greater specificity to this, so far, general account of preaching as symbolic labour, to consider in some detail the nature of the "private/public" distinction. As has been noted already, this distinction has produced a large and diverse literature. The present consideration can be limited to the ways in which it is related to religion.

In his article "The Private and the Public: the linkage role of religion

revisited" (Cheal 1987), David Cheal summarizes a number of views on the relationship between religious belief and the public/private distinction and comments on them in the light of his own research. He notes that among North American theorists (eg. Parsons, Berger), it is commonplace that changes associated with modernization have resulted in the fragmentation of traditional, integrated social orders and that a consequence of this is that

religiosity is limited to specific enclaves
of social life that may be effectively
segregated from secularized sectors of
modern society.

(Berger 1969 p134)

A fundamental aspect of this "segmentation" of experience is the dichotomy of private and public spheres of action. It is argued by some that because

[e]veryday life in mass society consists
above all of involvements in the small
worlds of immediate experience... it is
therefore possible that... churches could
provide limited, but nevertheless important
opportunities for the integration of private
and public interests.

(Cheal 1987 p211)

Cheal considers this view, but in the light of his own and others' research, he concludes (agreeing with Berger) that religious belief has undergone a fundamental "privatization" and that, therefore,

religion continues to be relevant [only]
within the segregated sphere of the family
and those social relationships closely
linked to it.

(op. cit. p219)

Cheal's work is valuable, especially for his attempt to rework the private/public distinction into a more subtle one that can be used both theoretically and practically (Cheal 1988). He replaces private and public with a distinction between two forms of relationship, in terms of which social reproduction is organized. These are the "strong ties" of intimate relationships (family and personal friends) and the "weak ties" of communal relationships which, respectively, express the two "economies" (moral and political) that individuals' lives must straddle.

Cheal focuses on the ritual enactment of these various relationships, especially the "strong ties" of family and personal relationships, through what he identifies as a "ritual cycle" of gift exchange. In this way, he recognizes the importance of the ritualized expression of these relationships for their reproduction and maintenance. Unfortunately, he does not extend this to his consideration of the "weak", communal ties, in the reproduction of which, organized religion still plays a role. I suspect that this is because, like the North American studies to which he refers in his article (cited above), he considers religion in terms of affiliation and belief (measures used repeatedly in North American studies), rather than in terms of ritual performance. The role of organized religion will continue to appear marginal if it is considered primarily in terms of "belief systems" (which, evidence, including that of the present study, suggests, are fragmented and heterodox). Only when the ritual performance of religious beliefs is examined in detail is its continued relevance in the reproduction of "intimate", private family relationships apparent. The very "private" nature of these relationships entails that some form of (ritualized) public display of them is required for their formation and control. The ritual of Sunday worship serves not only in the reproduction of intimate relationships, but

also in their "contextualization" within the broader ties of communal relationships. This is especially true of the modern day middle-class, given the transformation that these relationships have undergone and continue to undergo.

The middle-class is perceived as being made up of socially mobile individuals, whose mobility is dependent upon "individual" traits, such as initiative and energy. However, this very character works against the formation of stable forms of relationship that can be reproduced across generations. According to Giddens,

In general, the greater the degree of "closure" of mobility chances - both intergenerationally and within the career of the individual - the more this facilitates the formation of identifiable classes. For the effect of closure in terms of intergenerational movement is to provide for the reproduction of common life experience over the generations; and this homogenization of experience is reinforced to the degree to which the individual's movement within the labour market is confined to occupations which generate a similar range of material outcomes. In general we may state that the structuration of classes is facilitated to the degree to which mobility closure exists in relation to any specified form of market capacity.

(Giddens 1981 p107)

What Giddens claims is a general feature of social classes is certainly true of the middle-classes, especially during the mid- and late-twentieth century. For many individuals and families belonging to this social stratum, their life-experiences have been ones involving increasing material prosperity over time, which is expressed trans-generationally as upward social mobility. In such a situation, the "effects of closure" that Giddens notes (reproduction of common life experience and homogenization of experience) are notably missing. A major

consequence of this (not noted by Giddens in this context) is that the ways in which intimate relationships are experienced and expressed changes across generations. Therefore, these may be experienced as unstable or problematic. Ritual enactments which provide the means by which such relationships can be expressed, but more importantly, modelled and misrecognized as "the same" as in the past, are especially important. In part, the weekly rituals of worship examined in the present study function in this fashion.

Even greater specificity can be given to these observations by considering the arguments developed by those who have studied transformations that have taken place in familial relationships. These serve to support and explain the claims that have already been made in this study from very different perspectives.

As a result of his examination of changes in French family life, Donzelot draws the following conclusion:

The advent of the modern family recentered on the primacy of the educative function was not... the result of the slow propagation of the same familial model through all social strata... There were at least two distinct channels for promoting this educational concern... [and] most significant was the difference between the... position in which bourgeois women and the working class woman now found themselves.

(Donzelot 1979 p45)

The various elements of Donzelot's claim are worth noting. The first is that the modern family is identified by its primary concern with the education of children, where education is understood as the systematic imparting of specific skills and knowledge. Further, the triumph of this "educative function" as the

primary purpose of family life, took different forms in different social strata. Donzelot concludes that the most significant aspect of this is observable in the different situations of women. From a very different vantage point, Donzelot supports the position argued here regarding the transformations undergone by familial relations as they affect the middle-classes.

The particular way in which the educative function is displayed in the modern family is considered by Valerie Walkerdine in her investigations of the theory and practice of early childhood education (see Walkerdine in Henriques et al. 1984, and also her contributions to Steedman et al. 1985). She notes, among other factors, the ubiquity of Piagetian theories of psychological development and the effect that this has had, not only on education, but also on parenting and child-rearing practices. This, she argues is a particular form of a more general feature of the modern family. As the modern family emerged, she says,

Overt regulation, exerted through coercion shifted towards forms of covert regulation through the production of particular social apparatuses... [which,] incorporating the notion of the norm... supported the practices which produced... the individual who is the target of social regulation.
(Steedman et al. 1985 p2-3)

Further, she argues,

At the same time... the category "child" was produced - a child whose development was defined in relation to a universal norm.
(ibid. p3)

The triumph of the "normalization" of childhood by means such as the theories of developmental psychology is one of the most notable features of twentieth-century pedagogy. However, what Walkerdine and her associates point

out (echoing Donzelot) are the origins of this ubiquitous trend within a particular social strata: the emergent and transforming middle-class.

The integral part played by current educational theory in the Christian Education programmes used by the United church of Canada has already been noted. Further, the compatability of these theories with the religious project of liberal Protestantism to reconceive Christianity in terms of personal psychological development has also been pointed out. What remains to be emphasized here, in the light of these works just considered, is the significance of parent-child, and especially mother-child, relationships as the site of this social production. This draws more tightly together the connection claimed in this study between the preaching and the "Theme Conversations", as significant elements in the reproduction of social subjects.

One final element in this rather circuitous argument remains to be presented. This is the evidence available from the data gathered in this study which supports, both directly and indirectly, the claims advanced. There are two parts to this. The first is to re-examine the nature of Sharon Moon's own life-experiences, as presented through the interview and as comparable with the other female minister interviewed. The other is to interrogate the data gathered by means of the questionnaire.

Sharon Moon was born in the post-war decade into a family which experienced considerable upward social mobility and increased material prosperity during the years of her childhood. Hers was a stay-at-home mother whose extra-familial activities took the form of volunteer involvement in the local community. Only when Sharon Moon was older, attending University, did her mother take a job and this, according to Moon (A3), was the occasion of tension and disagreement within the family. Sharon Moon herself, in achieving a University

education and a professional career (both as a teacher and, later, as a minister) experienced life-chances and opportunities quite different from those of her mother. Likewise, her experiences of marriage, however similar or different from those of her mother, included divorce and re-marriage. The very possibility of these is as significant as their occurrence.

Sharon Moon's life experiences as woman and mother are radically different from those of her own mother. As a consequence, her self-image has undergone a transformation as a result of the dissonance between expectation (produced by primary socialization within the family) and experience. The reality of this and also its importance for her self-understanding and description as a minister is evident from her remarks during the interview and, also, from her preaching.

Anne McKeown, on the other hand, was born in the 1960s, into a family whose parents both had advanced academic status and who both worked outside of the home. Her primary experience of and model for herself as woman and mother involved the idea of professional career combined with marriage and motherhood. Her achievement of a University education is comparable to that of her parents.

The most significant factor, in comparing these two cases, is not merely that they belong to different generations. Rather, in the one case, significant upward social mobility, and the transformation in intimate familial relationships associated with it, have occurred, while in the other this is not so.

These phenomena are also illustrated among the members of the congregation. This may be shown by examining the data gathered from returned questionnaires. In order to set this in context, a brief description of the congregation at First United as it compares to the other two will be given.

Chart 9-1

253a

	FU	DC	GSJ	ALL
Male	26%	45	44	38
Female	70	53	52	60
Single	28	33	26	30
Married	40	39	58	43
Divorced	20	9	7	13
No Children	33	51	45	43
Grown Children	28	42	33	35
Age: 24 or less	2	0	4	2
25 to 34	15	2	11	9
35 to 44	35	5	22	20
45 to 54	13	8	33	15
55 to 64	18	21	11	18
65 or more	15	61	15	34
Education:				
Not finished H.S	4	9	7	6
Finished H.S.	11	28	0	16
College Diploma	17	25	4	17
B.A. degree	32	19	37	27
Higher degree	37	17	52	32

It is apparent that, compared to the other two, First United has a greater proportion of women in its congregation. Further, it has a noticeably larger number of people who are divorced (20%) than the other congregations. The great majority of these (over 70%) are female.

Like GSJ, the majority of the congregation are aged 25-64 (almost 85%); the largest single category is 35-44 (35%). This compares to the congregation of DC, which is significantly older (over 80% are 55 or older) and also to the United Church nationally (noted above).

The congregation of First United is well educated, almost 70% having at least one degree from a University. This compares with the less well-educated congregation of DC and the extremely well-educated congregation of GSJ (over 50% of whom have a higher degree from a University). This also compares with the education-level of the National Capital Region, which is above national averages.

A number of criteria can be employed to provide the means by which relevant sub-groups can be highlighted. For instance, if one focuses on those respondents who work part-time, the following becomes apparent. Approximately 90% of them are female and all but one of these have children. The age range of these respondents is large. However, many of them have children who are school-aged. This indicates that many of the women members of the congregation who work outside of the home also look after children, combining both paid occupation and motherhood. This observation is confirmed if one focuses on female members of the congregation who report that they have children of pre-school or school age. Every one of them also reports that they have jobs (either full or part-time) outside of the home.

A further way of focusing attention on this section of the congregation is

especially instructive. A number of items in the questionnaire were intended to provide some indication of the respondents' attitudes to preaching and the sermons that they heard.

Question #18 asked respondents to rank 8 qualities in order of importance, in response to the question "What are the qualities of a good sermon?"

Question #19 asked respondents to choose one of six possible responses to the question "Which of the following best describes the sermons that you hear in this church?"

Likewise, question #20 required respondents to choose one of six possible responses to the question "Which of the following best describes the preacher(s) that you have heard in this church?"

Questions #21 and 22 focused not on the preacher and the sermon as preached, but, rather, on the sermon as heard and the respondent as listener. Question #21 asked "What do you think is the best way to get the most out of the sermons that you hear?" and question #22 asked "What kind of skills do you think you need to cultivate in order to get the most out of the sermons that you hear?"

By focusing attention on responses to question #18, an important and identifiable sub-group is thrown into relief. In all three congregations, significant numbers responded that the most important quality of a good sermon was that it "makes Christianity relevant to modern life". This, it seems, is in keeping with, and supports, the discussion of liberal Protestant attitudes to the scriptures and to preaching, that has been given above.

However, in the First United congregation, slightly over half of all respondents (52%) consider the most important quality of a good sermon is that it "provokes reflection that leads to personal change and growth". This compares

to 10% at DC and 22% at GSJ. Given the discussion and analysis (above) of the sermons preached by the minister at First United, this may be understood to reflect the particular nature of the minister's preaching and the congregation's response to it. The question remains, whether this particular group of respondents can be identified more specifically.

In keeping with the composition of the congregation, the majority are female (approx. 30% of the total of all respondents). 90% of them are either married or divorced; 80% have children. Almost 50% are between the ages of 35 and 44. 90% work outside the home in either a full- or part-time capacity and almost 90% have at least one degree from a University. On the other hand, over 50% also report that their mothers were full-time home-makers. 50% also report that their mothers had no more than a high-school education.

This group is also extremely consistent in its responses to the other questions regarding preaching and sermons. Over 40% thought that the sermons they heard at First United "relate[d] Christianity to modern life". However, a comparable proportion (42%) thought that the best description of the sermons that they heard was that "they foster personal development". Concerning the preacher at First United, over 20% described her as showing "how the Bible has relevance to modern life" and 16% described her as sharing her "own life experiences in order to make [the] message meaningful". However, an extraordinary 53% said of the preacher at First United that she was "able to make the listener respond to [the] message imaginatively and emotionally" and fully 84% responded that the best way to get the most out of the sermons was to "cultivate a spirit of openness and calm during the sermon". Only 5% consider it valuable to be able to follow the development of an argument.

By comparison, and significantly, single females without children do not

share in this pattern of responses. Nor are these patterns of response found among the other congregations.

It seems, therefore, that a general compatibility between the preacher's intentions and conception of what preaching ought to achieve, on the one hand, and a sympathy to these on the part of the congregation, on the other, can be discovered from an examination of the questionnaire responses. More, however, a particular group within the congregation can be identified who are not only especially sympathetic to and appreciative of the sermons preached by the minister, but also are strikingly comparable to the minister in terms of their life-experiences. These are women who have experienced significantly greater life-chances through upward social mobility compared to those of their parents, and their mothers in particular. It seems, therefore, not unreasonable to conclude that their positive response to the sermons and preaching of the minister is due to the fact that questions of personal and social identity and change, which are pressing in their own lives, are addressed through them.

Ministry and Gender

The United Church of Canada was formed in 1925. Since 1936, it has accepted women into the ordained ministry. In 1995, an article published in the United Church Observer (May 1995) drew attention to a projected surplus of ordained ministers and the difficulty of placing them in congregational ministry. This abundance of students in theological training consists of a large proportion of women (though still a minority). More so than in, perhaps, any other mainstream Christian congregation, women are represented in United Church ministry. However, it should be noted that Sharon Moon is the first female

minister in the history of First United. Dominion Chalmers has never had a female minister and GSJ has a female minister at present, but only as an associate.

The arguments advanced in this study have made repeated reference to gender and have provided a close examination of one female minister in particular. Some attempt needs to be made, therefore, to indicate the ways in which the ministry and preaching described here are tied to the gender of the minister.

In his 1993 publication, Edward Lehmann claims that his study "is the first attempt to make direct empirical comparisons between clergymen and clergywomen." (Lehmann 1993 pix).

Whether or not this claim is strictly true, it is some indication of the lack of research directed to the question of ministry and gender. This is so, in spite of the fact that, as Lehmann also notes, in recent years a body of literature has been produced which argues, or assumes, that systematic differences between men and women are identifiable which result in predictable variations in the way that male and female clergy approach their work. While this is not an issue upon which the present study focuses, because of the centrality of gender, it is one that can be addressed usefully.

Lehmann's study is of churches in the United States of America. The congregations he studies are Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church of Christ. His research is valuable, therefore, because, while it is not directly applicable to the present study, it is concerned with mainstream Christian denominations. Lehmann reaches a number of interesting conclusions. He claims that, irrespective of gender, clergy report spending most time on their sermons and, further, consider preaching to be their most important activity. He claims that there is no significant difference in the way that male and female ministers

allocate their working time and, further, that there are no significant correlations between preaching style and gender.

On the other hand, Lehmann claims that a number of aspects of ministry style can be predicted by the minister's gender. More men than women tend to use social power when dealing with their congregations. More women seek to empower their congregations to define their own objectives. More men than women use rational and formally-structured modes of decision-making and more men deal with ethical issues in a legalistic way (Lehmann 1993 p79).

In general, Lehmann claims that gender differences are manifest in terms of general ministry style, but not in terms of preaching, the key aspect of ministry. It is to be noted that Lehmann's research is based on self-reporting instruments used by ministers and congregations, rather than on any direct observations of actual ministerial performance.

Very different conclusions are reached in a study which employs a very different approach. A disciple of Deborah Tannen, Frances Lee Smith provides a valuable and especially relevant study of gender and preaching (Smith 1993). Her study is based upon a detailed linguistic analysis of a small sample of sermons delivered by students at an American Baptist seminary, as part of a class on preaching.

Examining sermons preached on a particular gospel text (The Healing of the Ten Lepers: Luke 17:11-19), Smith concentrates on the exegesis of this passage which occurs in the sermons. By examining the occurrence of specific linguistic figures ("I believe", "we see", "we can see" etc.) which, she claims, "manifest exegetical authority" (Smith 1993 p188), she identifies four styles of exegesis, or

ways of framing the "exegetical self". These are:

- a) preacher as "on the record" exegeter
- b) preacher as "low profile" exegeter
- c) preacher as narrator
- d) preacher as "high style" exegeter.

Smith says that all of these strategies

present the preacher as a figure who is commenting on his or her textual statements in such a way as to put himself or herself on record as exegeter... they all present the speaker as... "a broker of his own statements, a mediator between text and audience... [they] contribute to the saliency of the preacher's ritual leadership as exegeter in the performance.

(Smith 1993 p158)

Smith's study is especially interesting because, to a limited degree, it covers similar ground to the present study. Smith considers the "presentation of the self" of the preacher through the sermons. She does so, in part, by analyzing occurrences of locutions in which "I" figures. However, unlike the present study, Smith seeks to indicate the ways in which these locutions function to support the authority of the preacher, specifically as exegeter (interpreter) of the Biblical texts.

She concludes that significant gender differences exist in terms of the use to which these rhetorics of self-presentation are put by preachers. She says "men foregrounded their textual-self authority ... more often than did the

women" (Smith 1993 p172) and, further,

the women used a greater variety of framing strategies for creating the textual-self footing in their exegetical arguments than the men did.

(ibid.)

It seems that this last conclusion is, to some degree, supported by the present study. The analysis of preaching presented here has highlighted the variety of techniques used by the minister in her interpretations and "re-readings" (often, not strictly exegetical) of the Biblical texts.

Another, and perhaps most significant, aspect of the relationship between ministry and gender may be approached by considering the conclusions reached by Mary Farrell Bednarowski in her study of women religious leaders in nineteenth century America. She asserts that women achieve leadership and equal status with men as ministers and religious leaders when there is:

- a) less emphasis on conceptions of the divine as masculine
- b) a tempering or denial of the traditional doctrine of the Fall
- c) a denial of the need for traditional, ordained clergy
- d) no stress placed on marriage and motherhood as the proper spheres of female fulfilment.

(Bednarowski 1980)

Bednarowski's study was historical and of women religious leaders "outside the mainstream". Nevertheless, the points to which she draws attention are

pertinent here.

Official United Church of Canada policy is to encourage the use of "inclusive" and "gender neutral" language in worship. It is up to individual congregations to decide on the degree to which this policy is implemented. The congregation at First United, under the leadership of the present minister, has probably gone as far as any others in this regard. Many of the hymns used in worship are chosen from the new hymnal (the "Green Book"), which is an overt attempt to purge worship of sexist and gender-specific language. Further, in her speech during worship, Sharon Moon is consistent in her use of gender-neutral terms, especially when referring to God.

Likewise, as has been specifically noted in the analysis of her sermons, she tempers, to the extent of effectively denying, the doctrine of the Fall, as traditionally understood in Christian theology. While she seems relatively content with the status quo regarding the question of ordination, this is probably due more to pragmatic considerations than to theological conviction.

The ways in which the present situation exemplifies all of these factors seems not only to confirm Bednarowski's claims, but also to suggest their application beyond their original focus. However, it is the last factor which is especially interesting. The ways in which marriage and motherhood enter into the idea of the feminine as it is constructed and mediated through the ministry in this congregation are both central and complex. It has been argued at length that a key strategy in the discursive practices identifiable as the symbolic labour performed by this minister concerns the presentation of mother-child relations and, specifically, mother-child relations within the traditionally-conceived family (that is: married motherhood). On the other hand, in many respects, the minister explicitly seeks to work against the traditional conceptions of gender relations,

both in her use of inclusive language and in her active and open welcome of gay and lesbian individuals and couples as members of the congregation.

A number of observations can be made which serve to elucidate this situation. A central aspect of Sharon Moon's belief is the need radically to transform society through the transformation of gender relations and gender identity. Like many other feminists (both Christian and non), she considers violence against women (and children) an especially important aspect of the more general question of social inequity, which is sanctioned and reproduced by violence (both physical and symbolic). By working to transform gender-relationships and identity, one works to transform society. In many respects, Sharon Moon exemplifies in practice the kind of position developed at a theoretical level by Sara Ruddick (1989) in her arguments connecting motherhood as a form of thought and action with global pacificism. The centrality of these ideas of marriage and motherhood, in Sharon Moon's thought, are connected with her belief in their importance as means to more general societal change.

Again, the work of Elaine Lawless on women's leadership in rural American Pentecostalism, already considered, is relevant. Lawless argues that women's leadership (non-traditional) in this patriarchal religion (traditional) is tolerated because the key image used in the self-presentation of women as ministers is that of motherhood. By this means, a leadership that could be perceived to threaten traditional conceptions of religion and its relationship to society is recast in a mode that is acceptable. Although Lawless' argument rests on some questionable foundations, I suspect that there is a degree of truth in this observation. Further, it seems to apply to the present situation. Sharon Moon's position as minister is supported by a number of factors, which have already been noted. Not only does the "liberalism" of the congregation support non-

traditional conceptions of gender and ministry, but also, Sharon Moon's role as a figure in the larger community serves to support her position in relation to the congregation. In addition to these factors, however, there seems little doubt that the explicit role that her self-understanding as mother plays in her self-presentation as minister is also an important legitimating factor. In this way, an acceptable and traditional image of woman is pressed into service to support the innovation of woman as religious leader. One must note, however, that this is far from unambiguous. Sharon Moon is divorced and remarried. In her preaching and other speech during worship, she often refers to her children and her husband. However, the children that she refers to are always her birth-children (not her step-children, of which she has two). The husband referred to is always her present, second husband. Further, one must note in passing her physical self-presentation during the ritual of worship. She habitually wears a long, white "alb", unadorned except for a coloured stole. Her hair, which is worn out long and unbraided, reaches to her waist (culturally, somewhat unusual for a woman in her late forties).

The salience of these points is supported by the following observations, made by scholars speaking of the roles of women in ritual and symbolic enactment.

Although positive attributes of the female nurturant metaphor continue to exist in the Western world, they are reserved for only those women who literally fulfil that function i.e. those who actually become good wives and mothers. Women outside the middle-class Western world retain power in some ritual domains - midwifery, possession cults, curing rituals - but females within the West for the most part have lost those gynomorphic alternatives to their procreative role.

(Hoch-Smith & Spring 1978 p11)

The "gynomorphic alternatives" referred to are easier to find from other cultures than from other classes. However, these authors are probably correct in their assertion that this situation is especially true of the middle-classes. In part, this may be because existing presentations of the feminine are experienced as particularly problematic within this class-fraction, for reasons that have been argued above. Nevertheless, as these authors point out, motherhood remains a highly important image, representing a significant social status, which confers upon individuals occupying it, prestige and possibility.

However, it seems that by concentrating on this aspect of motherhood - as a social role conferring status - one may miss another important aspect. Indeed, in Sharon Moon's words, one may miss the "key thing". Motherhood is not only a status and a relationship, it is also an experience. In order to be a mother (of natural children), one must experience childbirth. Frequently, the experiential aspect is subsumed in that of the social role. However, as Tess Coslett (1994) notes, for many women, childbirth is "a central life-changing event..." (Coslett 1994 p2).

This is clearly so in the case of Sharon Moon and has been, for her, the impetus for the transformation of her personal and religious self-understanding. Further, in her personal understanding, it is this experience which provides the legitimation for her life as a minister.

Coslett also makes the following point:

Childbirth, as an experience belonging to the private sphere of womanhood, has long been marginalized as a subject for public representation.

(Coslett 1994 p1)

While this may be changing - and, indeed, Coslett's study is concerned with

the development of modern discourses (both scientific and literary) of motherhood and childbirth - it has been true until recently and remains true for most individuals. The experience of childbirth is one that is shared by women in private conversations with other women and remembered as part of private, personal history. This is what makes Sharon Moon's case so particular. While she is by no means unique, the ways in which she has integrated a fundamental and traditionally marginalized personal experience into her self-presentation as religious specialist, indicate a major change in mainstream Christian religiosity.

It seems that this ties, finally, the various aspects identified in the course of this study together with what is the most individual and engaging aspect of her preaching. Childbirth is a personal, private and transformative experience which has been "laboured over" to produce discourses which valorize and transform the personal experience of individuals into religious experience. The mundane and prosaic are, in this way, transmuted into the numinous.

Conclusion and Summary

The preacher has spoken and the congregation has listened. By their collective labour, together they have produced the multiple meanings and understandings that are the sermon uttered and heard. Together, they have performed the ritual of Sunday worship. In doing so, they have affirmed it as the same ritual as in the past and, now, as the same ritual for each and all of them. Equally, they have rediscovered themselves as the same: members of the same congregation, faith, culture.

In concluding, it is appropriate, not only to summarize the main claims made in this study, but also to ask in what ways it advances an understanding of the ritual and, particularly, the verbal performances which are its major elements. In what ways, if any, is the sociological understanding of the ritual suggested here different from or greater than the self-understanding possessed by the ritual actors themselves?

It seems to be part of the very nature of ritual performance that, because they are assumed to be stable, unchanging and rule-governed activities, they are not only especially immune to changes, but also performed without conscious attention to their performance or meaning. Consequently, the relationship of ritual actors to their performances (with the partial exception of ritual specialists) is characterized by assumptions and implicit understandings rather than overt and explicit elucidation. One may state, therefore, that if the present study does nothing else, it succeeds in making explicit what is only implicit, clearly understood what is normally assumed. In part, this study has done this, but, more, it has also sought to discover patterns of structure and relationships between elements. Specifically, the ways in which such structures and relationships relate functionally, to one another and to other aspects of social

relations external to the ritual (the larger "context") are what the study has claimed to discover.

The main positions advanced and argued in this study may be summarized as follows.

An assumption guiding this study is that an analysis of ritual must recognize the importance of the context in which its performance occurs. This context needs to be understood not only as the immediate spatio-temporal context of performance, but also as the socio-historical context which is the milieu in which the ritual actors find themselves. Consequently, relevant to an analysis of the ritual of Sunday worship in a United Church congregation, is its social location and its own "local history". The brief summaries of United Church history, denominationally and locally, are included on this basis. It is argued, however, that most conventional accounts of the origins and development of the United Church of Canada underestimate the enduring influence of Congregationalism in this history.

The point of view adopted in this study assumes, equally, that an adequate account of the labour of the minister as religious specialist requires information about the minister's person and personal and social origins. The description of the minister attempts to provide a portrait of an actor in social space, using the conceptual tools suggested by the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

On the foundation of this necessary contextual background, the analysis of the ritual of Sunday worship, based primarily upon the results of participant-observation, is as follows. In spite of the efforts and intentions of the minister, the sermon remains the pre-eminent ritual element. Closely related to the Biblical passages read out loud during the ritual, the sermon functions as the means by which the various elements of which the ritual consists, are united to form a single identifiable performance with a distinct character and identity. This

primary function performed by the sermon is the basis upon which other discursive functions are possible.

The structure of the sermons preached in this congregation is shown in its realizations through various rhetorical strategies that are employed by the preacher. The relationship of the sermons to the Biblical texts is indicated and it is argued that the basic strategy of recovering/creating "meaning" and "relevance" from the Biblical texts by means of preaching is a fundamental and identifiable characteristic of liberal Protestant Christianity.

The study further argues that the sermon is related intimately, not only to the Biblical texts which are elements of the ritual performance, but also to certain narratives. Specifically, the sermons are related to the "narrative" of salvation history, which is conceived to be the Biblical text as a whole. Further, the sermons are related to "narratives of self", which are conceived to be the life-experiences of the minister and, by extension, of the congregation. Both these narratives are essentially ideological, in that they are imaginary constructs. Consequently, their relationship to the sermons is allusive and implied rather than direct and explicit. Indeed, this must be so, since they are, in large part, a product of the preaching.

It is argued that these imaginary narratives of experience (collective and personal, sacred and mundane) are connected with another important characteristic of liberal Protestant Christianity. This is the project to recast the Christian message in terms of secular ideologies of "development". Christian faith is understood as a personal "journey", undertaken through psychological development. Linked with this is an understanding of education as the controlled and "normalized" psychological development of the individual.

These arguments are developed and supported by detailed examinations of specimens from sermons gathered during field-work. Examples of narrative,

personal self- and other-reference by means of pronominal and other lexico-grammatical forms, are used to illustrate specific realizations of these discursive strategies.

In addition, it has been argued that the verbal performances engaged in by the minister with the children, the "Theme Conversations", are important. An analysis of a sample of these elements has sought to show how they function as an indirect means by which the tensions between adults of different generations, could be addressed. By means of the "Theme Conversations", the minister modelled a particular form of parent-child interaction, associated, not only with current educational ideology of the child, but also with a particular model of familial (and, especially, mother-child) relations.

Finally, it was argued that these various linguistic strategies were linked in the way they served to support the particular understanding of Christianity created through the ritual of worship in this congregation. In this understanding, Christianity is the means of psychological development and the transformation of mundane, personal experience into the sacred through its narration and valorization. It was further suggested that the success of this particular understanding was connected with the social profile of the congregation, especially as it consisted of women who have experienced upward social mobility resulting in a marked dissonance between real life-experiences and ideal life-expectations produced through primary (familial) socialization.

None of these functions, all of which are aspects of social reproduction, are peculiar to the ritual of worship or the preaching which is part of it. Indeed, bodies of research exist which indicate that many of these functions occur in other contexts and by other means (as an example, one may refer the work done by feminist scholars on diary-writing and autobiography as they are implicated in the production of the "self", especially for women). What this study has

argued is that the ritual of worship and the activity of preaching are significant means by which these aspects of social reproduction are accomplished among a particular social stratum of contemporary Canadian society. Further, it has been argued that this has been shown to be so by the employment of the appropriate methods of analysis. These are the contextual examination of verbal performances, at not only the semantic, but also, the lexico-grammatical level.

In conclusion, it seems appropriate to address what was noted, at the outset, as a "sub-text" of the study. This is the persistence, or, perhaps better, the "renewability" of mainstream, conventional Christianity, at a time when it faces increasing competition from other forms of religiousness.

Two points may be made. The first is that mainstream, conventional religion persists in virtue of its nature as ritual performance rather than as a confessional or doctrinal system. The many commentators are, indeed, correct who point out that conventional Christianity as, a system of belief, is characterized by heterodoxy and shows a high degree of dissonance between official, orthodox "theology" and popular, lay belief. It is through ritual performance that an ideological semblance of consistency and uniformity can be (re)produced. One may suggest, in fact, that the persistence of mainstream religion is due to the persistence of ritual.

The second point concerns this "persistence of ritual". This study has shown that ritual performances are enduring because they can function in varied and changing ways, while retaining largely invariant form and structure. The ritual of worship considered in this study is, generally speaking, identifiable as the same as that performed in this congregation over many years. Further, it is the same as that performed in other United Church of Canada congregations and, indeed, in many other mainstream Protestant congregations. Variations are minor

and are, in fact, just that: variations on a basic, stable form.

The collective symbolic labour undertaken by minister and congregation produces symbolic goods appropriate to specific subjects in a specific social milieu (specific "consumers" in a specific "market"). This depends, however, upon the conventional and, apparently, invariant nature of the means of symbolic production: the ritual performance. This combination of the possibility for innovation and the semblance of unchanging repetition is the key to the persistence of ritual. The rituals of conventional, mainstream Christianity persist because enduring structure is the means by which new functions are performed and symbolic goods appropriate to new social relations can be produced and acquired.

A particular set of functions achieved through the symbolic labour performed in this congregation have been identified. These concern themselves with the production of the means of self-description and self-understanding for members of a particular generational group among contemporary Canadian middle-class. It has been argued that this is what gives the preaching its uniqueness and specificity. However, this discursive practice is part of a traditional concern of Christian discourse with the soul and the "interior life" of the individual. Such venerable figures as Augustine and Theresa of Avila may be cited as key figures in the development and production of discourses that provide the means by which subjects can be described (and can describe and understand themselves) in terms of "interior states" and the development of a psyche. In this regard, the preaching considered here shows itself to be, not only innovative, but also part of an ancient tradition and, as such, it is comparable, insofar as it co-opts elements of an existing secular ideology in order to produce a specifically Christian discourse, distinguishable from, but related to that ideology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABRAMS, M.H. 1994 "Spiritual Travellers in Western Literature"
Introduction to
The Motif of the Journey in 19th century Italian literature
(eds.) Bruno Magliocchetti & Anthony Verna
Gainseville, Fla.: University Press of Florida
- ACCARDO, A. 1983 Initiation a la Sociologie de l'illusionnisme social
Bordeaux: Editions Le Mescaret
- ALLOR, M. 1988 "Relocating the site of the audience"
Critical Studies in Mass Communication 5,3
- ANG, I. 1991 Desperately Seeking the Audience
London: Routledge
- ANTOUN, R.T. 1989 Muslim Preacher in the Modern World
Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press
- ARIES, P. 1962 Centuries of Childhood
a social history of family life
trans. Robert Baldick
N.Y.: Vintage Books
- AUERBACH, E. 1965 Literary Language and it Public in late Latin antiquity and in the Middle Ages
N.Y.: Pantheon Books
- AVERY, W.O. 1977 The Word of God and the Words of Men
D. Min Thesis, Lutheran Theol. Seminary
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
- AVERY, W.O. & GOBBEL, A.R. 1980 "The Word of God and the Words of the Preacher"
Review of Religious Research 22,1
- BARR, J. 1977 Fundamentalism
London: SCM

- BAUMAN, R. 1974 "Speaking in the Light:
the Role of the Quaker Minister"
in Explorations in the Ethnography of
Speaking
R. Bauman & J. Sherzer (eds.)
CUP
- 1977 Verbal Art as Performance
Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publ.
- 1983 Let Your Words Be Few
Symbolism of Speaking and Silence
among 17th century Quakers
CUP
- BELL, C. 1992 Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice
OUP
- BENSTOCK, S. 1988 The Private Self: theory and
practice of women's autobiographical
writings
Chapel Hill: University of North
Carolina Press
- BERGER, P. 1969 The Sacred Canopy
Elements of a Sociological Theory
of Religion
N.Y.: Doubleday
- BIBBY, R.W. 1987 Fragmented Gods
Toronto: Irwin Publ.
- 1993 Unknown Gods
The Ongoing Story of
Religion in Canada
Toronto: Stoddart
- BIBER, D. 1994 "An Analytic Framework for
Register Studies"
in Biber & Finegan
- BIBER, D. & 1994 Sociolinguistic Perspectives on
FINEGAN, E. (eds.) Register
OUP
- BLENCH, J.W. 1964 Preaching in England in the late
15th and 16th centuries
Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- BLOCH, M. 1989 Ritual, History and Power:
Selected Papers in Anthropology
London: The Athlone Press

BOURDIEU, P.

- 1971 "Genese et structure du champ religieux"
Revue Francaise de Sociologie 12
- 1971/ "The Market of Symbolic Goods"
85 Poetics 14, 1/2
- 1971/ "Legitimation and Structured Interest
87 in Weber's Sociology of Religion"
in Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity
S. Lash & S. Whimster (eds.)
London: Allen & Unwin
- 1977 Outline of a theory of Practice
CUP
- 1977a "Symbolic Power"
in Identity and Structure: issues in
the Sociology of Education
Driffield, Eng.: Nafferton Books
- 1984 Distinction
A social critique of the judgement
of taste
trans. Richard Nice
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Press
- 1985 "Le champ religieux dans le champ
de manipulation symbolique"
Postface de Les Nouveaux Clercs
Centre de Sociologie du Protestantisme
Geneva: Editions Labor et Fides
- 1985a "The Genesis of the concepts of
Habitus and Field"
Sociocriticism 2
- 1985b "The Social Space and the Genesis
of Groups"
Theory and Society 14
- 1986 "The Forms of Capital"
in Handbook of Theory and Research for
the Sociology of Education
J.G. Richardson (ed.)
N.Y.: Greenwood Press
- 1986a "The Struggle for Symbolic Order:
an interview with Pierre Bourdieu"
Theory, Culture and Society 3,3
- 1987 Choses Dites
Paris: Les Editions de Minuit

- 1990 "Social Space and Symbolic Power"
in In Other Words
Cambridge: Polity Press
- BRENNEIS, D. 1986 "Shared Territory: Audience, indirection
and meaning"
Text 6,3
- BRILIOTH, Y. 1965 A Brief History of Preaching
Philadelphia: Fortress Press
- BROWN, G. & 1983 Discourse Analysis
YULE, G. CUP
- BROWN, R. & 1960 "The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity"
GILMAN, A. in Style in Language
T.A. Sebeok (ed.)
Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press
- CAMERON, A. 1991 Christianity and the Rhetoric of
Empire
Berkeley: U. of California Press
- CHEAL, D. 1987 "The Private and the Public:
the linkage role of religion revisited"
Review of Religious Research 28,3
- 1988 The Gift Economy
London: Routledge
- 1991 Family and the state of theory
Toronto: U. of T. Press
- CHODOROW, N. 1978 The Reproduction of Mothering
Berkeley: U. of California Press
- CLIFFORD, N.K. 1985 The Resistance to Church Union
in Canada 1904-1939
Vancouver: U. of British Columbia
Press
- COOK-GUMPERZ, J. 1973 Social Class and Socialization
a study in class differences
in the language of maternal control
London: RKP
- COSLETT, T. 1994 Women Writing Childbirth
Modern discourses of motherhood
Manchester University Press
- COULTHARD, M. 1977 An Introduction to Discourse Analysis
London: Longman

- CRYSTAL, D. 1969 Review of M.A.K. Halliday,
Intonation and grammar in British English
Language 45,2
- CRYSTAL, D. &
DAVY, D. 1969 Investigating English Style
London: Longman
- DASSETTO, F. 1973 Analyse du discours religieux et sociologie
Louvain: FERES
- DAVIES, A. 1988 "Talking in Silence: Ministry in
Quaker Meetings"
in Styles of Discourse
N. Coupland (ed.)
London: Croom Helm
- DONZELOT, J. 1979 The Policing of Families
N.Y.: Pantheon Press
- DOUGLAS, M. 1970 Natural Symbols
London: The Cresset Press
- ESSER, J. 1988 Comparing Reading and Speaking
Intonation
Amsterdam: Rodopi
- FAIRCLOUGH, N. 1992 Discourse and Social Change
Cambridge: Polity Press
- FERGUSON, C.A. 1994 "Dialect, Register and Genre:
working assumptions about
conventionalization"
in Biber & Finegan 15-30
- FERNANDEZ, J.W. 1967 "Revitalized words from the "Parrot's Egg"
and the "Bull that Crashes in the Kraal":
African Cult Sermons"
in Essays in the Verbal and Visual Arts
June Helm (ed.)
Seattle: U. of Washington Press
- FIRTH, J.R. 1968 Selected Papers 1952-59
London: Longman
- FRENCH, P. &
MACLURE, M. 1983 "Teachers' questions, pupils' answers:
an investigation of questions and
answers in the infant classroom"
in Readings on Language, Schools and
Classrooms
(eds.) Michael Stubbs and
Hilary Hillier
London: Methuen

- GAFFNEY, P.D. 1987 "Authority and the Mosque in Upper Egypt: the Islamic Preacher as Image and Actor" in Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning W.R. Roff (ed.) London: Croom Helm
- 1991 "The Changing Voices of Islam: the emergence of Professional Preachers in contemporary Egypt" The Muslim World 81,1
- GEERTZ, C. 1960 "The Javanese Kijaji: the changing role of a cultural broker" Comparative Studies in Society and History 2,2
- GIDDENS, A. 1981 The Class Structure of Advanced Societies London: Hutchinson (2nd edition)
- Gift, Dilemma and Promise a report and affirmation on human sexuality The United Church of Canada, Division of Mission in Canada. 1984
- GOFFMAN, E. 1981 Forms of Talk Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press
- GOLDBERG, M. 1981 Theology and Narrative: a critical introduction Nashville: Abingdon
- GRANT, J.W. 1967 The Canadian Experience of Church Union London: Lutterworth Press
- GRIMES, J.E. 1975 The Thread of Discourse The Hague: Mouton
- GUMPERZ, J. & HYMES, D. (eds.) 1972 Directions in Sociolinguistics: the Ethnography of Communication N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
- GUSDORF, G. 1956 "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography" in Olney (ed.) p28-48
- HALLIDAY, M.A.K. 1967 Intonation and Grammar in British English The Hague: Mouton
- 1974 Language and social man London: Longman

- 1975 Learning How to Mean
Explorations in the development
of language
London: Edward Arnold
- 1978 Language as social semiotic:
the social interpretation of
language and meaning
Baltimore, Md.: University Park Press
- HALLIDAY, M.A.K. & 1989 Language, context and text:
HASAN, R. aspects of language in a
social-semiotic perspective
OUP
- HARKER, R., 1990 An Introduction to the work of
MAHAR, C. & WILKES, C. Pierre Bourdieu
(eds.) London: MacMillan
- HASAN, R. & 1989 Language Development:
MARTIN, J.R. (eds.) Learning Language, Learning Culture
Meaning and Choice in language:
Studies for Michael Halliday
Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publ. Corp.
- HENRIQUES, J., 1984 Changing the Subject:
HOLLOWAY, W., Psychology, social regulation
URWIN, C., and subjectivity
VENN, C. & London: Methuen
WALKERDINE, V.
- HOCH-SMITH, J. & 1978 Women in ritual and symbolic roles
SPRING, A. (eds.) N.Y.: Plenum Press
- HUNTER, J.D. 1983 American Evangelicalism
New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers U. Press
- HYMES, D. 1972 "Models of the Interaction of
Language and Social Life"
in Directions in Sociolinguistics
The Ethnography of Communication
J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (eds.)
N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
- 1974 "Ways of Speaking"
in Explorations in the Ethnography of
Speaking
R. Bauman & J. Sherzer (eds.)
CUP
- JAKOBSON, R. 1980 "Metalanguage as a linguistic problem"
in The Framework of Language
Michigan Studies in the Humanities

- JHALLY, S. & LIVANT, B. 1986 "Watching as Working: the Valorization of Audience Consciousness"
Journal of Communication 36,3
- KERBY, A. 1991 Narrative and the Self
Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- KRATZ, C. 1991 "Amusement and Absolution: Transforming Narratives during Confession of social debts"
American Anthropologist 93,4
- 1994 Affecting Performance: Meaning, Movement and Experience in Okiek women's Initiation
Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Press
- LABOV, W. 1972 "The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax"
in Language in the Inner City
Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press
- LABOV, W. & WALETZKY, J. 1967 "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience"
in Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts
June Helm (ed.)
Seattle: U. of Washington Press
- LAMBERT, Y. 1987 "L'art d'accomoder et de transformer la religion: le sens theorique populaire"
Recherches sociologiques
- LAMONT, M. 1992 Money, Morals and Manners
The culture of the French and American Upper-middle class
Chicago: U. of Chicago Press
- LAMONT, M. & LAREAU 1988 "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in recent Theoretical Developments"
Sociological Theory 6
- LANHAM, R.A. 1968 A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms: a guide for students of English literature
Berkeley: U. of California Press
- LAWLESS, E.J. 1988 Handmaidens of the Lord Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion
Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press

- 1988a God's Peculiar People
Women's Voices and Folk Tradition
in a Pentecostal Church
University Press of Kentucky
- 1991 "Rescripting their lives and
narratives: Spiritual life stories
of Pentecostal Women Preachers"
Journal of Feminist Studies in
Religion 7,1
- LEHMANN, E. 1993 Gender and Work
The Case of the Clergy
SUNY Press
- LINDE, C. 1993 Life Stories: the creation of coherenc
OUP
- Living Our Faith: the History of First United Church
Ottawa, Ont. (n.d.)
- LOWRY, E.L. 1980 The Homiletical Plot
The sermon as narrative art form
Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press
- MACAULAY, M. 1990 Processing Varieties in English
An examination of Oral and Written
speech across genres
Vancouver: U. of British Columbia Press
- MACLEOD, H.G. 1980 "The Transformation of the United
Church of Canada, 1946-1977:
a study in the sociology of the
denomination"
PhD. Dissert. University of Toronto
- MAGUIRE, J.T. 1980 "A Scale on Preaching Style:
Hortatory vs. Interactive"
Review of Religious Research 20,1
- MARTIN, D.A. 1962 "The Denomination"
British Journal of Sociology 13,1
- MCNAIRN, N. 1965 Jesus Christ and the Christian Life
- the study guide
Toronto: United Church of Canada
- MITCHELL, W.F. 1962 English Pulpit Oratory from
Andrewes to Tillotson: a study
of its literary aspects
N.Y.: Russell & Russell, Inc.

- MORLEY, G.D. 1985 An Introduction to Systemic Grammar
London: MacMillan
- MORROW, E.L. 1923 Church Union in Canada: its History
Motives, Doctrine and Government
Toronto: Thomas Allen
- NEWMAN, W.M. &
WRIGHT, G. 1980 "The Effects of Sermons among Lay
Catholics: an exploratory study"
Review of Religious Research 20,1
- OLNEY, J. (ed.) 1980 Autobiography: essays theoretical
and critical
Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press
- O'TOOLE, R.,
CAMPBELL, D.F.,
HANNIGAN, J.A.,
BEYER, P. &
SIMPSON, J.H. 1991 "The United Church in crisis: a
sociological perspective on the
dilemmas of a mainstream
denomination"
Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses
20,2
- PALINKAS, L.A. 1989 Rhetoric and Religious Experience
The Discourse of Immigrant Chinese
Churches
Fairfax, Va.: George Mason U. Press
- PORTER, J. 1965 The Vertical Mosaic
An analysis of social class and power
in Canada
Toronto: U. of Toronto Press
- PRATT, H.J. 1972 The Liberalization of American
Protestantism: a case study in
complex organizations
Detroit: Wayne State U. Press
- QUIRK, R.,
GREENBAUM, S.,
LEECH, G. &
SVARTVIK, J. 1972 A Grammar of Contemporary English
London: Longman
- REDFIELD, R. 1956 Peasant Society and Culture
Chicago: U. of Chicago Press
- RICKEY, M.E. &
STROUP, T.B. (eds.) 1968 Certain Sermons or Homilies appointed
to be read in Churches in the time of
Queen Elizabeth I
a facsimile reproduction of the 1623
edition
Gainseville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles
and Reprints

- RIORDON, M. 1990 The First Stone
Homosexuality and the United Church
Toronto: McClelland & Stewart
- ROBERTS, K.A. 1994 Religion in Sociological Perspective
Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publ. Co.
3rd edition.
- ROBINSON, J. 1967 Honest to God
London: SCM
- ROOF, W.C. 1978 Community and Commitment
Religious Plausibility in a
Liberal Protestant Church
N.Y.: Elsevier
- ROSALDO, M.Z. 1974 "Woman, Culture and Society: a
Theoretical Overview"
in Woman, Culture and Society
M.Z. Rosaldo & L. Lamphere (eds.)
Stanford, Ca.: Stanford U. Press
- ROSENBERG, B. 1970 The Art of the American Folk Preacher
N.Y.: OUP
- ROUSSEAU, A. & 1973 "Discours religieux et metamorphose
DASSETTO, F. des pratiques sociales"
Social Compass 20,3
- RUMMERY, R.M. 1975 Catechesis and Religious Education
in a Pluralist Society
Our Sunday Visitor Press
- SAVILLE-TROIKE, M. 1989 The Ethnography of Communication:
an introduction (2nd ed.)
Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- SAY, E. 1990 Evidence on her own behalf:
women's narrative as theological
voice
Savage, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield
- SCHIFFRIN, D. 1994 Approaches to Discourse
Oxford: Blackwell
- SHARISTANIAN, J. 1987 Beyond the Public/Domestic Dichotomy
(ed.) Contemporary Perspectives on Women's
Public Lives
N.Y.: Greenwood Press
- SILCOX, C.E. 1933 Church Union in Canada: its causes
and consequences
N.Y.: Institute of Social and
Religious Research

- SMITH, C.M. 1989 Weaving the Sermon: Preaching in a Feminist Perspective
Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press
- SMITH, F.L. 1993 "The Pulpit and Woman's Place: Gender and the Framing of the Exegetical Self in Sermon Performance" in Framing in Discourse (ed.) Deborah Tannen
OUP
- STEEDMAN, C.,
URWIN, C. &
WALKERDINE, V. (eds.) 1985 Language, Gender and Childhood
London: RKP
- STUBBS, M. 1983 Language, Schools and Classrooms
London: Methuen (2nd ed.)
- SULEIMAN, S.R. 1983 Authoritative Fictions
The Ideological Novel as a literary genre
N.Y.: Columbia University Press
- TANNEN, D. 1994 Gender and Discourse
OUP
- TANNEN, D. (ed.) 1993 Framing in Discourse
OUP
- TEDLOCK, D. 1983 The Spoken Word and the work of Interpretation
Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press
- THAISS, G. 1972 "Religious Symbolism and Social Change: the Drama of Husain" in Scholars, Saints and Sufis (ed.) Nikki Keddie
Berkeley: U. of California Press
- THERBORN, G. 1980 The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology
London: Verso
- TOOLAN, M.J. 1988 Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction
London: Routledge
- THOMPSON, J.B. 1984 Studies in the Theory of Ideology
Berkeley: U. of California Press
- TOWLER, R. 1984 The Need for Certainty: a sociological study of conventional religion
London: RKP

- VAN BILLEON, E. 1973 "Le modele d'autorite dans l'Eglise"
Social Compass 20,3
- WEBER, M. 1963 The Sociology of Religion
Boston: Beacon Press
- WEBSTER, J. 1981 Some Sociolinguistic Aspects of Religious Communication
PhD. Diss.: SUNYAB
- Whole People of God, The.
Woodlake Books, Winfield, B.C. 1994/95 edition. Minister's Version.
- WITTEN, M. 1992 "The restriction of meaning in religious discourse: centripetal devices in a fundamentalist Christian sermon"
in Vocabularies of Public Life: Empirical essays in symbolic structure
R. Wuthnow (ed.)
London: Routledge
- 1993 All is Forgiven
Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press
- WOLF, E. 1956 "Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society: Mexico"
American Anthropologist 58,6
- WUTHNOW, R. (ed.) 1979 The Religious Dimension: new directions in quantitative research
N.Y.: Academic Press
- WUTHNOW, R. 1987 Meaning and Moral Order Explorations in Cultural Analysis
Berkeley: U. of California Press
- 1992 Rediscovering the Sacred Perspectives on Religion in contemporary society
Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. Eerdmans Co.
- WUTHNOW, R.,
HUNTER, J.D.,
BERGESEN, A. &
KURZWEIL, E. 1984 Cultural Analysis the work of Peter Berger, Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault and Jurgen Habermas
London: RKP

Appendix A: Interviews

INTERVIEW WITH SHARON MOON

Interview with Sharon Moon Jan. 11th 1994

P: Anyway, so I really want to, um, concentrate specifically about preaching. I think I've explained that that's what my study's about. Um, but preaching within the context of, um, your experience of, as a minister in general, and then as part of you as a person. Um, so I've set out the interview in terms of 5 general areas, so if we could just work our way through them, it shouldn't, um... I know you're female, I know you're married. I know you have children. How old are you?

S: 48.

P: How many children do you have and how old are they?

S: I have two of my own, 22 and 18 and I have two step-children who are, oh golly, how old are they? 30 and 26 probably. David's kids. But they're not at home, they're living elsewhere. They've never really lived with us.

P: How long have you been a minister?

S: Um, I was ordained in '85, but I was working for 3 years before that as an intern and as a staff associate at a church, so um, in paid accountable ministry, for, er, 2 years before that, '83. Ordained since '85.

P: How long have you been here?

S: All of that time, since I was ordained, since '85...

P: Right, so this is the only church.

S: ... this is the 9th year. Although I was staff associate at a different church. I was staff associate at Emmanuel, in the suburbs.

P: And before you became a minister, what kind of things had you been doing? You'd been a mum at some stage, well, you're still a mum, but...

S: Straight through. Well, I was a high school teacher straight out of University. I went with CUSO to Africa for a year and a half. And then, er, came back to a high school in Sault Ste. Marie and London, Ontario. And that's when I had children. My firstchild, one at a time thank you. Um, and was home with the kids for 9 years but during that time I was, I became a potter and did that professionally for, really, for most of those 9 years. It grew quite a bit over that period of time. It started out as a hobby but then it became more of a... I was selling quite a lot by the time I ... You know, it was really becoming much...

P: Was that an interest? Something you'd done as a younger person?

S: No, it was something that when I was teaching high school, I needed something that didn't have anything to do with books and something...

P: Or children.

S: ... or children. Something... you know, and I was taught to wedge clay a very interesting way. Its a terrible way to wedge clay but I was taught to take it and throw it on the ground and it was the most incredible tension release that action of holding it above your head and just smashing it on the ground. And I could imagine a few kids, y'know, which wasn't a very non-violent thing to say, but still, um...

P: But it started out as a hobby.

S: Oh yeah. Sanity. Sanity. And sort of to develop the other side. I guess I wasn't consciously trying to do that but... well I was consciously trying to get away from books, do something totally different as a hobby, while I was teaching.

P: So this was in the '60s, eh? Mid, late 60s?

S: Um, yeah, because I was '67 when I graduated. I wasn't, it was '67 when I graduated from University. So, it was while I was in the Sault, when I started doing that, so it was maybe '70, sort of time, 71. And that was actually a time of real, er, developing of spirituality and silence and creativity and developed a whole different side of, the introverted side, the space side. The whole, I wasn't conscious of that...

P: Right, I was just going to ask you that. That's an evaluation that you've come to. You now understand that, you would've been in your late 20s, early 30s.

S: Yeah.

P: So it was a period of personal development.

S: Absolutely, yeah.

P: Yeah.

S: Developing the other side in the Myers-Briggs kind of typology (P: Yeah). I'm an intuitive off the map and I don't have an ounce of "S" in me... and so working with the other side is quite numinous.

P: And this was a new departure for you? In terms of your self-understanding?

S: You mean the spiritual part?

P: Yeah and being an artist and what have you.

S: Oh definitely. That was, the artist part, not the spiritual part. Finding my creativity and... I was taught, as so many of us were, that that was a waste of time and that er...

P: What was your degree in?

S: History and French.

P: Right and so, er, that was my next question. Family background. You grew up... What kind of people were your parents? Where did you grow up? In the Sault?

S: Oh no. Thunder Bay. I grew up in Slate River, out in the country, rural upbringing. Um, my... how to describe my parents. That is, that's an interesting question. I used to think I was middle-class, but now I realize I was poor. Because everybody else was poor, I didn't feel like the stigma, um, we came, we moved into the middle-class through the period of time growing up, so that by the time that I left home, I think I was probably, had moved into that class, but in fact we were quite poor.

P: What did your father do?

S: Well, originally, he, when I was born, he was, worked in the logging camps, er, after the war, it was right after the war, and did all kinds of odd sorts of things, whatever he could make money at. He built our own house, and um, worked in a garage at some point as, um, a gas attendant to try to make extra money doing that and he was a grader-operator for the township at one point, until the Reeve's nephew... A new Reeve came in and hired his nephew and got rid of my dad and, er, he went into the Department of Highways, into government, and got involved particularly in the areas of safety, er supervision of equipment and found his real niche and kept going up the ladder... from then on it was a lot more secure.

P: And your mother was...

S: My mother was at home as a homemaker, um, she was, um, she started to sell Avon products at one point. When my father, when she went back to work, which was when I went to University, we moved to Toronto in the second year University, she went back to work, she really had to battle my father who did not want her to go back to work. I got to see some real dynamics of sexism that I hadn't been so conscious of,

that operated in my own family at that time. My father was livid at her but she did it, er... the other... My mum was very community involved, she was the Chair of the School Board in that community and er, she was the one that was involved in church. My dad wasn't... My dad came from a Catholic background. His mother had taken off and there'd been a divorce and, though my father had been an altar boy he was told by the priest that he could no longer be an altar boy and was so hurt, so wounded, that he left the Catholic church and didn't want anything to do with church, period. And then the Baptists found him and it was, I guess, a fairly open-minded, warm Baptist fellowship that he went to, this is up in ----, Ontario and so when it came to do church time, then when we were born, my brother and I, um, the Baptists in our area came round and they had a school bus and they wanted to take us to church and so my father assumed all Baptists were the same and thought that this would be wonderful and that we would have this wonderful warm family atmosphere in this church that he had in ----, but we ended up going to a very fundamentalist Baptist church that was... over the top, over the top.

P: How old were you then?

S: I was 4.

P: How much of that do you remember?

S: I remember... vividly. Vividly.

P: It was a strong experience that stayed with you.

S: Oh, very much so. Very much so.

P: So what denomination was your mother? She was United, or..?

S: My mother wasn't anything. My mother'd never been raised in the church. But when I started to come home with some of the crap...

P: Was, sorry to interrupt, but, given the time and the... era, and where, the location, was that not unusual? Or did she not... did she perceive that as unusual?

S: Um. I don't think so. It was out in the country.

P: It was just one of those things.

S: Yeah. And its ironic... that all of her sisters, pretty much all of her sisters are active, not all of them, most of them, are active in their churches. One's a real strong Anglican. Two are Anglicans. One's United. My uncle was quite strong in the Anglican church for a while, so its kind

of ironic that er, from a family where nobody went to church... at all... all these people ended up in churches.

P: Anyway, this four year old girl is in this hell-fire Baptist church.

S: Hell-fire. Hell-fire Baptist church being taught that dancing's a sin, wearing lipstick's a sin and I wasn't going to do any of those things, I'll tell you. And kissing boys was sure a sin. And...

P: Well, yes, that's true.

S: Well, yes it is. Terrible sin. And, er, God was white and very male and, boy, was it ever important to be obedient and good. And, er, it was tough stuff. And er...

P: The children, your brother and yourself, did your parents go with you?

S: No, no. We were sent.

P: You were sent.

S: That's why we got to go because there was a school bus to come and pick us up and the same school bus driver that was the school driver drove us to church. So we'd get in this bus and my mother and father would have the morning off...

P: Right.

S: ... y'know and I'm sure it was a sanity break for them. But then when we got old enough to haul home some of the theology, my mother was very disturbed by this, what we were bringing home.

P: Er, how many years is this?

S: Maybe three? I don't know exactly, maybe three. I think, er, how old would I have been when we went? There was a United Church starting up in our area and then my mother... my mother, um, somehow, I guess through the school board stuff, knew about this United Church that was beginning in our area and she started to, um.. go to that and haul us there. And because it was further away, we had to be taken and so my mother would take us to church. And my mother then became very committed herself... She, my mother is a very strong believer at this point, but it was very much because she brought her children to church... to rescue them from this awful Baptist theology. Its interesting, because I can remember now having this discussion with my mother about creation and, er, I knew it had been done in seven days. And that anybody that didn't believe that was going to

hell. And my mother didn't believe that and I was so, I was just in horror that my mother was going to hell, and, er, I mean, I had been really, severely indoctrinated with all that stuff and then I can remember going, I can remember vividly going to, um, a friend's house to sleep over and she was a Baptist, from the Baptist church, and so we went to the Sunday School in the morning and, er, y'know, it was kind of, like coming home, I wasn't aware of all this. My mother didn't say that this was a terrible place or anything like that. She simply, took us over to this other place and we began a different experience of church. So, as far as I was concerned, there wasn't anything wrong with the Baptist church, I just didn't go there any more. So, um, when I went with my friend, um, there was this prayer that we, they would have spontaneous praying, and this man prayed for this back-slider who was there this day, I mean this was a small community, every body knew that every Sunday since, I'd been at the United Church a mile away, y'know, its not like I was living in the dens of sin and, er, some wild and wonderful place in Fort William. And they were, this back-slider, and Jesus had seen fit to bring them back, oh I thought this was so wonderful, until I realized it was me they were praying for. That was a really strong... that was a horrifying thing, so I mean, I, I guess I have developed, I think I still have a passionate hatred for fundamentalism. Because I've experienced the ravages of it in my own life, and so, I've other experiences of that too, and so... so... I got some good things from it, I(M sure, but er, ... its a different experience.

P: So, by the time you went to University... were you still a church-goer, or, a committed church-goer, an occasional church-goer?

S: When I was in, graduating from Grade 13, I went to my minister in tears saying I didn't believe in God anymore and, er, he told me to go to the SCM (LAUGHS). The best advice I ever had.

P: That would cure you of any...

S: No, it was wonderful, no. It was wonderful. It was the best thing that happened to me. Um, I went to the SCM at University and I found there was a place where I could question and search, and I discovered, it was the time of the "God is dead" theology, y'know, all of Tillich and er...

P: Did you read that stuff?

S: Oh yeah. Didn't read Tillich first hand, I read that at, er, Bishop Robinson's stuff and I was reading Harvey Cox.

P: "Honest to God" and stuff.

S: Oh yeah.

P: That came across to Canada?

S: Oh, absolutely. It was formative, absolutely formative. You can probably hear it in my sermons. I read Tillich later. I think I might have read "The Courage to Be" then.

P: So, when, sorry...

S: But I sure wouldn't darken the door of a church.

P: Oh, so we've got a young woman who's obviously, well, who's got to University, in the late sixties (S: Early) sorry, early, studying a humanities degree, not going to church, but reading theology (S: Yeah) for the fun of it.

S: Oh no. For the argument. For the struggle, for the growth.

P: The SCM provided you with a little cohort? Peer group?

S: Oh, very much community.

P: Or, did you feel, um, did you experience yourself as a loner?

S: Oh no, it was community, it was community and they were very involved in justice and that made a lot of sense to me. It was in the SCM that I realized you didn't have to park your brains at the door of a church, well, maybe you did in church, but you could be a Christian without parking your brains at the door. And I'm a fairly intelligent person, so I have to have something that meets my intelligence quota. I mean, I'm not interested in, I can't take Pabulum and just be told I have to believe something and take it that way. That just isn't the way I work. So, I needed to have a place to really struggle and ask searching questions and I was at Lakehead University for the first year and then I went to Queen's and I connected with the SCM groups and was very involved.

P: So, and then you graduated, um... what kind of a decision was going into teaching? Did you... you went abroad first, or..?

S: Er, right at graduation, yeah.

P: Now, was that a, er, motivation's the wrong, um... was your religion involved there? Or was it, just seemed like a good thing to do?

S: Well, I think my rel..., my religion... I think my values were certainly involved, um, not religion: organized way. Because I was in organized, I'd go to church sometimes... But not very much. Once in a while. Most of my worship activities at that time was with SCM and, er, but I certainly had a strong, I mean, don't forget this was the time of the 60s, the Vietnam War, and I was very involved in anti-war protests and, er... very involved in, there was, the whole student uprising in the 60s, I mean, Queen's was very conservative, mind you, but I was the first representative of our year to the faculty things, you know, I was very much for student involvement and things and, um, I mena, I wasn't one of the key activists at Queen's but I was certainly on the fringes of the activists at Queen's along with Bob Rae and a few others, um, interestingly enough. Um... and I was going to go with CUSO after graduation but then I also met the man I ended up marrying and we were married, actually, in Africa, so I ended up going to West Africa because of him. I would probably have got to go to East Africa or India myself.

P: And where did you go? Which country?

S: I went to Ghana and taught in a boy's school over there. A Catholic boy's school.

P: That was a positive experience?

S: Um, it was a life changing experience. What's positive? I don't know. It was a different experience.

P: Did you enjoy it?... Some of it. Not much.

S: Some of it. I, well, its, I can't, it wasn't fun. It was wonderful. It was, er, um, I learned more than I'll, it really turned my life around. I was already in what wasn't a very happy marriage. So I had to deal with some of, you know, I wasn't terribly happy that way. I lived my teaching. Um, I loved the work I was doing there. I was amazed, er, at the cross-cultural experience. I loved living there and learning a different, but on a personal level... my marriage was a bit different so... I had both positive and negatives. I met some amazing people. In terms of the spiritual journey there, there was a Doctor, a German doctor, a lay sister, who I would speak theology, spirituality with and just find out what made her tick and why she did what she did. That was fascinating. And we also met a Catholic priest who worked in a very remote area and he was the only white man and he was literally like something out of the books; over on the --- Plains, we met him quite by accident. And, er, a Czechoslovakian guy and he had a very deep impact on me as well, so, he was really living the gospel. As did this nun, not nun, lay sister. And I was teaching in a Catholic high school but I wouldn't go to Mass because I wasn't a Catholic, besides, that was my

excuse for not going. Although, one day I went when they had the Diocesan meeting there and they had done, they had a special African liturgy and it was the most moving thing I'd ever experienced. It was just, it was really breathtaking and very, very moving, so, that was about the limit of my church experience while being in Africa. So, um, and funerals...

P: They do good funerals in Africa. Take them seriously.

S: Oh yes... yeah.

P: Um, so, OK...

S: So, I was still pretty on the fringe of organized religion.

P: You came home, you taught, you raised children. You...

S: But you're missing the key thing. When I had my child, that was when I had a religious experience. That was when I had, my first child, a very strong mystical experience. Again, which was a life changing experience in which...

P: Which was where? In Africa?

S: No. This was here, in London, Ontario. 22 years ago now. And er... that was what brought me back into the church. Into organized religion. Because I didn't know, really, where else to deal with this thing. There weren't the alternatives there are now. So, er...

P: Was it a traumatic birth? Was it...

S: No, no, no.

P: It was a happy birth, the child was healthy etc?

S: Oh yes. But I just had a, I've known from that moment on that God exists in a way that... I didn't really know before. It was more of an abstraction. It was not real, it was something out there and that, the birth of that child just ... it was... well, it was as people describe a mystical experience. It was a profound, um, breakthrough of, um, the numinous, the transcendent, and, er, I simply knew that God existed and I felt a real sense of oneness and connection, connected-ness with, with the Other, beyond myself, with all others who had ever given birth, throughout time, I mean, God, I could start waxing, waxing eloquent here. But it was a very profound experience. And drew me back to the church in spite of doctrinal... difficulties with doctrine.

P: 22 years ago. Early 70s. You said a couple of seconds ago (S: '71) that it drew you back into the church because

that was the only place to deal with... now, again, is that a judgement from now, or did it just seem that way at the time? Did you actually feel yourself casting around for some ... way, or venue to deal with this, or did you just think, this is a religious experience, I'd better go to a church. I mean, did it strike you that there might, or did you seek...

S: I didn't look around for other places because I didn't ... I guess, I didn't know of any other places. I suppose if this were happening now, I might have delved into some New Agey stuff. I don't know what I would have done now. I have a hard time knowing what I would have done now. That stuff wasn't around, at least in my, y'know. The only place I knew where, was the church and so I came back with a profound sense of God but not having a bloody clue what I thought of this Jesus character. Or a lot of other stuff I'd learned.

P: You came to a United Church.

S: Yeah.

P: And what was the United Church busy with at the time? What was the United Church doing in the early '70s?

S: I don't think I cared what the United Church was doing, I was too self-absorbed.

P: How did you, how did you... experience attending Sunday worship in those days? I mean...

S: There were parts of it I liked. I was surprised to see how much of the, um, the, er, God in our depths kind of theology had actually got quote, unquote, "down" or out or however you call that imagery to the, to the congregational level, so in the prayers and in the sermons I found the kind of theology that connected with me and was something... The God that I knew, I could say, yeah, this person seems to be... it was stuff there that I could connect with. And then I'd run into some stuff that was just, made my, the hair on the back of my back just stand up on end. The hymns especially. The theology in the hymns, it would just drive me wild and er, so...

P: That would have been the United Church Hymnbook. I mean, there had to be some good Wesley, the... the... it was the theology that drove you wild, not the sentiment that (S: No, no) that attracted you.

S: No, it was the, the very hierarchical theology and the very theistic theology, um, of a God, the out there God, and, um, ... and very military, y'know, power. Not that power's a bad thing... but the way... the way its used, the imagery is coming from a kind of time when that was very much

the way one thought in the early, y'know, use your own categories to project the best that you know on to God and the best they knew of that generation was that kind of stuff, but it sure didn't connect for me. So, er, so I went and taught Sunday School so I wouldn't have to listen (LAUGHS).

P: So you could be excused.

S: Oh yeah, oh yeah. That's right. I originally went into teaching Sunday School to avoid having to sit through the worship. And I would not have been the first or the last to have done that. By any manner of means. And, I hope there's none doing that here (LAUGHS). Actually, I don't think that there are, actually, but I certainly know that that's a dynamic. A very strong dynamic. Um, so... but you know, the whole wisdom thing, I will find you wherever you want, I will find you, well God found me there too... That was where I had to really discern where... I was teaching Davis C. Cook which is a fundamentalist programme. I was teaching literally some of the stories of Elijah and I thought, this is a crock. I cannot teach this stuff the way it is. And then I thought what am I doing here? Because I still had this God thing and... So, I had to learn about the Bible. So I started reading some of the Abingdon Bible Commentaries and reading some of the Introductory articles, this stuff just blew my mind, it was just so exciting, so interesting and so really, really neat. So, um, I had to then, sort of, when you think, what do you pass on to the children, you've got to remember I was much, much younger and not very evolved in terms of theology or anything, um, trying to really discern what's the key thing, what are the really important things to pass on to the children and how do you teach children in ways that are not just moralistically, be good and be obedient, not that it just becomes, er, God just becomes the judgemental parent and, so, that was, some real discerning had to go on. Some real seeking. Because I knew what I didn't like. I didn't know what I really did like. So, I had this experience, all this... theology that didn't make sense. Now some of it did, and a lot that didn't make sense. I knew what wasn't right but I didn't know what was right.

P: Now, when you were in Grade 13 or whatever, you went to see the minister and he advised you. Did you approach a minister this time?

S: No, no. He wasn't the right person.

P: How old are your children at this stage?

S: Oh, Christopher was just a baby. The other one wasn't born.

P: How... I want to move on now to ask about becoming a minister. Was there a comparable, um, key experience associated with that set of decisions in the same way as associated with the birth of your first child?

S: No, not in the same way. It was more a cumulative thing. Um, because the path that I started on there... that I just was talking about, just kept on increasing and I kept, um, learning more and, er... developing my own theology, more sort of, um, reading and just, sort of growing...

P: And who were you reading? Was there anybody that stands out the way that Tillich...

S: Gee, no.

P: Were you reading the Bible, or...

S: A lot of stuff, well, alot of it was, um, I'm sure just very... just very traditional stuff of learning, well I can remember doing the Kerygma Bible Course, Bible Study Course, which did, sort of later on when I did that, but that was something I did which was, do you know, are you familiar with the Kerygma Programme?

P: It rings a bell.

S: Its quite academic, um, it would be comparable to , say, an introductory Bible course at University or something like that. Um. So i was doing that kind of stuff. Learning, you know...

P: Are you still potting?

S: Yes, and so that... Yeah, so I'm doing my academic, learning this Biblical stuff, I'm potting, in which the Spirit's working with me in a whole different way, with symbols and images and the internal spirituality genesis although I'm not aware of it. But it is. And somehow, I'm getting to the point where I've got two kids by this stage and, um, I'm beginning to feel a lot of unease. Um, a lot of, er, not-enoughness. Something else is... there's moreness. It got to the point where, although I was getting... to the point where the pottery was quite successful, I always was at the Ottawa Christmas Craft Show and I did a big show in Toronto I could sell everything I did and there were stores that were looking... I had more orders and more demand than I had time to do, um, so that was quite successful, but it wasn't what I was, it wasn't my gift. It wasn't what, it wasn't what I was called to be about. And part of me, I guess, knew that. And so every time I'd go down to work, there'd be this kind of unsettling going on, sort of, you should be with people. This is your gift, kind of, um... I felt constantly drawn to be with,

working with people, that was really where my gift lay. Although this was good, it wasn't, and there wasn't anything wrong with potting, but it wasn't what my life was about for the next phase...

P: Can you specify that... How does that sense of unease express itself in your memory? In the sense of... er... was it a... How did it express itself? Or, how did you express it to yourself? Was it a "I'd be happier if..." or "I ought to..." or "Things will fit better if..."?

S: Nothing so concrete as that.

P: It was never specific.

S: It was much more - and I certainly didn't recognize this as a call to ministry, um, I simply recognized a sense of dissatisfaction with what I was doing with my life. It wasn't enough. And it was a spiritual dissatisfaction at this point. It was, I was able to identify it as a God, that God was part of this unsettling. It didn't lead to a direction, although it led in a direction to needing to, my calling had to do more with people. Not necessarily in ministry, it didn't even cross my mind, because, you see, I'd never met a woman minister. So it didn't even occur to me. Although one thing I forgot to tell you, is that back before I didn't believe in God, when I was 17, I had a, I... had what I experienced as a call to ministry. I felt I wanted to be a minister and when I was 17 years old, I went to my minister and talked to him about that, now this is a guy who had just come over from Ireland and didn't realize that the United Church ordained women and... now he was wrong but you know, at 17 you don't know any better and church is this little wee rural parish and I believed him. Anyway, but um, just as well, because 2 years later I didn't believe in God anyway. So, so, er, its a push-pull thing, y'know. God had a lot of work to do before I could get to the point of being of use to anybody.

P: At some stage you, er, get some inkling of the process. You put yourself forward as a candidate. I want to talk very briefly about the, y'know, the actual process of formation. That involved, presumably, another period of study of some description at a Theological College or what-have-you.

S: At several.

P: How long did that take?

S: I think I did it in 5 years. Because I did a year-long internship over at Emmanuel and I did some studies at St. Paul's. I did a little bit at Carleton and I graduated out of Queen's. My Master's of Divinity. But I did a lot of courses and transferred them in and since I was doing it

part-time also with children here, I... I, um, ended up, I separated the year of my internship from my partner... so because I was co-parenting and... wanted to make sure that that continued, I was able to continue as staff associate part-time and study part-time at Queen's, so I did the last year in 2 years, so it was about a 5 year period.

P: Sounds, kind of, rather a self-directed...

S: Yeah. It was.

P: Was this typical or untypical?

S: Um, I mean, I fulfilled the United Church requirements. I... I was able...

P: Presumably, for some people it involves registering or enrolling in some sort of college and staying there, possibly even in residence, for a period of time and then at the end of it, they spit you out. Presumably that does happen to some people. It certainly didn't happen to you.

S: Well, I mean, I had to enroll in colleges and I had to negotiate, I mean, the United Church has a very clear set of things that you have to do. I did both Greek and Hebrew, then you have to do your Biblical stuff, you have to do history, Church History, doctrine, so I mean, it was certainly within that system. It wasn't as if I was just taking anything I wanted. And I had to negotiate every step of the way exactly what was and what wasn't acceptable. So it wasn't, really, its a little bit wrong just to say I did it my way except that I did manage to tailor it to my own needs as much as possible to do every bit of, um, like, for instance, I did two courses as a unit of CAPE up here, doing a unit of Hospital Chaplaincy. Actually, there were certain areas that I knew I needed to learn, areas I needed to work with and others I didn't particularly, so I tried to really learn the stuff I needed to learn within the framework of, er, what was there.

P: But, again, there was, this is probably, er, a fiction, but there was no, no, there was no cohort, there was no close associates who were going through the same thing that you were going through at the same time.

S: Oh yeah. I had, er, certainly my colleagues at Queen's when I was down there which, worked very closely with them and there were some other people here that were doing, in fact, the woman that called was ----, was the woman that was, er, going through the same process of going up and down to Queen's with kids up here and was travelling down, being down for part of the week, so she and I certainly journeyed together and we both experienced as women going into ministry at that time and saw the same kind of pressures, so we were very supportive to one another and,

kind of, struggles through issues of, y'know, together. And, er, -----'s another one who was doing quite a bit of the commuting stuff as well as, so, yeah, there were colleagues and then when I did some of my courses like the, the CAPE unit is a very small group of six people and we were very much... people that worked closely together and there was a lot of challenging back and forth. I feel I learned as much from fellow students as I learned through classes. I think I learn more from my children than from any of them.

P: Is this, is this when you read Tillich? Or had you done that previously, or...

S: Tillich? OK, well, the first course in theology I ever took when I went back was with John Dourley who's a Jungian analyst at Carleton and it was "Models of God and Man in Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin and Jung" and it was an absolutely... well, I had convinced myself, or my life-situation had convinced me that I was stupid by this time, which was not the truth, but it's what I felt. And, um, I didn't think that I would be able to handle the course and John Dourley, I don't know if you've had anything to do with him, he's a very, I mean he lectures a mile a minute, he's brilliant, he's insightful, he's got very deep analysis of things and, er, boy oh boy, for a first course, I mean, I wouldn't recommend it for a first course, but it was the best thing for me, because it was the only course I was taking and I just completely threw myself into it and I really hammered stuff through and I read everything Tillich wrote, including the essays, I read, I even read a lot of the Bollingen journals, um, of Jung, I read all, I can't say I read all of Jung, but I certainly read, and I read everything that Teilhard de Chardin wrote and, er... it was... amazing.

P: Now, this was a Master's level course? Or an undergraduate course?

S: Well, it was a Master's of Divinity at Queen's and it was an undergraduate course here, fourth year course here.

P: Bit of an over-achiever we've got here, I think.

S: Yeah, but it wasn't...

P: Its only three credits.

S: I didn't think I was going to pass it. I got A+. He doesn't give out A+s. I felt very proud of myself. But it was more, it was more than just trying to, I mean I had other courses that, during theology, that I didn't put anything into because I... I didn't give a, y'know, I thought it was a hoop to hop through and I hopped through it.

This one was a, was formative, like this was, this was the clay molding, I was the clay that was being molded, my theology was being formed and, I mean, that was a terribly formative course for me. It really was. Plus I was also going through, at that time, the decision to leave my marriage, which was... talk about formative. That was another course in theology.

P: How old were the children at this stage?

S: Er, Christopher, when I left the marriage, Christopher was 11 and ---- was 7.

P: Um... OK... I want to move along. Um. I want to talk about, um... ministry. We could do that, well, I'd like to do that two ways. If you could say something about your general understanding of what it is to be a minister. But then I'm also quite interested in quite specific, the nuts and bolts of... like... what it actually involves, what you do in a ... "average day".

S: (LAUGHS) You don't have average days.

P: Um, what weight, um, if you can sort of, how much do you, er... is... does one aspect of it predominate... um...

S: Well, I think I take my sense of ministry... from the Isaiah passage that Jesus quoted when he... read in the Temple at the beginning of his ministry, that he has... "The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me". I do feel anointed, not, not er, by the Spirit, I don't feel... better... I've just been given this particular kind of ministry. Other kinds of ministry are as important, as valid, they're just different, that's all. So, so I think there is a sense of.... to bring, preach good news to the poor, and to bind up those who are broken-hearted and wounded and to set free, to set free those who are in captivity and proclaim the year of the Lord and... the Jubilee Year, proclaim the Kingdom which is and is becoming. So I think I see most of the ministry in those kinds of, I see myself, the image I used at the time of ordination, is an image that still speaks to me, is a mid-wife. Um... I'm not giving birth, but I'm present at birthing... my wisdom and knowledge of other births help me help this other person give birth, or the community birth something new. I have there's always someone else. Its God giving the birth, or its God through the people that are working with us, giving the birth... I'm an attendant as someone who helps, er, encourage, as a teacher...

P: Who are you a minister to?

S: With is a better word.

P: Yes. Sorry.

S: Um, yeah. In this community? Um... with those who are part of the congregation itself, but also, I'm also very much part of, um, the larger community because this congregation certainly sees itself as part of a larger community and as a congregation in the context of the larger community. So, I minister with, for instance, a lot of people who are abused women, I do services of remembrance for women who are murdered by their partners and, er, I am called on often as a, a voice for justice in the city. To put my energies and the congregation's energies behind certain things that, like, for instance, er, they were trying to get a Women's Shelter going and there was a big problem, so we wrote letters, we made 'phone calls, we were involved in organizing something to try to bring others to peace and justice... So, its the larger community, but this community here... are you asking who the people are in this community?

P: No, I meant it just in terms of definition. You minister with, um...

S: Whoever's around.

P: Yeah, well, that's what...

S: What's here. You minister with what's here. And, er, so when I was ministering at, er...

P: I mean, there's a, so this congregation... becomes a focal point of a ministry which extends beyond it.

S: Yeah.

P: The congregation is not the sole object, not even the major object of the...

S: The congregation, hopefully, becomes a vehicle for... I see the whole congregation gathered, that's gathered... we come together to nurture and strengthen to go out to do our ministry. So, I think all people are in ministry... You know, that's not just words, that's not just words for me. I really believe that, so, hopefully, when the congregation gathers, its to provide community of support and strength and encouragement and challenge, um, and healing, so that folks can then go out all over the city, hopefully, because First United Church is here, there's all kinds of stuff (P: Right). And I know that to be the case. Its hard to track that stuff. We don't exist for ourselves.

P: So, now, there's a sense of co-ministry between yourself, in your perception, between yourself and the members of the congregation.

S: Very much.

P: So, there's a shared vision.

S: Yes.

P: I mean, this is a vision among alternatives (S: Yes). That's the reality, there are other churches (S: With very different visions) with very different visions (S: That's right). So, where has that, now, you've been here over a number of years, um, so that shared vision, presumably, developed over those years. Has that been difficult? How... I can see the cornerstone out there, this church has been here since 1911. Um, and there are members of this congregation, who might not have been here since 1911, but they've been here for many years.

S: Some were here at Union.

P: They have their, they have their... its not, they don't have an agenda, that's an insulting word to use of them.

S: But, their experience.

P: But they have their experience. They have their own local tradition. How has the relation, how has that helped, hindered, interacted with the development of this shared vision of ministry that you feel you have with the congregation at present?

S: Well, its, um...

P: I mean, does it, does First United, in very crass terms, does First United have a history of, y'know, radical social action since 1911, for instance? Or is it something....

S: It has some angels that go back that far. And that are the same angels that are here now... By that I mean, sort of, organizing principles, spirits. This congregation, from way back at the beginning, it, it joined before Union. So, it has a lot of firsts.

P: Joined before Union?

S: Before Church Union took place, before the United Church was formed, the Presbyterians and the Congregational Church here formed a unit and, er, that's why we're called First United. Not long before, like six months or something, but they were still way out in front, they took the risk of doing church union, um, before it actually happened. So, so, there are ways in which this congregation has, um... has been involved, it certainly has always been involved in outreach. Now, that's been, hasn't always been seen in the ways I would see, y'know, we would see it now, but, um, they used to send missionaries to Angola, very involved in missionaries to Angola. This church has raised tons of money at one point to for the Church Extension Fund which is why

churches like Barrhaven and, er, the one out in Orleans now are able to have land. This church raised almost \$10,000, I think it was at one point. Almost \$100,000 I think it was. It was a lot, well, I shouldn't quote figures because I'm terrible at remembering... but it was a lot, it was a lot. Um, and so, so mission work has been... so concern for doing mission work has been there. Um, the other thing that's been there has been a sense of welcoming new people and that's been right from the beginning. One of the myths around here, and I mean it's a true story, but one of, kind of, formative myths is how, when the Presbyterian Church came here, the Congregational members went to each side and allowed the Presbyterians to come into the heart of the church. Right into the middle. And that's a story that's, that's formative, so, and that's very much what these older people have done. When I came here they had money for three years and they didn't, they didn't know if they could survive and, er, so I came knowing that it was either going to be death with dignity, which I think is a very valid ministry, or renewal and they wanted to try renewal. And I said, well, I don't have any big magic answers for this, y'know, but I'm willing to come in and just listen to the Spirit and try and let, I mean, I guess I'm Spirit-led in that sense, I try to, I don't come in with heavy-duty agendas, I mean, I come in with who I am, I obviously have very strong opinions about a lot of things, which is, I'm not going to pretend I don't, but the ministry I had at Emmanuel, for instance, in a different context, was very, very different from the one that's here and if I go somewhere else, whatever I do will be very different. So, this is very much what this place is about, y'know. This time. But, um... so, so, renewal happened, it happened very slowly, but because we were building on the basis of people welcoming people in and there wasn't this hard and fast, well, we've done it this way, um, there was any, the changes that took place, there was one very big power broker here, who died several years before I came and there was a huge void. And, er, other than that, there weren't a lot of people hanging on to power and using the church for power, and so I didn't have an awful lot of resistance. I had people who knew that they couldn't do it anymore and I said to them that they didn't have to do it, what their main role was to create the space for it to happen and if it was going to happen, it would happen and if it didn't happen, we'd go out with the biggest party you ever saw. Celebrating what had been and that would have been a very valid ministry. I wasn't against doing that. So, what the people did was, they created space, and they did and they have done. These older people have given money faithfully and they have, we don't have a lot of big donors, they're poor, a lot of them are living on very small pensions and stuff. They've got their minks, but it's the same mink they've been wearing for 25 years, y'know. And, er, so we don't have a lot of --- in this place, but the people have given very faithfully and more

than that, they've been supportive and caring and created the kind of space and, er, once they saw that the new people were able to and wanted to do things, they were able to give over, but that happened slowly, slowly, slowly. A lot of the new people that came at first weren't really all that keen in getting involved. They were keen to receive rather than to do. It took time. I made a deal with God, which is not my theology, but maybe this harkens back to my old Baptist days, that if I got six, I knew I couldn't do it alone, if I got six people who were committed to renewal in the first year, I'd take as a sign that we were to renew and if not, I'd assume that, I mean, I'm not going to spin my wheels here and do nothing, I'll assume that we'll just move in the opposite direction. Well, we got 14 in the first year and 2 of them were feminists and I figured God must have had the most incredible sense of humour, I mean, I didn't ask for feminists, so... its kind of just, if you had asked me, well I've been here, this is my 9th year, if you had asked me even 7 years ago, what this church would look like now, I wouldn't have described it as it is now, because I wouldn't have foreseen this. And... so... its kind of been growing... Its not been like an iron-clad vision. We're going to create this thing, no matter what, y'know? Its been, um... the interesting thing is, there's a strong desire and hunger for Bible study in this congregation and for prayer. I mean, we had 30 at those "Deepen Your Prayer Life". We had 17 out at "What on Earth do we Believe?" We have people on a waiting list for the EPC, which is a very intense experience in practical Christianity. This is very traditional stuff we're doing. Like, real traditional catechismic... stuff. And there's a real hunger for that. And so, the irony is... the perception might be that we're very loose and open and we've got all those strange gays and lesbians and wild-eyed feminists, you know, radicals over here that don't want to be real Christians. In fact, I think there's more evangelism in the very traditional sense of that word, going on here than there is in most churches that are taking a much more conservative line.

[END OF SIDE ONE]

P: ... Can I move on a little bit? I appreciate this. More specifically about preaching as an aspect of ministry. Um. Do you experience it as a major part of your ministry? Or... just one part among many?

S: It doesn't predominate... and I don't see preaching apart from liturgy. So, worship is a very important part. So, preaching within worship is just one of the pieces. I mean, to me, the reading of the scriptures is as important as the preaching. Its all a whole and when it works well...

P: The preparation of the Sunday worship, I get the impression that it takes a lot of time and a lot of effort.

S: A lot of time, yeah.

P: And is that because, er... other people are involved?

S: Um, its partly that, its also because, er, its highly valued, I think, I would think at least 30% of my time goes into worship and worship preparation... We have a worship committee that works and is very involved...

P: Specifically, if I may, on... how do you prepare your sermons?

S: I start on Monday mornings reading the Scriptures for the next week and I allow that scripture to kind of just, I get up Monday morning I take off, so, before I come to work, on Monday morning, I've read the scriptures for the next week and I, kind of, let it just burble around... its like the computer or something, I just put it in and let it mess around in there. And then I live my week through the scripture. I sort of live my week with that, kind of, as a backdrop. And then I never write a sermon before Saturday. And I usually know what I want to do Saturday in terms of, I don't do as much research as... I don't do a lot of research, I do some. Um... I have a couple of, I look at, I have a couple of publication things that I get, I get "Celebrate" and "Homiletic something-or-other" from the States. And, er, I have "The Whole People of God", which is the Sunday School programme. Its a lectionary-based one, so they go through the scriptures and lift up themes and give me a sense of what the kids are doing. So, I read all that stuff. I might read some commentaries, or some books that I dip into. Not always. And er...

P: It always starts with the scriptures.

S: Oh, absolutely.

P: And... strange question, but that's what preaching is about? Preaching is about the scripture?

S: Well, its about, its about, yeah, its proclamation. So, its taking the scripture and, um, bringing that word for the now as it interacts with people's lives. That's why its so important that it goes through my life during the week. Because whatever's deepest in my life is, um, most universal, y'know, I don't mean that personally, but I mean, whenever we hit down to the deepest stuff of ourselves, we're touching into something that's of a universal nature. So, um... so as I listen to people, y'know, watching people, things that people say during the week... its kind of, I'm quite intuitive, this is all happening unconsciously, more than sitting down and analyzing... But you see, the question is, how do you get, what is the Good News?

Like, what is God trying to say to us through these scriptures now? For that you sometimes have to go back and teach what it was about. Since a lot of our people don't have any Biblical background, a lot of its going back and teaching, y'know, like the Exodus and, er, what, er... the whole Exodus stuff, or you tell the story of Jesus this or Jesus that, so there's a kind of teaching element to it, of putting Biblical background into some sort of context for its time and, um, but that's not the main thing. That's an important piece, because otherwise the Bible just becomes a totally irrelevant fairy tale book that doesn't have anything to say to anybody. Um... and, then trying to figure out what's the, where do I experience Good News in that? Y'know, where do I? Like, this one on Sunday, I had to wrestle, as I told mykids, I had to wrestle, wrestle, wrestle with it. It was on the new life, the Spirit of Creation. It was very hard, because I was at the other end. And so it was, the Good News was really to get back to the lifing process rather than just the deathing principle, where I'd spent most of my week. And, um... so its, because, but its not just me, because I'm listening, all the time. When I'm preaching I have in mind certain people, um, two or three people usually, that I've met that week or that I know what their situation is, and, OK, what's the Good News for this person? And, I mean, it changes totally how you preach because we did, for instance, the Good Friday Service... I had just begun working with abused women and that week I had heard the most horrendous stories I ever want to hear, I have heard worse since, mind you, but I didn't know there were worse at the time and, um, then I heard some of, heard the Good Friday Liturgy through this woman's experience and I thought, "My God, what are we doing here, what are we doing here?" and I went to my Good Friday Service, never again, never again. And so, I'm always trying to listen through the eyes and ears, as much as I can put myself in the experience of another person. I hear so many stories and the, sort of, one of the jobs of being a minister is being a story-keeper of the congregation, keeping and not telling. But, I get the privilege of, y'know, kind of the mythic dimension of it, the kind of epic, not epic, the, um, archetypal, I guess. I'm just constantly being inundated with people's stories. And so, that is a wonderful... resource for preaching. Because if I can't speak to those people, it doesn't speak to the person who's just lost his wife, or to the guy who's just found out he's got AIDS or to the woman who's trying to decide if she should leave her husband, um, then what have I got to say to anyone? So that's what I'm always trying to do, is to make that link, make that connection between what's really going on in people's lives and what that scripture's saying. But it all starts with the scripture... Sometimes the scripture is so horrendous I won't use it. I get absolutely nothing out of it.

P: Just as a... you use a lectionary. Not all United Churches do. So that's a choice on...

S: Its a discipline.

P: Your personal choice?

S: The first year I was here, I pigged out on all my own stuff. I figured I needed a year to just be a glutton on all my own themes. So I did that and, er, did a whole series on "called to Be", a whole series on "Images of God", did series...

P: Yeah, that seems to be the more traditional pattern...

S: Less and less. More and more are going to the Lectionary. Partly because of the "Whole People of God" curriculum. Partly because the United Church is rediscovering its liturgical roots. Sometimes it gets a little bit nauseating, but it, y'know, but... Because it doesn't have the same, sometimes we're a bit funny. Anyway...

P: But you preach all over the shop. I've heard you preach on the first reading, I've heard you preach on the psalm... so, I mean, as far as you're concerned its all, you don't feel an obligation to address the gospel text.

S: No, I preach what I find.

P: Just one other little thing. When people stand to do the first and second readings, they introduce them. Who writes that introduction?

S: Usually I do.

P: That's a decision to enable people to understand the readings better.

S: Yeah.

P: OK. You talked about preaching in general and I really appreciate what you've said. Can I ask you about, give you a couple of examples, mainly in terms of sermons that you've preached that I've experienced. And ask you... a couple of them really stuck in my mind. Do you remember the one you preached on Remembrance Day?

S: Do I ever (LAUGHS). Do I ever.

P: I think its possibly the first one I recorded. I mean, I was absolutely stunned... Um... what were you trying to do when you did that?... Let me just remind you of what you actually did do.

S: Yeah.

P: Because, you, you, you produced this... compelling, er, imaginative picture that people were... forced, called right into, of imagining, experiencing being a member... you said what would it be like if you were sitting here and I was the preacher and I said that, er, we've just heard that so-and-so has died in action, what would you feel if you knew that his fiancée was sitting over there? That's what you did.

S: Yeah.

P: What were you attempting there? What was...

S: We have had a history in this church around Remembrance Day that is... its ironic, its where the most conflict in this church happens, and we do ---- on gays and lesbians and there wasn't as much conflict around that as there's been around Remembrance Day, flags and issues around military and things like that. Um, and last year we had, I thought, we had really tried very hard to address, to ensure that the people that'd got, we've got both ends of the spectrum here, 80% of the congregation for whom Remembrance Day and the World Wars is not high on the hit parade and they would be people who would be more likely to be at a peace march than (P: 80%?)... 60 to 80, its very high. I've got a small, quite small group of people - it doesn't all go by age - some of the older people would be people who would be in that camp. I've got a small group of people for whom its a very, very key, important day and for them, the people that have died are a very much, they're up and walking around inside them that day. And, I can have some experience of that, because every December 6th is that for me. December 6th is my Remembrance Day. December 6th, I go through a, all my ghosts are up walking that day, so I have some, my own personal experience of what that might have been like and I was really trying very hard to... make... I was trying to make them feel that their stories and their experiences mattered and to do that, um, without losing my own integrity, of my stand around war and not to try to justify the role of war, the World Wars were a good thing, so it was a real challenge to, um, to, um, I was trying to be very pastoral, to the people who, for whom this was a very important and I was, it was a real reaching out to make them feel validated and heard and included because if we believe in an inclusive congregation, then that doesn't, then I have... then that doesn't just mean my end of the spectrum. Y'know, that means the more conservative end and they're very important and I don't want to lose them, because none of them are, I mean, they're all good, I mean, I don't have, there's nobody on that side that I wouldn't want here, they're really good people and who do I have the right to say who belongs in this church? But, um, so I was really trying pastorally to reach out to them and at the same time trying to do something that would allow... it was...

the folks in the congregation who... don't take that stuff seriously, who are down on that kind of stuff, to try to give them a way of entering it in such a way that it could become more real for them, so that they would have more compassion and more understanding for where the other people were coming from... as well as preach a sermon about peace (LAUGHS). So, I was, I thought I told you, I was skating on a razor's edge that day. That was the most tense sermon I've preached for years in this congregation. I felt under the most pressure, I agonized, agonized, agonized over it... and it worked.

P: You perceived it to work or...?

S: Oh yes. Well, it worked and also, everyone of those people - and they were all men - for whom that was a big, big, issue, everyone of them made a special point of either speaking to me afterwards or calling up the next day, or, to tell me how much they really appreciated and to thank me for it.

P: And that's not a unique situation - you get feed-back from your...

S: Yeah. But not from them usually. It was really... I needed to hear from those people how they had reacted to it. And if it had done what I had wanted it to do. And some of them are quite important leaders in the community and I was also very anxious to keep them involved and not to feel disaffected because they have to put up with so much stuff around here that they don't agree with. Um, they don't agree with my politics, that's fine, I don't care. Y'know, so, but, so... and they hang in, so I wanted to, yeah, it was a validating I don't know, that was what I was trying to do.

P: Another one, if I may? Again, another one that I was stunned by, but in a different way, perhaps. I think it was First in Advent, the Annunciation, being pregnant? giving birth? What were you trying to do there?

S: ... what was I trying to do? I felt, pregnancy's a really important image for me, obviously from my own experience and, um, I was trying to make sure that those who, men and, I was trying to make sure that pregnancy was seen as, spiritual pregnancy, was seen as something that didn't exclude men, so that it was for everybody. And, er, trying to, er, set that as an image, I was trying to encourage people... to let the Spirit enseed them. Yeah, I guess, yeah, to pay attention to where the Spirit was impregnating them where they were...

P: And the way you did it, by the use of a kind of guided imagery technique, lots of empty spaces, pauses, questions, now that's um...

S: That's a more of a feminist, that's where my feminism would come in, as a woman today.

P: Is that a preaching technique that you use... frequently or is it a...?

S: Not particularly frequently, I'd probably use it four times a year, maybe.

P: There are certain subjects, topics...

S: Yeah, that it lends itself to, but I lead a Guided Imagery Meditation Group every Sunday night, so I do that sort of thing with the scripture.

P: And so, its something that the congregation is, may be familiar with?

S: Yeah. Some people in the congregation. I work at a much deeper level on a Sunday night, but I do that with the scripture on two levels every week. At the preaching level, if I'm preaching a regular sermon, at that kind of talking, or, yeah, at that kind of conscious level, I suppose, and also working with some of the images at an unconscious level as well, at night. Yeah, I guess the other thing is that, for me, preaching isn't just preaching. Its how to lift up the word and that's not always best done by me talking at people. Sometimes that might be done by drama. So for me, preaching isn't limited to preaching. For me, its the exposition, the lifting up of the word. So, how does one do that? What's the best way, in this congregation we're getting a lot more open to thinking of other options. And I mean, sometimes people do dialogues, y'know? Just that one traditional way where the minister stands up and talks at people isn't the only way, in fact I seem to be doing less of that.

P: Now, its almost the same question again, but... when you, you've talked about... this is starting with the scripture and being, the whole business is making it... relate to people's present life experiences... Now, when you preach a sermon to this congregation, there is a didactic element. This is the scripture, this is what it says, this is what it means, this is the circumstance that it refers to, we are talking about the Exile, the Exile happened in 587BC, whatever, there's that, its not the major, but there is this didactic... (S: Yeah) and then there's this, this whole set of processes whereby the scripture is, is presented to... I'm asking you what you think from the other side, from the congregation's point of view... what do you hope for them, when you preach? What do you hope that they, that they, that preaching achieves for them, or allows them to achieve?

S: I have quite a high theology of Word, I think. I think the word becomes Word when... when it, capital W, when it, er, lives, when it comes alive, when it becomes enfleshed, when it becomes real for somebody. So that I can read a scripture 25 times and I'm reading words with a little weeny "w" and then someday, a big "W" will come and it will be something like, you know, it will be like something that will go right through me and it'll touch some deep place, not always feelings, it can touch lots of different, it'll be somewhere. It'll touch me in some way that changes me. That changes in the way I see things, y'know, whatever. Somehow it comes alive in a way that I didn't hear it before, or God becomes more real for me. And I have a sense of that. And so, that's what I hope happens. So that, I hope that I'm a vehicle and I guess that I see myself as a channel in a way. The best work that I do is when I'm out of the way, that my ego is out of the way. That... that whatever God's doing with me, um, is able to get through, so that, and if that and when that's happening, its as if I'm not even there, I mean, I'm there and my personality, I'm not gone, but I'm not the same and, um, something's going on, something bigger and I can feel an energy and it isn't always certainly isn't always. But, um, and people, a lot of people can feel it and something's really happening and its not the same thing, like, it meets people wherever they are and so somebody's going through one thing and it hits them there. Like, I don't want them to come out all thinking like me. That would be real dull. Um. But hopefully, something I say will be a vehicle through which this Word with a capital "W" can unlock something in them and, er, help them on the journey, give them something that'll make them more alive spiritually, give them more courage, more hope, more encouragement for the week, more capacity to keep slogging when they feel like they're, why bother? ... Worship for this congregation as I've never experienced it in another congregation is literally a life-line. And that's both for professional people who in their work are doing professional, may be they're doing NGO or something and doing incredible things, y'know, they get so exhausted and start to lose hope. Where do you find the spiritual renewal to keep going? How do you unless you keep the vision alive, um, you could be working, working, working and just get drained and so even people with the very best of intentions find that unless they keep alive the visions. I hope that this church and this congregation and the worship helps to keep alive the vision of it, of why people are doing what they're doing and, um, help them to feel that they're not alone, that there's a community of support and love and common sense of vision and that, to keep on keeping on. Its a lot of our job in this congregation is ministering to people who, its a spiritual gas-tank for people to come back to. Not just the sermons, but the community.

P: ... Um, last question. Actually, its a question from the questionnaire, but you don't have to do the multiple choice. Somewhere in the questionnaire, I ask people to complete the sentence "The heart of Christianity is..." In a sentence, or more, how would you answer it? You could preach a sermon on it. You could preach a series of sermons on it.

S: Um. The heart of Christianity is being in touch with God's Spirit... and, um... acting... How's that?

P: Very impressive. Its one sentence, too.

S: Its one sentence. Do you want to know what my gospel is? Two words: God is. I think that's what Jesus was saying, too.

[END TAPE]

INTERVIEW WITH ALLEN CHURCHILL

Interview with Alan Churchill Jan. 26th 1994

P: If you don't mind, I'd like to begin with a series of personal questions. First of all how old are you?

A: 58.

P: And you're married?

A: Yes.

P: Children?

A: Three children.

P: They must be...

A: Grown children. 32, twenty... eight and 22.

P: How long have you been a minister?

A: I was ordained in 1964.

P: So, 30 years.

A: 30 years... but then I did my post-graduate work at Oxford... for, for those first four years of that... so 26 years active.

P: Right. And so how long have you been at this particular...

A: Church. Almost 10 years. Well, in August, 1st of August, I will have been here 10 years.

P: And before that.

A: I was 5 years in Hamilton, in St. Giles United Church there. And before that I was 8 years in St. Andrew's United Church in Chatham, Ontario. Prior to that I was for 3 years on a 4 point pastoral charge in Southern Manitoba in a place called Cartwright.

P: And where do you come from originally?

A: Just up on the other side of Perth in Lanark County. 55 miles away from here.

P: So, you're local, relatively local.

A: Yes.

P: Um, so, well, um, you must have been in your, um... late 20s when you were ordained...

A: I was 29.

P: Right, so, um, how long was the period of preparation?

A: The initial period was 6 years. Three years to do a general B.A. degree, majoring in Classical Greek and Hebrew, Philosophy and History mainly. And then 3 years doing a Bachelor of Divinity at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto.

P: So you have not, um, this was not a career change. You've always been a minister.

A: No. I was, for 5 years, a constable in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

P: So when, you must have been quite young when you became a constable.

A: I went in at the earliest year I could, at the age of 18. I'd just turned 18. I'd passed my entrance exam when I was 17. Finished High School, Grade 13. And then in early October of 1953 I was called to Ottawa to be sworn in and, er, did two stints of training, one in Vancouver and one in Regina and then did over 4 years of general police duties in Manitoba.

P: And... you enjoyed that?

A: Oh, loved it. I intended to make that my career, 'til God called me out of it. I didn't volunteer to come out of it.

P: Yeah, now, I want to talk about that... but before we get into that, can I ask you... Can I ask you a little bit about your early background, family? You said you come from Perth. That's, as I learned from CBC radio, that's the Ottawa Valley, so, um...

A: Yeah, there's a debate about whether Perth is in the Ottawa Valley or beyond the scope of the Ottawa Valley.

P: Yeah. So, um, that's a substantial community, but, um...

A: I don't come from the town, I come from the country. I'm a rural boy. My father was a carpenter, my mother was a school teacher. She was the only teacher I had in Public School.

P: So it was a rural school, one room.

A: Rural school, one or two room school. And then I went to Perth Collegiate. For five years there.

P: So, now, was your father in, um, business for himself?

A: He was a carpenter. He built houses. And cottages. And, he was really a jack-of-all-trades. Um, he operated a planing mill. He had, er, built windows and doors. He had a... he was a joiner, in other words. And, er, he was a bricklayer, he made brick. Er, we had a brick-making machine. And, er, he was also a very good mechanic. And used to fix cars for people as well.

P: Um, so growing up in rural Ontario, what were your kind of, ambitions or life-expectations? You went to High School, you graduated from High School. You went into the Police Force. Um, that's an ambition you'd had for some time or it was just happenstance or just a good idea at the time or...

A: Yes... I'm not sure I had any deep convictions about what I wanted out of life. I had a few deep convictions about life but that was slightly different. I had convictions about the context of life. For example I believed, always, very strongly, in God. I can never remember a time when I didn't... But God in my early days seemed to be rather distant. There, but somewhat distant... Um, and I can never remember not believing in the risen Christ... that was with me...

P: You were a church goer as a...

A: Yeah, my mother took me to church. My father was the stronger believer but he never went to church. He taught me scripture, a little bit about the scriptures.

P: Which church was this?

A: United Church. Always United Church, I never was in any...

P: Your father, it's stupid to ask for a non-church attender, but would he have described himself as...

A: As a Christian.

P: As a Christian.

A: Oh yeah.

P: Would he have given himself a denominational label?

A: Yeah, probably he would have called himself a displaced Methodist... the Methodist Church having disappeared when... almost all other Methodists came into Union with 2/3rds of the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists in 1925. Er, my... yeah, my father had a thing about one particular Presbyterian elder that he didn't like in the community. The Churchill's being somewhat stubborn about these matters and...

P: He had been a church goer in...

A: In the Methodist Church he was, yes. And he liked a good hot gospel too. He didn't like mincing about with the Word of God.

P: So how would you have described his, er... his faith? In, you'll understand that this is, possibly, convenient short-hand. Would you describe him as an Evangelical, or a fundamentalist? Liberal? How?

A: Oh, he was probably a practical fundamentalist. That is, he believed in God, there was no equivocation about that. He believed in Jesus who is both divine and human. He believed in the necessity... he believed in the reality of sin, he believed in the necessity of atonement. Um, I suspect he believed in the bodily resurrection and a physical second coming. He also believed in the importance of

loving God and loving your neighbour and being useful. He wasn't a theologian. He wasn't a man with great intellectual capacity. Er, he certainly believed the Bible in a very straight-forward way.

P: And he was familiar with it.

A: Oh yes. He was the one who taught me Bible stories. He was a great spinner of yarns and when he wasn't spinning yarns he was telling me stories from the Bible.

P: Your mother?

A: My mother was a traditional Christian but only became a convinced Christian later in life through a decision she made at a Billy Graham Rally in Toronto in the 1950s when she was much older but she was the traditional church-goer and she was the one that took me to church.

P: And how would you... the United Church that you attended as a youth, how would you describe that, again, um, in these label terms? Evangelical, fundamentalist... traditional... liberal?

A: Well, this was a rural community... so there was very little that was liberal [LAUGHS] except, sort of, "live and let live". That was liberal. Um... certainly not all philosophical ideas... or even... ideas in general would be considered to be good. I mean many would be considered to be frivolous because they were, you couldn't apply them. And that didn't matter whether you were talking about a new idea in agriculture or, er, which is what most of the people were concerned about, or whether it had to do with the raising of children which was normally taken in a very matter of fact way. And books on child-rearing were not read and probably were considered suspect. Um. It was your typical rural attitude and atmosphere and, um, I remember going to what we call the Farm Forums which were held, I think, on Monday evenings at various people's places in the community where we would go and listen to a talk on the radio on agriculture and then have a discussion about it and this is the way that the people, the agricultural people learned new things, er, and so they were open in that sense to being taught but they were always somewhat suspicious about higher education. They were certainly open to it but they were not, did not want to be gullible. And er, they knew pretty well the things that worked and they would probably err on the side of tradition or what worked, or the past as we might call it, rather than pursue new-fangled ideas.

P: And their religion was comparable?

A: Yeah, their religion was that way and if it didn't work it was no good. Now, just like a buggy-whip had to work or it was no good, or a tractor wheel had to work or it was no good, a cow had to produce milk and lots of it or it was no good, a chicken had to lay eggs or it was destined for the pot... so it was typical rural Ontario... So I would say that the Church, the attitude would have been traditional and if you had asked people were there such creatures as Adam and Eve or was that a story, they probably would have opted for Adam and Eve. They wouldn't have... they wouldn't probably, most of them wouldn't have heard of the theory of Darwinism or evolution. Um. They... and the ministers didn't force them on that issue. The ministers probably kept their own counsel if they were taught that in Divinity schools and I assume they were, at least from the turn of the century. So the ministers were thoughtful and they didn't want to upset the apple-cart and they just wanted to see the people at prayer on Sunday morning, er, and at any other time. There was not a great emphasis on Bible study. One was expected to study the Bible on one's own. Prayer was certainly believed in. God was very real. None of them would have made great theologians, but God was real.

P: Now, as a mature man... you give me the impression of looking back on this life and your experience of it, obviously you evaluate it, but I think you look

back with affection. You look back on it positively.

A: Oh I do. These were kind people. What hurt one member of the community hurt the whole community. There was a sense of community there that we just, I think one would travel a great distance to find today. Maybe in some commune you would find a variation on it but this wasn't a commune. This wasn't intentional. Nobody set out to create this kind of community but they were certainly very happy that they had this kind of community. Er, I remember when the, when a fellow student of mine, a young boy from the country school drowned in ---- Lake, just a few miles away, at a picnic, the whole community was extremely sad and felt for the family. None of them expressed, at least I would be doubtful if many of them expressed their sympathy to the family in... in conversation, a few would've, I mean they would just "We're sorry" or "We're terribly sorry" or something like that, but it was just this quiet presence of the people and they wouldn't intrude on the people's grief. On the other hand they would want the family to know that they cared and they cared deeply. It was really, when one compares the kind of society we have now, when every person, or many seem to be out for themselves and community doesn't matter and we find community experiments breaking down because people don't know how to reach across, um, to other people and live together and work together and... um, and finding that very difficult, they didn't find that difficult or if they did they certainly didn't give the impression of it. Er. They worked together. I mean they were together on the corn-cuttings and the thrashings and Church on Sunday and ball games and picnics down by the lake. And in trouble they rallied round. They were very close knit. That didn't mean they weren't opinionated. They were that. And I remember one occasion which was a blight on that, which I think I should mention because I don't want to give you the impression that this was totally idyllic or a kind of carbon copy of Eden or something like that. I remember once when a new family moved into the community and they were not related to anybody in the community and, um, I think the adults got along perfectly well but we, as children in the local school, did not take kindly to these newcomers coming in. We, whether it was because we were afraid or... of something that was new, or what it was, I really don't know, but I remember that we treated them rather abominably. I mean, they got into more fights than anyone else did in the school yard, for example and we would call them names and so on. And I look back on that now with chagrin. And some measure of guilt. We behaved badly. We did not behave as Christians and we should have known better. But it was sort of typical at that time. But here we are again, you know, er, 50 years later and, er, now we kill people. Then at least we didn't do that, we just fought with them and drew a bit of blood. That was about all, you know, created the odd bloody nose but that was about it. But generally speaking, I would say it was a marvellous time. I wish my children had the experience of living in that kind of community. Close-knit communities I think are by definition limiting communities because they don't allow... not everybody breaks out and discovers other things that are true about the world. And, so I guess what I'm saying is...

P: Is that true of you? Did you feel that when you left home you, and entered the police force, it was in a sense a breaking out?

A: Oh yeah. Yes. And I would have to say it was a form of liberation, there's no doubt about that. But I didn't see that as somehow being in contradiction to the other. I saw it as a kind of necessary part of growth... and Chapter One would have been the experience, the rural experience and Chapter Two, in the Book of Life, would have been my experience in the RCMP. And I remember whereas a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant... for whom about the only civilized people were the English, Irish and Scots and we sometimes wondered about the Irish but, um, I

remember meeting Germans. My wife is a German, as a matter of fact a German Mennonite. And she, having lived with her for 35 years, er, has brought tremendous growth and broadening effect and deepening effect upon my life. And I met Canadian Indians for the first time. My Dad knew some of the Sharbot Tribe up at Sharbot Lake and he used to tell me about them and so I felt that I had stories about them but its one thing to have stories about a people, its another thing to meet the people themselves. And so I met native Indians and I met Icelanders and, er, Polish and Ukranian people. And, er, French Canadians mainly in the Police force itself but of course, part of the citizenry. Er, plus I also got to live in cities. And, consequently I've lived more in cities in my 58 years than I've lived in the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy. And, and I always identify myself as a rural person and I'm sure it drives some of my congregation, um, into desperation when I start reminiscing about the glories of my rural, rustic rural life and, um, I still tend to think in rural terms. I'm very close to nature. Very close to animals. Love horses and cattle and, er... dog, things like that.

P: Can I, I want to now, you'd become a police officer. Can I ask you now, can you talk about the processes or the circumstances in which you experienced a call to ministry and how that developed and then, also, the process of becoming a minister?

A: Yeah, I think that has to be understood in two separate but interrelated ways. First of all, um, its important to say that I became a conscious and conscientious Christian fairly early in the 5 years I was in the police force. Let's say I was in about year 2. Um, when I was about 20, maybe 21, somewhere in there. My, my... my faith then became more personal and, I believe had to become more personal. It was a traditional faith up until then, clearly defined in some areas but with gaping holes in other areas. For example, one of, I remember one of the major problems I had to work out in my own life, sort of philosophically, or spiritually, call it what you will, was what really is human nature? And having left this rather idyllic, rural background where most things that happened were good, I was suddenly thrust both by the nature of my work in the police force and into the areas of society where the police force normally operates, to discover that human nature can be fairly beastly from time to time. And I was, to put it simply, given authority and instructions that my task was to protect one part of society from another part of society. And that seemed fairly simple to me at first but then became more complex, um, when you drive an unmarked police car up and down the back alleys of, say, Winnipeg or a small town like Selkirk, Manitoba or a village, or municipal road, you see some of the pillars of society doing things that they really oughtn't to do and, but what they were doing was overlooked unless they became fairly blatant or if they became violent and, um, most of the things they were doing wrong they knew how to cover, they knew how to cover their tracks. The poor criminal doesn't know how to cover his tracks very well. Most of the time. And, um, so that was one thing, was the existence of both good and evil now which was a philosophical and a practical problem that faced me. And then the second question was, um, why it was that there was good in the lives of those people who were considered to be evil and why there was evil in the lives of those people who were considered by society to be good. And I couldn't quite make out why it was that human nature should be that way and it certainly ran counter to, to the task I was, all policemen are given, to protect the people on this side of the tracks from the people on the other side of the tracks. So I began to talk about this with some of my friends and I don't think they got the point. They didn't seem to be overly concerned about this, other policemen. And, er, maybe they, they were probably wiser than I was and I was just going through this process of exploration of what, to me,

was a considerable problem and I remember discussing this with preachers and priests and Christians and non-Christians and so on and not being conscious of any particular answers given to me and so I finally decided that I'd better start reading the Bible, that my parents had very wisely put into my suitcase when I left home. I had been worshipping in churches all this time but was not a Bible reader. I mean, I'd read parts of the Bible, the gospels and so on, but, and the Psalms, but I, there was much of the Bible I knew nothing about and, so I began to read the Bible, I read the gospels, didn't get any answers, that I could detect, to my questions, the Acts of the Apostles, read that, and it was interesting, the history of the Early Church and so on and the need to preach the gospel, but it didn't deal with the particular dilemma. I got to Paul's Letter to the Romans, the first of Paul's letters and the largest of them and maybe the most all-encompassing, theologically and, er, I got, just the first three chapters were enough to blow my mind away because here's Paul saying on the one hand simply by looking at creation you know that God is and that he is powerful...

P: Can I just, sorry to interrupt, but I can't resist this one. [A: Yeah.] You're a young man, 19, 20. You have a high school education and I suspect, um, it was a King James Version, was it? [A: Yes it was] That's quite an intellectual feat to have read and understood the first few chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans. A: Well, I'm not sure I understood it all, but I certainly saw some things. Things began to leap off the page at me and, um, oh I quite agree, there are some things in Paul now, especially the Pauline epistles, try to read them in the King James Version and it's virtually impossible. I find it difficult, er, consequently I was educated in the Revised Standard Version and in our own church here at the Dominion Chalmers we use the New International Version, but I've gone back to the New King James Version which is a kind of an update of the old more resonant, more rhetorical style of English. Er, I, there are reasons for doing that. Anyway, that jumped out at me, but also there was a sense now that God who was not only distant but he was transcendent and distant could also come closer. In other words, the personality of God began to impress himself upon me, because in the first couple or 3 chapters of Romans, Paul said it by faith in this living God that we are put into right relationship with him, I mean the familiar text of Romans 1:17, Luther's famous text. Which led to his conversion. Well, that didn't lead to my conversion but it prepared for my conversion which came as I read in the 3rd chapter, um, so God who was distant began to come closer to me. I got, somehow got this sense of it and it was testified to in scripture and I happened to feel it in my own bones. I don't know how else to describe it. And then this dilemma of human nature seemed to be answered in the 23rd verse of Romans 3 where St. Paul said in those famous words "All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God". And the penny dropped and the light went on and I suddenly said "Ah ha, this is, has got to be it." We're all made for the glory of God which must mean that we're all made to stand in his presence and be in some kind of good relationship with him but all of us, somehow, have shaken our fist in his face and said well, if you don't mind, Lord, I'll try it my way first. And so we've sinned, we've turned our back on him. And for some reason that seemed to answer the question of why there was evil in good men and why there was goodness in evil men and it just depended more or less on what you decided to do with your life and partly because of circumstances in one's life. I mean I knew a little sociology and a little psychology, not much, but a little. But, but I was never tempted to believe anything other than we got what we deserved, in other words we were in charge of our lives under God. And that was something that I relate very strongly to the first chapter that we talked about a few minutes ago in rural Ontario; you learned that the buck stops here. You, you're accountable. If you do something

wrong, you pay for it. If you do something right, you may or may not be rewarded but at least you have the benefit of knowing that it's up to you to look at life in the proper way. So, reading Romans 3:23 gave me this sense of understanding for the first time this dilemma of human nature and then, of course, the automatic dilemma that answer gave, because answers always lead to more questions, well then, what must we do to be saved, the whole lot of us, police force, criminals, everybody? And the next few verses, 24 and 25, as St. Paul says, well, given the fact that we're all sinners God has provided the atonement that we need in Jesus and he's died for us and he's the righteous one and he loves us enough to do that and it's all by grace and as this began to percolate through my mind and my heart, I said this is it and so some of the holes in my theology... rather incomplete as it was, began to be filled up and God who was transcendent came near, the dilemma of human nature, I began to see what the solution to that, to my understanding of that was, the question of why Christ had to die on a cross, which had always been a mystery to me, why the greatest life ever lived had to perish on a wretched cross. I could never figure that out and it always seemed to me to be terribly unjust, even as a young boy I remember that, I mean this is an absolutely ridiculous thing for Jesus to have died on a cross, um, and, um, but now I saw why, that it was for the salvation of the world and more importantly for my salvation. Well over a period of 6,7,8,9 months, that just began to resonate within me and I became a conscious and a conscientious Christian. Then I knew why I ought to worship. Then I knew why I needed Christ. Then I knew why I should pray. And the whole Christian perspective opened up to me. Two years later, given the fact that in these two years immediately following my conversion, or one of my conversions, I don't know how many I've had, that was certainly one, I take it as the main one, because the other, I sort of imbibed or developed by a form of osmosis or something. I don't know where it came from. Maybe I got it with my mother's milk, who knows, but, um, next two years, I continued working very happily as policeman and was on a good career track and, um, never thought of doing anything other than being a policeman and never thought, never dreamed that I had any talents or abilities to go into the ministry. Um, so now I have to tell you the second, major point here which led me to the ministry. The safe-blowers had been working out of Winnipeg, um, breaking into the Manager's Office in the typical western, prairie grain elevator where the safe was and using a little nitro-glycerine on the door and blowing that and getting the grain coupons which were a kind of blank cheques which the managers used and filled out for the farmers as they brought in their wheat and their barley and their flax and so on. They took it to the bank and cashed it. And in those days, it was assumed that every farmer was an honest farmer. And so the crooks would blow the safe, get these coupons, forge and utter them and the banks wouldn't ask for very much identification and they got away with 100s of 1000s of dollars. Our task as policemen was to apprehend them, catch them in the act. Well, we plotted, plotted on a map where they were going to hit next. We knew where they were going to hit next. We just didn't know when. So, we used to have to go out in the middle of the night and lie in the bushes and the willows across from these grain elevators waiting for these guys to show up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning to break in and blow the safe and we would rush them and nab them. Arrest them. So leading up to this, I was alone in the single men's quarters. My buddy, another single person was off visiting his girl friend in the town of Selkirk. This was in a little town in north-eastern Manitoba called Lac du Bonnet or Lac du Bonny in the local vernacular and I was waiting for the corporal who was in charge of the detachment to come in and pick me up and we'd go out in the car to set up our observation post. I was dressed in britches and boots and spurs

and side-arm and stetson and everything, lying on my bunk, just a few minutes before midnight. Lights were all off, I was just resting. It was going to be a long cold night. Thinking about everything, thinking about nothing. Maybe thinking about the night's work that was ahead or what kind of people that were that would do this kind of thing or what other, saner people might be doing this night and why I had to do it and maybe feeling a little sorry for myself and yet there was always excitement in it, there was always something new happening every day, it was a marvellous life. And, er, maybe thinking about the juvenile delinquency problem that we had, and we had a fairly severe juvenile delinquency problem, we had no drugs, we certainly had an alcohol problem at that time; the main drug scene was in Winnipeg. And the kids were having difficulties and we did everything we could to befriend the kids and there's no point in locking them up and treating them like criminals, what they needed was a little friendship and a little help and so we started... er, groups and we started a water-ski club that still sends competitors to the Canadian Water Ski Championships and that's, you see, 40 years ago we started that. I used to teach them a bit of boxing and some of the Public Health Nurses - which is where I met my wife, she was a Public Health Nurse - used to work with the girls and counsel them and befriend them and that was the kind of work we did and so I may have been thinking about some of them, I'm not sure, and all of a sudden a voice spoke to me. Um, I suspect that if you had been there you wouldn't have heard a voice, but I sure heard a voice, on the inside of my head and the voice spoke only one sentence: "Allen, I want you to leave the police force... I want you to take your Bible and I want you to preach the Gospel." Well, I've not been the kind of person who's heard many voices. As a matter of fact, I've never heard another voice since then and I certainly hadn't heard one before and I thought this was the most peculiar thing and so I flipped on the light. I thought maybe my buddy had returned from seeing his girlfriend and was playing a trick on me or something. He may have thought I should have been a preacher instead of a policeman, I don't know, but, er... I never considered ever being a preacher. It had never entered my mind. So, I thought maybe my mind was playing tricks. I thought maybe I was praying too much, or... This was strange behaviour. This was not the kind of behaviour that someone who grew up in Bathurst Township, Manitoba would manifest because nobody saw voices or dreamed dreams or saw angels or heard direct communications from God. We heard it from the preacher on Sunday and we got it from reading the Bible. That's where we heard it, it was very practical. It wasn't mysterious or mystical like this. And so, we went out on a night patrol and then on Monday I went into Winnipeg and saw a preacher there of the church that I belonged to or where my membership was and I ran this by him to get some verification one way or the other and he said "Well, I've never had an experience like this, but you seem fairly sound and sane, I'd recommend that you follow the voice and you start preparing for the ministry". I said "Thank you very much, I'd like a second opinion." Which made him somewhat unhappy that I didn't take his word for it and he said "Fine, we'll get 6 of the elders of the church, some professors of the University of Manitoba and, er, some hard-nosed businessmen, you won't put anything over on them, you tell them the story, I won't tell them, see what they say." So the same thing happened. The result of which was that I found myself within 5 or 6 or 7 months, finishing up my 5 years in the RCMP and heading off to Divinity School. But that is how my call to the ministry came. It was a voice on the inside of my head.

P: When you heard the voice, you wondered whether it was , first of all someone playing a trick on you and then whether it was yourself playing a trick on you, er...

A: I was quite aware that this was uncommon. I had never heard this kind of thing before. The suggestion seemed to me to run counter to everything I was equipped to do and that I wanted to do and where I was, which was a very happy situation.

P: So there was a, and that's reflected in your reaction to the minister in town that there was a certain resistance on your part (A: Oh yeah). You would have preferred it if he had said "You've been working too hard, Allen, you need a rest." You would have been happy with that (A: Sure) How long did it take you to, um, overcome that resistance and then become resigned or eventually become enthused about it?

A: Oh well, I've always been very matter of fact about things. Again, that's the way you are in the country. Certainly in Bathurst Township and, er, once I had become satisfied and thought this thing through and it was a matter of maybe a month, maybe two months at the most. And having received confirmation from people and having been assured that, er, by them that I seemed relatively sane, everything pointed to the fact that this was an authentic voice from God and I would say now that if I heard voices all the time, then I would be more inclined to be skeptical. But because my desires ran counter to this, because I was happy in the police force... and didn't know what was ahead of me in the ministry and for that I am very thankful, for being a minister is far harder than being a policeman, well I'm not sure today, but then it was. Um, and getting the confirmation from them and now having that confirmed in certain other ways in terms of things I've been able to do such as graduate work and the kind of effectiveness I've been able to have at least to some small degree, er, I think that has confirmed that. But it's not something I, in the first place I think it's not, one should not enter the ministry unless one does have a call from God. I don't mean to say that it always has to be like that, a kind of Damascus Road experience or something like St. Paul had. And I'm not saying that it has to be a voice in the night... so clearly as I had it. But I certainly think there needs to be a clear understanding that a person is... definitely being called by God before one enters into it. On the other hand, I think one should always resist that kind of call because, well first of all because all the great prophets and leaders resisted. Moses said Lord don't ask me to lead Israel for I am heavy of tongue and these are a rebellious lot and I won't do a very good job, um. Paul resisted, I'm sure. And er, I think it's always best to resist these things. One shouldn't preach the gospel lightly. But if you are meant to preach the gospel, then go and preach it and preach it fearlessly. And that's something I've always tried to do. And that has been confirmed. In the United Church of Canada because... I guess a kind of reputation some would say I have within the United Church of Canada as being very faithful to the United Church of Canada as an idea and as an ideal but willing to speak out on controversial issues that some people would just as soon nobody said anything about and just let the thing evolve as it will. I feel strongly about things but I've never been curtailed and I've always been happy and I've always received support. Not always agreement but always received support. And I've always been happy in my ministry, not always satisfied. If I can make a distinction between being happy and being satisfied. Y'know there's always so much... more to be done. And I just came from a double-decker Board meeting that we had here. We had so much business last week that we had to have a second meeting last night. And some of the things we need to do here are just major, major things and it's very frustrating when one can't go ahead and manufacture those things, but if you try to manufacture those things, you find yourself running rough-shod over people or maybe the timings wrong or maybe you don't have all the data together or there's some spanner in the works. So there's dissatisfaction that way, but in terms of having

been in the ministry now as I look back, I sense that it was the right thing to do, that the call was authentic. And this is the 3rd chapter or 3rd major part of life.

P: Now, so you initially went to, er, you enrolled in a programme of... um, Divinity College or...

A: Yeah, well, first of all I went to University of Toronto, to Victoria College which is the United Church College in the University of Toronto and did my...

P: So, now, your programme of study was directed by...

A: The United Church of Canada.

P: ... your aim, your goal (A: Yes). You need to do this.

A: Yes, yes. And what ministers often do in preparing for ministry, they go immediately in Arts and take all kinds of religion courses. Which I think is a mistake and which the United Church of Canada then and now also thinks is a mistake. That one needs to be trained first of all in one degree either in Science but preferably in the Arts, in Philosophy, in Languages, in History, in English maybe, in Sociology and Psychology, major secular disciplines and, um, I, that, so consequently that's what I did and it was a good job that I did because that lead me eventually then to do a Master's degree at the University of Western Ontario much later in Greek language and philosophy. And it also helped to prepare the way when I won the Gold Medal and the Travelling Scholarship from Emmanuel College which is the United Church Divinity College in Toronto, er, to go to Oxford and do my D.Phil there in New Testament language, literature and philosophy.

P: OK, there's a whole bunch of things I want to ask you about there. To start with, now, when you first went to, er, U. of T., it was in your mind that you were embarking on the process of preparing for ministry. Were you able to associate with others who were like-minded and who were in this process of doing the same thing?

A: Oh yes. For the next 6 years, both in Arts and Divinity, because you come out what you call "Theologs", or "Pre-theologs", who are in Arts preparing to go to Divinity School and so we had our own little group and we did Bible study and prayer.

P: Right, it was like a peer group.

A: Sure.

P: Um, was there anything at this stage, um, well, both in Arts, the secular disciplines that you pursued and in the theological ones, was there anything formative? Anything, a lecturer, or an author that you read or an approach to the Bible, was there anything that really, that you look back on and say this was a really, er, this was a key experience, this is a key figure, this was someone who shaped my thought or my position on issues or whatever?

A: ... I think the answer to that is no. Both for that degree and the degree, the B.A. degree and the B.D. degree. I would have to say there was no single person that emerged as a professor, as a mentor. There were some people who suggested important things, but none of them became... of fundamental importance to me...

P: And this was also true of people that you were reading? There was no-one that [A: No] grabbed you.

A: Huh, there were a few. I remember for example, but they were basically classics. In the philosophy department, people like John Locke, er, John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, Plato and Aristotle. I mean these were significant figures that I'd never read before. But I loved them and I lapped them up but I didn't consider them to be possessors, or dispensers of prime wisdom. They were important because they provided... a thinker's framework, or at least, no, not a framework: data that one needed to take into account, but the framework was provided by the Biblical revelation itself. And that, I would say, has been true

in all the degrees I've done, whether they were secular degrees and I've done two of those or whether they've been theological degrees and I've done two of those.

P: Right, so there's never been a, I'm thinking of, of...

A: Well, Northrop Frye was at Victoria College at the time.

P: Right. Well, yes, I'm not so much just thinking of people under whose tutelage you had come but authors, I can imagine someone being exposed to the writings of Karl Barth for instance, or Paul Tillich or Carl Jung...

A: Well, that came later in Divinity School, yes there's no question of that. The major influence on me in Divinity School, the B.D. degree, this is the second 3 years, would have been Rudolf Bultmann, who was a kind of bete noir in the, um, New Testament field at the time because he was proceeding to say that we couldn't know very much about Jesus at all except that he lived, he was an, a wandering preacher, rabbi of some kind and that he died on a Roman cross. And so, I remember that the New Testament professor said "Allen, I think its time you started reading Bultmann." I don't know why he recommended Bultmann to me, but I'm glad that he did. And, um, he didn't recommend that anyone else in the class read Bultmann, but he did recommend that I do it. Maybe he thought that I was... in need of something that Bultmann had to offer. Bultmann was one of the two great New Testament minds at the time, the other being C.H. Dodd from Oxford and Cambridge, er, who were poles apart in their estimation of New Testament literature. Both of whom, but pre-eminently Bultmann, had a greater, not directly formative influence but what he did was force me to deal with basic critical questions of the New Testament that I wouldn't otherwise have had to face.

P: So when you read Bultmann, you didn't accept what he said [A: No] but you realized that you had to deal with the problems [A: I had to deal with it] that he presented [A: Of course].

A: Because Bultmann, on the one hand, was an evangelical. Most people don't realize that, Bultmann was an evangelical, but a liberal evangelical who had, for his own reasons, gutted the evangelical message and now had to depend on some kind of... um... I don't want to say ethereal... impact of the gospel, but it came precious close to that. He used to say that the Word of God happened when the preacher mounted the pulpit at 11 o'clock Sunday morning. That's when the Word of God happened. And to try to grasp that is very difficult when you already have known, when you read his "New Testament and Mythology", his essays on that, um, that he has pretty well denuded the gospel story of any of its salient features - the things that would make it the Good News. How then can he say that the Good News happens, or the gospel happens, or the Word of God goes forth at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning when the preacher enters the pulpit and begins to preach? When, if the preacher listens to Professor Bultmann, there doesn't seem to be very much there. So what's he talking about? Its almost a kind of, er, existential... existential... um, running out of words here. Well, certainly an existential impact but it seems so automatic. He's talking in automatic terms here. It almost sounds like a certain kind of old-fashioned Roman Catholicism put into some kind of existential 20th century Lutheran Bultmannian form, and so, he was doing it for the right motive, because he wanted the Gospel to be communicated to the thinking person. One couldn't question his motive.

P: So, now, may I ask you, obviously you saw the, you're still a young man, but you're in training for the ministry [A: I was 26, 27]. You saw the questions, the problems that Bultmann raised for New Testament study, but you also saw that he raised specific questions for a minister [A: Oh yes] and those were both issues that you had to deal with.

A: Academic questions must always feed the gospel as it is proclaimed and as

it is pastored out. And both must serve the purpose of the Biblical testimony or revelation. So I think it is, one of the problems in the church is that the Church is not too academic, but the church isn't academic enough and it doesn't demand enough of its people. And... maybe I overstress that, I don't know. I know some of the people chafe at the bits, they say you expect too much, and so on. And I say, well in today's world, its complex enough that I think every Christian needs to become at least a decent if not a very good amateur theologian. And there's no reason why people can't do that, I mean, nobody, the preacher isn't the smartest person in church on a Sunday morning, usually. I mean, there's somebody else and it could be anyone from a housewife to a professor at a University to someone who's a CEO of some big firm, or just somebody who is accustomed to doing a lot of reading. So why can we not expect the laity to know as much about this as we do? And I think we're failing in our job as preachers if we don't give that to them. Now if they don't want to accept that, of course, they naturally will reject it. But on the other hand, I think we have to encourage them to consider it because they're going to have to meet people in the world who've got all kinds of questions about the faith and its, the lay people are going to have to deal with that in some way. And so they need to be equipped.

P: You're starting to talk about my next heading, so perhaps I can push you in that direction a bit. Can you... I'd like to ask you to speak about ministry. And perhaps you could begin by saying how you would describe ministry in the most general terms, but then could you also say something more specifically about, describe your ministry here. I certainly get the impression that for you preaching is a very central aspect of ministry.

A: Well, the voice that I heard said "Allen, I want you to leave the police force and take up your Bible and preach the gospel"... I've taken that word fairly seriously and stuck with a face-value reading of it. So yes, I would say that if I have been prepared for anything and if I've been called to anything it has been to preach and teach the Word of God... It just so happens that within the United Church of Canada, you get to do many more things than that and those other things are often taken as important or more important than the preaching of the Word. Preaching has not, I think, been taken all that seriously in most mainline denominations in the last 50 years. I know that's a general statement and you would be fair in asking who says that? All I will say is that that is the impression I get from listening to preachers... and from interacting with lay people who have to listen to my preaching. Um, it is also a very difficult thing to preach and to preach well. But I think if we ever learn to preach, its at the end when we're ready to hang up.. our collar and retire and grow petunias. But its like everything else, you learn to raise kids by raising them and by then its probably too late. Or you learn what marriage is by living a marriage. I've been married for 35 years and I feel that I'm just starting to learn what marriage is... Ministry, I guess first of all means to be a servant. It doesn't mean to be a dictator, or a Protestant Pope or anything like that. It means to be a conduit of what God has to say to his people from all time and henceforth, but also now. So there's an historical, there's a prophetic and there's an existential...

[END OF SIDE ONE]

A: I used to define, I'm accustomed to defining things, most things technically first, so, but I'm not sure that's the most important way of doing it but that's what I was trained to do and that's what my head tells me to do, but that's not particularly what God tells me to do. Um, so if I'm to define what a minister is I guess I would tend technically to say what a minister is professionally then

name a whole bunch of things and in the United Church of Canada, a minister is someone who is dedicated to preaching the Word, the administering of the sacraments and pastoral care. But I see that increasingly, simply as the framework, or the three dimensions within which real ministry is carried out and increasingly I've begun to be more simple about it and more Biblical about it. I've become convinced that probably we should not have ordained ministers in the church. Because that ordination has tended to do things, institutionally, that I think may not be all that helpful. It has created classes and it has, um, we talk about a holiness about a minister, behaviour about a minister in one set of terms and behaviour about the lay people in another set of terms. And, er, there tends to be in the Protestant church a standing in awe, or has been at any rate, a standing in awe of the ordained minister as there is in the Roman Catholic church or the Orthodox church of a priest and so on. I really can't find anything in the New Testament that would justify the creation of a different class of Christians and I think probably that, whether we think we've done that or don't think we've done that, I think that is in fact what we've done and I'm not sure that's good. But since we've got it, I don't know, I suppose it would be a major revolution ever to try to get rid of it. The Quakers have got rid of it. The Plymouth Brethren have got rid of it. And some Mennonites have got rid of it but other than that, the majority of churches in the world still retain that. So, that's one thing. You talk, I mean, we can define it professionally. I prefer to define it, ministry, in terms of the Biblical imagery of light and salt and leaven. Or if you like, in terms of incarnation, an incarnational ministry of self-sacrifice, following along the kind of ministry that Jesus did, though ours can never be atoning, it may be pastorally helpful, somehow, while we can't walk in other people's shoes, when they're suffering one way or another, nevertheless we can... be more thoughtful, more engaging, more with them in their need. And I think in terms of preaching, we need to recognize that we probably preach better and more effectively, the more we know the people. I'm never quite sure about that because, sometimes, the more I know some people, the more poorly I preach, because I get put off by their attitudes and then there's an edge that comes to my preaching that I think is not prophetic; there is a prophetic edge that can and probably should most of the time be on our preaching, but there's another kind of edge that comes on and it's a human edge and it's not a helpful edge. It stands between a person and the people who are participating in the preaching event.

P: Can I just interrupt, if I may, for a second? A bizarre question, but who, and I think this has to be specific... who do you minister to or who do you minister with? Um, in more technical language, what group or what kind of people, er, is or are the object of your ministry? How do you define that: the community, the congregation here or does it have wider connotations or... how does it work?

A: Well, there's a good illustration in John Wesley, the founder of the Methodists, he said the world is my parish. Again, I go back to the voice that I heard, which is, I mean I haven't always been totally conscious of that and I never thought long about it on a daily basis or anything like that, but as my ministry has unfolded, it has unfolded in such a way that has kept fairly close, it is lived out, fairly closely the simple straightforward word that I heard that Friday night in Lac du Bonne. "Take up your Bible and go and preach the gospel". It didn't say in the church, but it didn't say not in the church. It didn't say in the world, but it didn't say not in the world. Just wherever you can, preach the word. And so, in that sense, I suppose most of the time is spent encouraging and teaching the saints who are supposed to be the people in the church, but sometimes that's very difficult to tell because I always go back to

the situation of my father and mother. It was my father who was not in the church, who was the saint, in Biblical terms and it was my mother who was in the terms, who wasn't until much later. So, that's another thing. But for example, when I do weddings, most of the weddings I do are for people who are... I may never see again, probably won't see again. A few stay to be part of the congregation. When I do funerals, I will do a funeral for anybody, because it's a compassionate thing to do and it gives me the opportunity to preach the word. Not to the dead but to the living. Not necessarily to the family, though partly to the family, to encourage them. Jesus said "Blessed are those that mourn for they indeed shall be comforted", so maybe I can help them in their mourning. But, also to the other people who themselves must prepare for one of the greatest events that they will experience, namely the experience of dying. And they must be prepared for that as I must be prepared. Er, we didn't get to prepare for being born into the world, too bad. But we get prepared for other things, though not with great care. We need to be prepared better for marriage, we need to be prepared better for being parents, we need to be prepared better as human beings for our own sakes and for the sake of society. In that I would say that the best models are probably the Puritans who ingested their faith and lived their faith with greater conscious integrity and thoroughness, let me say with the emphasis on thoroughness, than maybe just about any other group of Christians in history. Certainly, they are people we ought to consider, I don't want to over-estimate the Puritans. That's not to say there weren't some bad Puritans, but I'm talking about the main thrust of Puritanism, their search for godliness and that wasn't a monastic godliness, it was a worldly godliness, a godliness in the world, that affected their business, their agriculture, their beliefs in education and their views of the arts. Er, they were people that were really renaissance people, but the renaissance, the re-birth of their humanity was always within the context of the Biblical revelation. Anyway, I'm wandering a bit but not entirely in responding to that. Where were we?

P: No, that makes perfect sense. I was asking you about whom do you minister to and you were saying: whomever.

A: Whomever. And I believe we're coming to a period of time when we, again as Wesley was and as George Whitfield was, we may be coming to a period of time when we may, not have to forsake our pulpits in pleasant sanctuaries, but we may have to take to the fields and the street-corners, especially in the Western world. Within about a month I'm going back to Siberia to preach in the prisons, in the Gulags. In churches. To teach business ethics, in a nominally Muslim country. Christian ethics in a nominally Muslim country, invited by the government. Because they know that they can't get a more capitalistic kind of, reasonable capitalistic kind of business going unless people can learn to trust each other. But how can you learn to trust each other? That is part of Christian ethics. In China, in the Third World, the Christian faith is mushrooming as never before, perhaps it may be - and church missiologists and historians are now saying this maybe the century of greatest growth and current, the last decade of this century may be the greatest growth period in the history of the church. But not in Western Europe and not north of the Rio Grande. And especially not in Canada. There's a problem in America. As Billy Graham says, how is it that 60 million Americans claim to be born-again Christians, but we don't see that ethic in the market-place. We see the claims being made, but we need, that's where I think the Puritans provide a marvellous model for that. We've a faith up here or here but it doesn't seem to come through our finger tips very well. Well, anyway, that's a problem. Western Europe and Canada and the United States. Especially in the main-line churches.

P: Again, let me interrupt because I just want to make sure that I clarify

something, or underline it. You seem to be... telling me about, what you conceive your ministry [A: Exactly] to be in specific terms. Initially, you began by speaking of a minister as a conduit by which the eternal Word is made present to a particular historical and social context [A: Uh huh]. And in practical terms, that's what you've just been describing. Teaching and enabling people to live out their Christianity in their everyday, mundane, worldly setting. That's what its about.

A: Yes. In the church, but also in the world. And in Western Europe and Canada and the United States, I believe the church is going through a perilous time in terms of both its understanding of the faith, its motivation and its performance in a variety of ways. And I think God is chastising the church.

P: Would you say that the Western Church has failed in the ministry that you have?

A: Oh yeah. Yeah. And I wouldn't hold myself up as the great liberator or focal point. That would be pure blasphemy. All I'm saying is, this is the way I see it. And... I try to focus on that with some intensity. But I'm only a justified sinner in the process of it.

P: This (a) I can't resist it (b) it is relevant. Can you talk about this from the other side? You've talked about this as a failure of the church, a failure of ministry whereby people are not, again to quote Billy Graham, how is it that 60 million born-again Christians aren't virtuous citizens? Where's... which link fell out of the chain there? Um... can you describe... if people's Christianity is failing to enable or to prompt them to be Christian citizens, what is it enabling them to do? They continue to seek the words of the gospel in a continual attempt, or do they, you see that as a problem, do your congregation, do Christians see that as a problem or do they think that their Christian faith has a different purpose? Have they somehow separated Christianity from, I mean is there a Christianity when I come to church on Sunday and then when I walk out the door I somehow flick the switch? How do you evaluate that or perceive it?

A: Well, there are 2 or 3 factors there. There is such a thing, I believe, as spiritual and moral schizophrenia. Um, we know what's good for us, but we won't take our medicine. And, for example, in our own particular situation, and one has to take into account the work that Reg Bibby has done, in which he has pointed out that if the United Church of Canada continues to be as ineffective as it currently is with those young people between the ages of 18 and 34, then extrapolating from that, and this extrapolation has been done, if we continue to be as ineffective in the future up to the year 2015, the membership of the United Church of Canada will decrease, its currently at roughly 750,000, it will decrease to less than half of what it was at Church Union in 1925, which was 650,000. It will be down to roughly, somewhere between 250,000 and 275,000. Now I know we're talking here statistics and what we really need to know is more than statistics. We need to talk about performance, too. I realize that. But if you believe that you take good care of your automobile and you change the oil with regularity etc. then its going to go many more miles and its going to last that much longer. The point is if you keep your vehicle up, it will last. The issue is performance now determines longevity and the increasing of interest and the bringing in of other souls into the flock so that instead of staying neutral or declining, the figures will keep rough pace with the increase of Canada's population. There does seem to be a connection between what we believe and how we perform. And by performance I mean how we live out our faith. The salvation and sanctification side, both sides of the coin, in the Christian life. On the practical results of that in the church, certainly most of the sociologists of religion are pointing to the fact that the churches that are more intensely engaged in their faith, both in terms of what they believe and how they apply

that in their lives, are the ones that seem to be making the greater marks or the greater strides. They're the ones that have, um, more people out to worship services, more people involved in Bible study, more people engaged in reclamation projects, offering compassion, that kind of thing. And the more you cut people off from their theological roots, or the more you cut them off from sound fellowship, the more you cut them off from loving God with mind and soul and strength, the more deleterious the effects are down the road. Does that answer some of your question?

P: Yes, yes thank you. I want to move along. Can I ask you a few nuts and bolts type questions about preaching and particularly about sermon preparation? How you do it, how long does it take etc? You're preaching a sermon next Sunday. When do you begin to prepare it and how do you do that?

A: 3 to 6 months ago. I preach in series almost always. Right now I'm doing "Questions that Jesus asked". That will probably run up until Lent sometime. I normally start preparing over 6 months in advance. And I'm normally working on several series, thinking them out, seeing how they fit in with the things we're doing in the Church at the moment. Certain things developing in the congregation, for instance. And you can only use reasonable good judgement, pray about it a lot. For instance, this series I'm preaching now, there are probably 60 questions that Jesus asked, other than just mundane questions, serious questions. For example, this Sunday, I'm on #6, a question taken from John 6 where he's talking about the Bread of Life and the disciples are somewhat perplexed. This was about the time when some of his disciples left him, when he was beginning to be less popular. And so Jesus says to them "Does this offend you?" So, I'll do an exegesis of that at some point and then ask the question what does this have to say to us today? What are the expositional values of this and how does it tie into some of the things we're doing here? One always has to be careful in terms of application because some people, I tend to be rather forthright and so consequently that can be somewhat dangerous. People can begin to think that I'm pointing fingers at them and so I have to be very careful not to be so heavy-handed that it destroys them as Christians or breaks the fellowship that we have. I want the people to talk about it. And the importance of doing a series on questions is that it will stay with people for some time. I want them to think about it, I want them to apply it in their own lives. On the other hand, I don't want the edge to come off it. "Does this offend you?" Are there some things that Jesus did that offend us today? When he demands that we live with greater intensity the gospel that he has given us. What about money matters in our own homes? What about the way in which we order our lives, sometimes can take us away from raising our children? What are the priorities in the Christian life? Once again, the Puritans are a marvellous example because they as well as any worked through this. Some Mennonite groups have also done the same sort of thing. And they've arrived at a list of priorities. The world would say that item 10 ought to be #1, but the Puritans or the Mennonites would say "No, no we stick to that"... So, choose it 6 months in advance. I have a file, I tuck this in, its like an oven. These are the things I've gathered data on. I add notes to these, references to books, or to hymns, so I have that. But just with the basic framework and then the final week I do another exegesis of the passage and then fill in some of the blanks and then I write it out verbatim and that's what you get on the hard copy and what you get on the tape is partly what you get on the hard copy and part what the Spirit says at the moment.

P: So the hard copy could be made prior. How far prior?

A: Oh well, not very far prior. 2 or 3 days prior.

P: So the actual, er, its a slow cooker, its not a microwave.

A: Well, the last week it becomes a microwave, I'll tell you.

P: So the sermon that you will preach this coming Sunday was committed to paper sometime this week.

A: Yeah, it will be in the next couple of days or so. But sometimes, the flesh is weak, the Spirit is willing, it gets left to Saturday too. But I'm becoming better at that. I'm becoming more disciplined. But there are all sorts of things. I wrote something up back on August 17th. I don't know whether this is of any importance at all. But, if you don't mind, I can just read it into your thing. I was just going over what preaching was, back then, for some reason. I've got this under the heading "Preaching and the Preacher". So, preaching means faithfulness and adherence to the text of scripture. It means faithfulness and adherence to the whole canon of scripture and it means faithfulness and adherence to the whole teaching of scripture. It means awareness of the presence of God as a holy and revealing person. An awareness of the human condition sinful as it is and under judgement. It includes awareness of the necessary power of the Holy Spirit in prayer and awareness of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. It means concentration on intelligent and intelligible preparation. It means concentration on a spirited delivery. In other words, it must be more than lectures. It means concentration on expected results. Which will include conversion, instruction, conviction and consecration, things like that. It means placing a demand on those listening to come to terms with the message. That is preaching for a response, which is the kind of thing that you get in the American Evangelist, Charles Grandison Finney who was a lawyer, who was converted, from Adams, New York. If you've ever been on the way down to Syracuse, you would have passed Adams, New York. He was a lawyer who became probably the greatest evangelist that America has ever produced. Not as well known as D.L. Moody or Billy Sunday or people like that. And he preached mainly in New York State. But he had tremendous effect and he utilized his ability as a lawyer, as an examiner of witnesses. And he would, in fact, cross examine a model parishioner or somebody sitting in the pew. He would cross examine that person. And he would give this image as he was doing it and he had the most awesome effects on people. "But are you such and such?" "But what was your motivation in this?" And he would have some grown and intelligent men on the edge of their seats, he was a fantastic guy. That's what I mean as an illustration. Martin Lloyd Jones, the Welsh preacher in London had much the same kind, but he was more polished, Welsh rhetorician or orator. Finney was strange. Very effective for an evangelist. I have some of his sermons here, they scare me to death. But that's what I mean, a demand on those listening to come to terms with the message. There are techniques for doing that, you know. Slamming your Bible and putting it down on the pew. And stepping aside in the pew and saying "Now what I'm saying, people, is..." I mean, that's a rhetorical way of doing it. It not rhetorical, its contrived. And his was probably contrived, too. But its, I don't know... To go on: #14, a demand for effective preparation. It requires a demand for directness of approach to the people. Not narration, not lectures, they're sermons, penetration of the mind and the heart. Use of questions, use of statement, the use of imperative, the major parts of speech. Looking for the change in society and institutions including the church, by changing people. Sermons are meant to change people. They're not just there to instruct, they're there to transform. And in the process one must be generous to those with whom you disagree, but you must also be firm. I find myself sometimes referring to Rudolf Bultmann and saying to people, look he taught me more, in a way, than some of the greatest people I've studied under. I disagree with him but I don't want you to think that he did it from a bad motive. And the final thing I have down here: Remember that you are not worthy to preach, you are only called to preach. So.

P: That's great. Thank you very much indeed. One last question if I may. Its a question from the questionnaire. In a sentence, if possible, I ask the questionnaire respondents to complete the following sentence "The heart of Christianity is..." How would you?

A: ... The heart of Christianity is knowing God the Holy Father, intimately, through the forgiving and transforming work of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit brings about a continuous and ongoing transformation, lived out in one's life and demonstrated in a compassionate attitude.

P: Thank you. Thank you very much.

[END]

Interview with Jack Nield May 17th 1994

P: So, if you don't mind, I'll spend a little time just asking you some personal, background questions. First of all, how old are you?

J: I'm 54.

P: Are you married?

J: Yes.

P: And do you have children?

J: I'm married and I have 4 grown children.

P: So you've been married...

J: 30 years.

P: So, they're all grown and have left home?

J: Yes.

P: And how long have you been a minister?

J: I was ordained in 1966. I was a student minister for several years before that, but about 30 years.

P: So, you were... well, how long have you been at this church?

J: This is the end of my 4th year.

P: OK. And before?

J: Before this I was in Montreal for 15 years. In the same parish.

P: OK, so that was really quite a long stretch. But that doesn't cover the whole of your ordained ministry. So before that there must have been...

J: Before that I was here in Ottawa before that for 5 years. And Peterborough for year and I was, I did all my undergraduate work in Manitoba and my first charge was in Manitoba for 3 years.

P: Right. So, now, where do you come from originally? Are you a local boy? Is Manitoba...

J: From Manitoba. Manitoba is home.

P: If you've been a minister for nigh-on 30 years, um, this is something you've done, this wasn't a career change. Did you have a previous occupation?

J: Um, it wasn't really a career change. Out of high school, I did some, spent

some time in the army as a training officer. but there wasn't an intention of making it a career. I decided late in high school that I wanted to go into the ministry.

P: So, um, this was a, from the outset, I mean, when most young men are expected, or were in those days, so this was a goal that you had set yourself and the things that you did in the interim were just that: things in the interim.

J: Yeah.

P: Now, whereabouts - if I can ask just a little bit about your early background, whereabouts in Manitoba was, were you in a city, was this a rural area?

J: Oh, rural Manitoba. I lived until I was 15 in a small town of about 300 people called Elgin, then we moved to a very large town of about 3000 people called Burdon when I was 15, so I was in Burdon until I finished high school at about 18. Then went to Winnipeg U.

P: Um, your parents. What did your father do?

J: My father was in partnership with his brother and they owned a Ford dealership.

P: And your mother?

J: My mother was at home.

P: If you wouldn't mind, perhaps you could describe some of the means by which your decision to train for the ministry occurred. Um, you said this was a decision that had been made by the time that you graduated from high school.

J: Yeah. Yeah. And I'm not really clear on how it occurred. I er, during high school I sang in a choir in the United Church and, er, it was a community of crazy people as most choirs tend to be and I had a real sense of belonging there. And er, and because I sang in the choir I sat through worship most Sundays. The preacher was incredibly boring, er, and er, but it must have been either the Holy Spirit or osmosis, I'm not sure which but somewhere along the line there I decided to go into the ministry and I'm not really clear on how that decision was made.

P: Now, you were attending worship in the choir, but um, so, was your family as church going family?

J: No, not really.

P: Well, how would your parents have described themselves? Would they have given themselves a denominational label?

J: Oh, yes. They would say they were United Church. My Dad maybe wouldn't. He really didn't go to church at all. My mother was an occasional attender. And my decision to go into the ministry gave them great discomfort.

P: Now. Discomfort as in just general embarrassment or opposition or?

J: Opposition, but er, more opposition out of concern for me. They thought it was an uncertain life, er, a life with not much security, they thought, and certainly with no money. They saw me, sort of, er, going from small town to small town in Manitoba begging chickens from parishioners. Their picture of what I would be doing was not what they had intended for me.

P: Right, ok, so now, what... opposition or at least lack of support in the family, there must have been support somewhere else. When, did you approach your minister? Explain that this was what you felt, that you had a call to the ministry? Did you discuss it with someone who set you on the path and said this is what you must do?

J: Well, it was quite remarkable actually and I have no idea where this came from, but er, actually he approached me and said I wonder if you might be thinking of going into the ministry. Now, I said Yes, actually. But I had never mentioned it to anyone. And so he certainly helped the process through as far as the church was concerned.

P: So he, sort of explained well, if that's the case, then this is what you do.

J: Yeah.

P: So what did you do? You left, graduated from high school but then you didn't enter training for ministry immediately...

J: Well, I did, er, I went away in, er, the army for the summer and wasn't clear on whether I was going to continue that a while, but, er, it turned out that I did go to University that fall and then went back in the army for, er, the coming spring again. So, I did begin my Arts education...

P: So, you did, like, an academic year at University?

J: Um hum. Yeah.

P: And then went back into the army.

J: Yes. I didn't do too well in Arts. I, er...

P: Why the army? Was this, were you still wondering whether this might be a long term occupation or was this just a way of...

J: Oh, no, it was just, er, I had been an army cadet in Verdon. That was one of the few things that was offered for young boys. I did it and it was interesting and challenging. And I was, er, offered an opportunity to get a commission.

P: Right, OK. So this was just an avenue that you thought it was foolish not to...

J: Um hum.

P: So where was your officer cadet training?

J: In Saskatchewan. Dundern, Saskatchewan.

P: And where was the University?

J: In Winnipeg.

P: OK. Well, what happened? What happened next?

J: Then I continued taking Arts courses at United College in Winnipeg. I was, wasn't, well, first of all my, my, er, good marks in high school were all in science and, er, I decided that to go into ministry, Arts would be a better avenue to pursue. I'm not sure if that was true, but, er, but that's how I was advised and, er, I went that way and had a difficulty with it. I enjoyed the, was intrigued by going to the University and the process of learning, but, er, I didn't do really well with my marks. And so it was a hard learning process and it took me an extra year to get through it.

P: But eventually you ended of with what? A Bachelor's degree?

J: A B.A. And then I went into Theology. Still at United College which is now the University of Winnipeg. And did er, a 3 year Theology programme.

P: Was that any easier or was that just as...

J: Oh, oh yes. I was learning how to be a student by then.

P: Right. But the, er, material, the subject matter, was it more congenial. Did it, sort of, grab you?

J: Oh, certainly. And, um, that, during that time I also was working in ministry here and there. The first year I worked as a Youth Co-ordinator in a city church and then I got married and er...

P: How old were you?

J: ... early 20s. And then I had a, what they called a "student charge" which was a small church out in the country, about an hour and a half out of Winnipeg.

P: This was a common occurrence [J: Yes] that people in training would be given a, well presumably there was a shortage, was there a shortage of...

J: Uh hum. Small rural places, they probably would have trouble, er, supporting a full-time, er...

P: So this was what we've learned to call, like, a practicum. [J: Well...] or was it not included in your academic...

J: No it wasn't included in the academic, it was, er, it certainly was a practicum, but it was a seat-of-your-pants practicum.

P: Well, can I pursue that a little bit? I know from my own experience, but also from having spoken to other people. Sometimes, um, particularly in Adult Education, particularly in Theology, you get surprised, you get grabbed by an aspect of the study. [J: Um hum] And you think - My God, this is fascinating. Apart from anything else, apart from the fact that it may well be, er, to do with

what you consider, what you believe to be an essential part of human life, its just, its just really interesting. Um, and sometimes it doesn't happen. Did that happen with you or was the most important or the most enjoyable part the practical experience of ministry?

J: Certainly for me, the practical aspect of ministry was most important. and I improved as a student immensely when I started practising, when I started working. Er, because then my studies suddenly became relevant to something.

P: So you suddenly started to see the point. [J: Uh huh] You could see an application. Sounds like a scientist.

J: Yeah. And that was really true for me. The application and practice of ministry was vastly more important.

P: While in the training you were obviously exposed to, well, Biblical Study, theology, this was late sixties...

J: Yeah. It was pretty basic stuff. There really wasn't much practical training. We did, er, Old Testament and New Testament each of the 3 years, we did one Christian Education course, we did Systematic Theology each of the 3 years. We had 1 preaching course, 1 hour a week or maybe 2 hours a week of preaching. I think that was pretty much the extent of the practical.

P: The theology, the Systematic Theology, this was the late 60s, we look back at these as years of foment and adventure [J: Uh huh] was there anybody or anything that you were exposed to that you look back on and think this was a formative experience?

J: Certainly, I wasn't set on fire by it. By any of the classroom stuff and, again, the classroom stuff was pretty basic. Looking at the Church Fathers. It seems to me we got as far as Barth, Brunner and Tillich one year. But it was still pretty basic and it, er, really didn't light my fire. I guess what did happen in that Theological School was, er, we were a total of, maybe 15 students in the 3 years. It was a very small community and so much of the real education took place between classes and after classes and er, most of us were doing student fields, so, er, almost every minute that was available was spent talking theology and talking over what we were going to do next weekend on our student field. It was just survival. And, er, but it really became a practicum in theology.

P: So that experience of a, these were all your fellow students on the B.D. [J: Uh huh] that was a strong, they must have all been about the same age as well...

J: Um, well, no, um, there were quite a number of mature students. Er, I would think about a third of the students would have been over 35. Some of them quite a bit older than that; for whom this was a second career.

P: Did they naturally become, sort of, mentors, or leaders of the group? Did their greater experience in other aspects of life seem to help them?

J: Oh, certainly they added a whole new dimension to, to the discussions. They were, most of them had families at the same time. It was a hard life for most of them. Most of them had families who were living out in the country and they were in the city during the week and out at the weekends, trying to do a week's

work on the weekend and relate to their family as well; it was hard.

P: Um... I think you've already answered part of this, but when you look back at your training, how do you judge it in terms of how it prepared you for your life as a minister? Is it good, bad, indifferent?

J: I wasn't a very good student as an undergraduate. I was such a poor student that now I would never be able to get into graduate school. But, er, it did give me the basics, for which to learn. It taught me how to learn and, er, gave me some basic skills in Biblical studies and Systematic Theology, so that when I decided I wanted to be student, I had the tools to read and understand. So it was helpful in that way.

P: Have you, at some stage in your ministry, pursued further formal studies?

J: Yes.

P: So... explain a bit about that. When was that?

J: When I was in Ottawa, I began, er [P: This was before the 15 years in Montreal?] Yes, yes, 1970 to 75. And during that time I went part-time to, er, St. Paul University and, er, earned a Master of Pastoral Studies. And it was that time that I became a student. I was, by that time, I was really excited by learning.

P: I have a certain tangential understanding of that degree and my understanding of it is that it is a very concentrated programme. There's also a practicum involved, there are practicums. How did that work out? You were, while you were in Ottawa, you also had a pastoral charge.

J: I had a pastoral charge. I came there with the understanding that I was going to go to St. Paul and they agreed to give me time to do that.

P: So what was your practicum in, or what were your practica...

J: Er, I did a practicum in Pastoral Counselling.

P: So, you say that you had already learned to become a student and this time around you did actually enjoy, it grabbed you. Looking back, was there or is there anything that, yes that really grabbed me, that's become part of who I am as a person or as a minister?

J: Well, the first course I took from St. Paul, it was taught by Adrian Vischer who is still there and it was a course in the Theology of Pastoral Counselling. And, er, that was probably the first theology course that really excited me. And, er, I guess partly, the study of theology and it was a Summer course and so there was a wonderful community developed there as well and I became part of that... but, er, and, er, there was a major essay involved in that that I really got into, really enjoyed and I think I got a 92, which was just an unbelievable...[LAUGHS] so, er starting right off that was a good experience. Many of the other courses were more practical but still quite enjoyable. I look fondly on that.

P: Which church were you at when you were there?

J: I was at a little church in the south-east part of Ottawa called Hawthorne. Out Russell Road.

P: Right. And then when you went to Montreal that was the same place for 15 years?

J: Uh huh. Yeah. It was a fairly large church on the West Island of Montreal. and, er, it changed several times during the 15 years that I was there. I was there during the 1st election of the Parti Quebecois. And many people left the Province during that time. Property values fell in a fairly established, affluent area of the city where we lived and that did wonderful things for the community. It meant that young people with young families could afford to move in and really renewed the community. And so there were many changes took place in the congregation. My children grew up there and they see themselves as Quebecers.

P: And so, but it was no hardship to come back to Ottawa.

J: No. Well, er, I thought it wasn't, like, I felt ready to move after 15 years. But really the first year I was here I mourned Montreal. Which quite surprised me. That I would be that depressed by leaving.

P: They're certainly two very different places.

J: Um hum. While I was, er, at the church in Montreal I also worked, went to school part time and got a Doctor of Divinity from er, no a Doctor of Ministry from Drew Theological Seminary in New Jersey, its a Methodist School.

P: So that was, you were commuting or...?

J: No, it was a programme that they had set up, a non-local programme and, er, it was centred in Queen's and they sent people up to Queen's to teach it. And we did 3 courses out of Queen's and we met there every second Monday throughout the year.

P: You must have known the 401 like the back of your hand.

J: Oh, yes. [LAUGHS] It helped there were 3 of us from Montreal. Started at 9 o'clock at Queen's, so we were up before breakfast. And then we did 2 courses during the year at Drew in residence. We, er, one in the fall and one in the winter. We went down and stayed in residence for a week and a half. They called it an intensive course. We had classes morning and afternoon and did assignments all evening. There was an assignment due 1st thing every morning so it was intensive.

P: And that was, well, you survived it obviously, but was that an enjoyable experience?

J: Oh, yes. Exciting. And then we...

P: Was there a concentration in this?

J: It was a general Doctor of Ministry. There were some things we had a choice about, but as a group, we worked as a group. And, er, they had some courses that we had to take, and then we could choose what, in some cases what courses

we wanted and who we wanted to teach it. And, er, one of the courses we asked for was with Herbie O'Driscoll, er, who was in Vancouver at the time. They flew him down to Queen's 4 times. The, er, to teach us that course. So, er, it was a well set up course. There was also a summer residency, a 3 week summer residency. And that was, that was just sheer luxury, at that point, to be able to spend 3 weeks as a student, just sort of concentrating full-time...

P: OK. If we could move on a little bit, though this does follow logically. If I could ask you to speak about your understanding of the nature of ministry. And perhaps you could do that by, well one possibility would be that you could speak about ministry in perhaps general terms and then maybe more specific terms about how that general understanding is played out, is exemplified in the day to day. [J: Uh huh]... Well, first of all, what is it, who are you when you are a minister?

J: ...OK...I'm pausing because, er... my understanding is constantly changing. Er, and I haven't really, haven't really written anything down for a while, that's sort of how I... find out where I am, is when I sit down and write things out. And so, er, I suspect my understanding of ministry has changed since I thought seriously about it. But... I guess I feel 2 things... that are quite different. One is that I see myself as a... as a part of the ministry of the whole congregation... that the ministry of this congregation isn't mine, that it's the congregation and it's my job is to help them do their ministry. That, er, so I'm a catalyst, an enabler, a prodder, a, somebody that can add a theological perspective to what is happening. That's why I don't refer to myself as a minister. I want to save that term for others.

P: And "pastor" is a deliberate, it's not just another convenient word, it has positive connotations that you wish to enforce. [J: Uh hum.] Shepherding, caring. [J: Yeah] OK. Well, now, just briefly, or not as the case may be, the 20-odd year old Jack Nield in his student charge, mightn't have answered the same question in the same way, or would he? [J: Er..] Or would he have answered the question? [LAUGHTER] Or would he have said he was too busy, too busy doing it?

J: No, I think I would have probably answered it in a similar sort of way, um, that part of it, er, I think I've always seen myself as an enabler, as, er, the person who helps others with their ministry. The part, it's the other part of that equation that I didn't have an awareness of as a 20-some year old. The priestly part of it and the prophetic part of it. And the representative person part of it... that is only, and the mystery of the priesthood that is only, er, still vaguely, I'm still really unclear about, but it's only in recent years that I've had an awareness of that.

P: Do you want to expand on that, even if it is a bit, er...

J: Sure. It is, er...[PAUSE] Maybe we could do it in terms of story, more than theology because the theology is still really unclear. One thing that happens is that er, happens to me fairly often is that people who have moved away from the congregation for one reason or another, live somewhere else and they come back to town, er, they'll come and visit me. Er, and these will be people that... that my, pretty well the extent of my relationship with them was shaking hands with them at the door of the church on Sunday morning. And yet they felt they had a relationship with me that, so that when they come back to town they come and

see me. And that's very mysterious to me and can only, er, I guess partly I understand it in terms of the fact that I represent something to them. I represent their relationship to this community. And it seems to me that's part of what pastor-priest is, is a representative of this community, who symbolizes the community.

P: Now... there's a whole lot of hooks there just waiting for me to go "Ah", can I just put that one on one side for one second. There's another question. Going back to your original statement about how you see yourself as an enabler, of a congregation that has a ministry. [J: Uh hum] Now, so in general terms it is congregations that are ministers, not individuals [J: Uh hum]... Who or what is the congregation minister to or with? What is the object of that collective ministry? Can that be answered in general terms or only in specific ones? If that is your understanding of what Christian congregations are, can you answer that question Who or what is the object of ministry? Is that answerable in general terms or can you only say, Well, the object of this particular ministry in this particular location is... Can it only be described as a series of individual charisms? Or is there a more general answer, something that's shared?

J: I think there is a more general sense, that first of all they're ministers to each other. That, my understanding of Luther's "priesthood of all believers" is not that we each our own priest, but that we're priests to each other. And so that, er, in the eucharist the prayer of consecration, in our congregation, is said by everyone. And when the, er, when the elements are passed, the people pass it from one to another and say to the person beside them "The Body of Christ", "The Blood of Christ for you" representing their ministry to each other and so, that's part of it. The other part of it is, er, the ministry beyond the walls, outside the community and I think that's harder to get at, but in the long run more important. I think, er, this congregation has wonderful skills, people with wonderful skills that they'd be prepared to share with the community and one of the functions of the congregation is to provide them with a vehicle to do that. And that's one of the things we're working really hard at right now, is providing the vehicle for people to do that kind of ministry.

P: I'd like to pursue that. You've obviously had a vast experience of a number of different congregations and you're obviously aware of various other United Church congregations in Ottawa. Its an urban setting. Its not rural Manitoba. Its not one church and one community. [J: Uh hum] Um... could you... how would you describe this particular congregation, this community of Glebe-St. James, um, in a way that, what is different about it, what is unique about it, if anything? What it, perhaps, the specific object of ministry of this community in specific terms, um, given that its, er, a relatively old, established church in one the most old established residential areas in Ottawa. Is there a tradition of, I mean, yes, is there a Glebe-St. James tradition of particular aspects of ministry that have been and continue to be, or has this church gone through a renewal or a revitalization that has revisioned its idea of ministry?

J: Um... there a ... tradition, there's a number of traditions here. One of them is musical. There's a long musical tradition here and that's an important part of the life of this congregation. There's also a tradition of, er, of, er... liberal protestantism, intellectual liberal protestantism, perhaps... um, the clergy of this congregation have always been well educated... part of the liberal wing of the church. So that's part of the life here. So the congregation tends to be a congregation of well educated people and I think that's a key to the ministry

that we can offer, is that we have people here that have a lot to offer. And I think that at this time of our life we're just finding a way to offer that to the community. To develop outreach that we can do. That people can share their skills that they have...

P: Again, I want to move on and I wonder whether I can go back to the one I left hanging there?

J: Sure.

P: Because I wonder whether this might...eventually I want to ask you specifically about preaching. I wonder can I start by asking you about worship? [J: Sure] Because I have a suspicion that that might connect with, well certainly in semantic terms, with the priestly aspect of worship and, er, ministry and also goes back to your, for large numbers of people their contact with you is, the physical contact with you is shaking hands at the end, but, I mean the real contact is your mutual

[J: Sure] experience of worship. Now, Glebe-St.James describes itself as a, I can't think of the exact wording, its always in the "Citizen" on a Saturday...

J: Contemporary Church [P: Right] worshipping an eternal God.

P: And, in keeping with a number of the larger, more substantial United Churches you have 2 Sunday worship services. Er, and your earlier one, the 9.30 one, again, you describe as New Ventures in... yes, I think that's probably the way to do it. If you could speak something about, say something about, first: worship in general, how preaching as an aspect, how you see that as an aspect of worship and that as a function of ministry or pastoring.

J: OK. Um...

[END OF SIDE ONE]

J: Well, the, er... I'm not sure where to start on it. Er, maybe...

P: In practical terms, how, or in what ways - you've already mentioned about the eucharist, er, are there specific or significant ways in which the worship, the 9.30 worship differs from, well, a) from the 11 and b) from, um, more traditional or, um, United Church worship services. I mean, this, presumably, any alterations you've made have been intentional, rather than accidental and therefore reflect an intention or something that's been thought out.

J: The 9.30 service is an, er, interesting service. It has a long history in the congregation of an informal kind of service. Er, but up until recently it was an informal service led by the clergy of the congregation. Er, its developed now so that its an informal service led by the worshippers. And so, I, er, I help people plan that worship but probably not more than 1 in 6 weeks would I be the worship leader at that service. There's about, er... oh, on most Sundays there's about 30 people there, adults and children. And, er, usually one of the adults though sometimes one of the children will take the role of the worship leader. There's a great, probably a third of our time would be in singing. Singing's an important part of that. And its intergenerational, so everything that happens has to be involving, usually for adults and children together, but sometimes they separate and do separate things as part of the worship, but the interesting thing

to me about that community is that back in the... oh, sometime in the early life, my early life as a minister, probably in the 60s, early 70s, that's how I thought that worship was going to develop. That the church would worship in that way, a small group of people sitting around in a circle, sharing worship leadership and so its interesting and exciting for me to have that kind of experience here. But its also important to note that almost all of those people who worship that way at the 9.30 service also go to the 11 o'clock to complete their experience of worship. Er, and that er...

P: And the 11 o'clock is more traditional.

J: More traditional, more formal, yeah.

P: Choir. [J: Uh huh] Worship leader's one of the clergy [J: Uh huh] Penitential prayer, the readings.

J: Yeah. Its all there in the bulletin.

P: And the numbers are much larger than 30-odd people.

J: Oh yes. There would be 2 to 300 there most Sundays.

P: How does the age break down? Are you typically United Church? Are you predominantly older?

J: No.

P: Or you're typically Glebe. [J: No] School-aged children.

J: Um. This is a change in the community since Anne and I came to the church 4 years ago... When we came here, there was a Sunday School of about 50 kids and the congregation, on a Sunday morning there would be kids up to until about age 12 and then there would be adults from about age 40 on up and, er, at the moment if you counted children, which I would want to do, er, on a Sunday morning, half of the congregation would under age 35, 35 and under. So there's been a significant shift.

P: What does that mean? Does that mean that when you first came, the parents were sending their children and not coming themselves? If there were children under 12 years of age, they either had to have rather old parents or they were unaccompanied, or they were sent with their grand-parents.

J: Well, children, those children, most of those children would have parents over age 35, or, yeah, certainly there was a few younger but...

P: Generally, your congregation's getting younger.

J: Um hum. Uh hum. On a Sunday morning now, there would be, um, probably 30 unmarried adults as part of a congregation of 200.

P: And are they coming from all over? [J: Uh hum] Or do they come from the geographical locale?

J: They're coming from all over. Probably, well, the congregation comes from all

over and it would be, probably half in the Glebe. But its, er, certainly the young adult group is from all over. This is one of the, they, those who want to go to church start looking and this is one of the few places they find others of their own age.

P: OK. If I can ask you to speak specifically about preaching. As it occurs within the context of worship, but then specifically, then some specifics about how its done. When... obviously there's a sermon preached during the 11 o'clock service... how would you describe that? Would you describe it as one element among many or would you describe it as a central element in the worship?

J: May be if I describe the physical set up of the church it would help give a picture of what happens. That as you stand in the aisle and look at the front of the church, the first thing you see is the choir, the choir is high and organ pipes and big choir loft and then in the centre of the choir almost as high as the choir loft is the pulpit. Er, below the pulpit, much lower, is the communion table and then you have to look around for the baptismal font. So, and, er, before I came here, the whole service was led from the pulpit. Up high. And I've refused to do that. And so I lead the service down on the same level as the congregation from behind the communion table. And, er, one thing that has done, is that it has involved a lot more lay leadership in the process of worship, that there's an open microphone on the floor and people come up to it regularly for announcements, for... er, I was going to say regularly in worship, it would be regularly, but not often, er, periodically throughout the year, people will come up and tell the congregation something about themselves, that I'm having a difficult time now, I need your prayers, I've lost my job, my marriage is broken up, er, I can use all the support I can get right now. And its become, so worship time's become more of a community act, the people do participate.

P: Obviously, people have been allowed, encouraged to do that, they feel comfortable doing it. The congregation feels comfortable when that occurs.

J: Yeah. Yeah. And the "Prayer of the People" is also becoming more a prayer of the people, we're not to the place yet where people stand up in the place where they are and lead us in prayer, but during the prayer people will say "I would like us to pray for my aunt who's ill" or some would say "For me, I'm having a difficult time" or "I'd like us to pray for people who're unemployed because my brother's unemployed" or that sort of thing. So there are ... so the service is much more a service of the laity.

P: So where does preaching fit into that? Because that is, nevertheless, pre-eminently a ministerial task.

J: Yeah. It is. It is and its an important part of protestant worship that people would go home disappointed if there wasn't a significant sermon as part of worship. And my preparation time for that, I would spend at least a full day preparing for the sermon.

P: Now, how do you choose your topic?

J: Er. Well, first of all we follow the Common Lectionary, so there's that ingredient. And, er...

P: OK. Now, so whose decision was that? Does that practice pre-date your

ministership here or is that something you started? Is that something you've done in other churches?

J: Yes. I think both. I think it does pre-date my coming here but it was part of my practice as well.

P: How do you find that? You obviously, well you continue, so you obviously find it congenial. [J: Uh hum] Do you find it a constraint? Do you it... how do you experience that?

J: Er, I...

P: Well, first of all, how do you respond to it? The Common Lectionary has 3 readings and a psalm, one of which is the Gospel... Do the Lectionary readings therefore provide you with a text that you feel must be addressed or just a theme or do you... again, from my Catholic background, if you don't get 3 solid minutes on the Gospel, even if they're incoherent, you don't...[LAUGHTER]

J: Well, its... er, I continually tell myself that there's nothing sacred about following the lectionary, that I'm free not to and if I find it, that I have something to say and the lectionary doesn't help me with that, I'd be free to change the readings. But I almost never do. And I think that's because I almost never have to. That the... that the... and that surprises me. That the lectionary provides a... look at the Word of God that invariably speaks to the life of the community. And, er, when I decided to follow the lectionary, I was sure I'd be straying from it regularly and often, so that's been a real eye-opener to me. And a freedom also, because, er, because it always gives me a place to start. Like, I study the lectionary well ahead, like 6 weeks ahead and so I have those texts going through my head and so I have a place to do my studying and do my prayer and I'm not waiting around for the Spirit to speak to me in some sort of nebulous way. Hoping that she will sometime before Wednesday. [LAUGHTER]

P: So its Wednesday that you sit down. Wednesday's your sermon day.

J: Well, Wednesday is a day of decision because stuff has to be in for the bulletin on Wednesday. I write, I actually write on Friday. [P: OK] But we have other days of decision too, like the choir works, with music being an important part of our worship here, the choir works really hard at music that fits, that's part of the worship. And so, they need a month. So, we're working on worship themes at least a month ahead.

P: Well, that gives me some idea of the preparation. If we could be specific, what should we talk about, the sermon that you preached this Sunday gone or this Sunday coming?

J: Yes, because I'm not preaching this coming Sunday.

P: I had to stay home with a sick child, so I can't remember what the Gospel was.

J: It was Ascension.

P: Right. Whit Sunday as the Anglicans have it. Um. Tell me about that sermon. What... How... I mean, sermons can be all kinds of things, particularly if you

start, well, did you preach about the Gospel?

J: I preached, yes, the Gospel and the Acts reading, both of which are on the Ascension. And er, the Ascension is one of things that, er, liberal 20th century protestants would, er, prefer just to white-out and skip over and I often do find a way around them, even on Ascension Sunday and there's usually a reading there that I can avoid preaching about the Ascension. I started my sermon off that way, actually, by saying that this whole thing is something that we have a lot of trouble with and then I talked about, I told - got time for a story? I told a story. Er, that in my undergraduate class there was a group of students came into, 2 students came in to class one day, took over the class, it was kind of a tradition that students could do that every so often, and said the reason they had taken it over is that they had just figured out the Ascension. And they had maps and graphs and barometers and they figured out that at that time of year in Israel the temperature would be such and such and the high pressure area and they had all over the black-board, they had, er, calculations and eventually they concluded by saying that they figured that the Ascension was indeed possible, if Jesus was 8 foot 6" and weighed 46 pounds. [LAUGHTER]. And so I used that story. And that er... and concluded by saying that the reason I'd used the story was, er, not to say that the story of the Ascension wasn't a meaningful story, but if it was a meaningful story we had to look in other directions than the physical one. And the I read, a lay person read the scripture, but I did read a bit more of that story, including where it said that it happened 40 days after the resurrection and I talked a bit about 40 days being a clue to it being a picture story, a poetic story. I pointed out the passages that have 40 days. That Noah, Jonah, er, the temptation in the wilderness, that that's a poetic indication and er, so I looked at how the Ascension is a picture. And it says Christ has gone up there with God, even though we know God isn't up there, God is everywhere, that it's a picture that we can and it makes a point and the point is that when we look at Jesus we see something of what God is like. The things that Jesus came to teach us here weren't just relevant in ancient, in the ancient Middle East for a few years but that they have eternal relevance. So my purpose that week was just to look at that lectionary passage that we tend to avoid and find some meaning in it.

P: Good. Its fortuitous that that was the one that I specifically asked you about. Would I be right, perhaps, in suggesting that's not untypical of what you find yourself doing when preaching? Whether or not its particularly a liberal-protestantism-embarrassing passage or not, its... relating the Gospel, the Bible passage to a modern context [J: Uh hum] providing the meaning which is relevant to today, is that what [J: Sure] you're trying to do?

J: Yeah, yeah.

P: Um... now this is a kind of more difficult one, but... if that's the kind of thing that you are doing when you are preaching, what do you hope or expect or think that the congregation has to be doing, ought to be doing, is doing when they are responding to the preaching? Are there... you're not a Professor, a lecturer... they don't take notes, because there's not an exam at the end, they get a handshake, but not an exam [J: Right] What... you see, again, by comparison, the relationship between lecturer and student is relatively clear [J: Uh hum] My teacher, you student; you shut up and listen, later on we'll find out how much of it you remember. [J: Er, yes...] What's the comparable, or parallel...

J: OK. Worship is quite a unique thing in that people's real lives are very close to the surface in worship. People cry during worship. Er, I look up quite often and see people crying and I've talked, had occasion to talk to some people about that and often they say I didn't realize those tears were there, I don't know where that came from, it just struck me in worship and, so that, er, so that, I think the depths of people's lives are often very close to the surface in worship and they're looking for something that will help them deal with that. And preaching often does that. But I'm often intrigued how many times people will say to me either at the door or after a service that "You really help me when you said da da da..." and I didn't say it. I didn't think I said it. It certainly wasn't in the words I said. But somehow, er, they heard that and it was helpful to them. It touched a place that they needed touching. So I think... people come with an expectation that the words of the sermon are going to say something to them.

P: In their, what you describe as their personal [J: Uh hum] which is often expressed through emotion or feeling, that's the point of connection, is it?

J: Yeah. That's certainly part of what happens. That's what the expectation is that what people are dealing with, what does this say to me? And, and I guess the other part of it is there's an expectation that preaching will touch on and direct the life of the congregation as well. Here are some things that we as a congregation need to consider about our life and ministry and mission.

P: Does that connect with the prophetic aspect [J: Uh hum] Can you talk about that?

J: Er...

P: Its a collective thing? [J: Yeah] You've just made a distinction, whether you meant to or not [J: Yeah, yeah] between a part of preaching that is directed at the [J: Personal] at the person, at the individual and then when you started talking about the congregation as a collectivity...

J: Yeah, yeah and I think one of the things that the Gospel does and one of the things that preaching does or needs to do is to, is to be prophetic, is to bring judgement on the life of the congregation. That, here's what God calls us to be and, er, here's how we're living up to that and here's how we're falling short of that.

P: But that would be in terms of, that would be, the prophetic aspect of ministry would be in terms of, er, a description of what the congregation is or ought to be and how the congregation, collectively, could move towards fulfilling it. [J: Yeah] That's separate from the individual, or is there an aspect of prophetic ministry that is directed to the individual? An individual's life.

J: Oh, I think so. In terms of call to service, of, in terms of, er, I guess "call" would be the word I'd want to use. How does God put a claim upon us? And how would we respond to that? One of the, last year certainly, if you'd asked the congregation what they remembered about my preaching, one of things that would certainly come up would be, er, I did a series of 4 Sundays in last November on Christian Ethics. And, er, that's a thing that, when we talk about what we're going to do next year, people say let's do something like that again.

P: We have a tradition of dealing with the "4 last things" at the end of the

year. [J: Uh hum]. The...questionnaire that I was attempting to get administered, er, one of the questions that I ask respondents is to complete a sentence and they're given a series of multiple choice options. The sentence begins as follows "The heart of Christianity is..." and I ask them to complete that as a sentence. Could you do that? Would you do that?

J: I would try. Its, er, "The heart of Christianity..." hum...[Pause]...Lots of answers spring to my mind and most of them are probably true, but trite. I haven't really come on one that... I'm happy with...I'd rather work on this a bit and come up with an answer I like one day, but er...I guess the one that I can think of at the moment that I'm happiest with is "The heart of Christianity... is the light of Christ glowing within a Christian person, no I wouldn't say Christian person, glowing within a person." Very quick. Yeah, I would, if I need one sentence that would do.

P: Thank you very much indeed.

[END]

Interview with Anne McKeown May 27th 1994

P: So, anyway, can I begin with some personal questions [A: Sure] that should be relatively quick. How old are you?

A: I'm 35.

P: Are you married?

A: Separated.

P: And you have children, I know that because you said you were sending them of to school.

A: I have two girls that are 10 and 8.

P: So, one must be in Junior, no they're both in Elementary.

A: Yeah. They're Grade 5 and Grade 2.

P: Where are they?

A: First Avenue.

P: Really. That's where mine are. We have one in Grade 3 and one in Grade 1. ... OK. so you you have two girls. So how long have you been a minister?

A: Um. I have been... oh, probably all my life. I have been in paid accountable ministry [P: Right] since 1988.

P: 1988. So...OK. And how long have you been here?

A: Since July 8th 1990.

P: And prior to that you were at another charge?

A: I was in England as a Chaplain at their Army College.

P: OK. As a United Church Minister or was it an ecumenical thing...

A: No, their Free Church Chaplain resigned, but I shared a Parish with a Church of England Chaplain and we shared worship.

P: Now, was this the Canadian Forces?

A: No, the British Army.

P: So how did that...

A: My ex-husband, who is Canadian Forces, was posted there for a year. And the week we landed their Free Church Chaplain resigned.

P: So it was just purely coincidence... happenstance...

A: One might say that's another word for God.

P: Right. But it was not something that you'd planned.

A: Oh no. Not at all.

P: Just one of those things.

A: And I'd left Orleans United Church to go there, assuming that I wouldn't be in paid, accountable ministry.

P: Right. So you had been at Orleans United for...

A: A year. Almost a year.

P: And was that your first charge?

A: Where I was paid, yes.

P: Right. And, then before that...

A: I was for 3 years at Chalmers United in Kingston. Which is pretty much where I learned the beginnings of my ministry skills. The team there spent 3 years putting me in situations and doing reflection with me on a daily basis on different areas of ministry, so I preached my first sermon there [P: Right] First became involved with Presbytery. It was quite intentional. It was like an apprenticeship.

P: Right. So, when you went to Chalmers United in Kingston, that was your first paid [A: I wasn't paid] Er, what's the word I'm looking for?

A: They don't call that anything at all. Its not a formalized structure, it was completely informal. It was a matter of a team sensing a call in someone before I was ready to acknowledge the call. So it...

P: Were you, um... were you studying at that same time?

A: No.

P: You'd completed some kind of...

A: Yeah, OK. The point of entry in the United Church, there are three points of entry into paid, accountable ministry: you do your Master's of Divinity, are ordained and settled; you study at the Centre for Christian Studies and become commissioned as a Diaconal Minister and take settlement; or you come in as a Staff Associate which means your training is in another area which meets the needs of a specific congregation. And that was my point of entry. So that my training, my degrees are Child Psychology and Education. So my theological studies, I didn't start until 2 and a half years ago.

P: Right. OK. And what are your degrees in Child Psychology?

A: I have a B.A. in Child Psych. and a B.Ed.

P: And so when you went to University to study your B.A. or B.Ed. were there any specific plans? [A: No] Did you have a career in mind, or these just seemed like a good idea at the time. These were things that interested you.

A: They were definitely things that interested me. I changed my major every year. So I did Life Sciences one year, English Literature one year and Political Science one year, but all the way through it I kept taking the Psychology courses because they fascinated me. I also picked up things in Inter-session each year so that I could change major, so it's a renaissance education, but I did finally decide that what I wanted to do was teach. And then promptly ended up in a situation where I couldn't do that.

P: Right, so by the end of it you were thinking to yourself, obviously you went into the B.Ed programme [A: Yeah] generally a sign that you think you're going into teaching... Can I back up a little bit further [A: Sure] and ask you a little bit about your earlier life, your family background etc. Where are you local to?

A: Toronto born and bred.

P: Um... and your parents, what did your father, what does your father do? Is he still working?

A: He's still working, he's in transition right now. He has just resigned as the Director of the Metro-Toronto Board of Education and is going to head up a Task Force for the Ministry of Ed. on shared educational services. And my mother was a Special Ed. teacher.

P: Um. Were you church-goers...

A: Oh, definitely.

P: And this was in the United Church.

A: Er, mostly, yes.

P: So as a child, you remember going to church.

A: Oh, it was every Sunday, yes.

P: But when it wasn't a United Church it was...

A: I had a best friend who was quite a fundamentalist Baptist and on occasion we did Sunday night things together. We also explored the Quaker Church. And part of the family lore involved Native Spirituality. So that by the time I was 3, I had a fair handle on the Native Spirituality bit, I didn't have a handle on the Christianity stories until I was 8 or 9.

P: So you would describe your family situation as, um, active, practising [A: Oh definitely] Christian.

A: In, I guess, the closest mainline you could pick is in a Quaker way. So that all of life was that. Worship was just part of we did.

P: Right, but by tradition or choice, the church to which the family went was a United Church. If you had to give a denominational label that would have been the box that you would have ticked.

A: Uh hum. Yes.

P: OK... I want to go back to the, um... you'd gone to University, studied, you'd become interested in Psychology, you'd done a B.Ed., presumably with some kind of intention of becoming a teacher, um, can you, because of your age it doesn't sound as if it took very long, can you, er, give me some indication of the processes or the... the ways in which, how you became a minister? Or how you decided that you were going to be a minister.

A: I'm really uncomfortable with the terminology because I would say that everyone is a minister. How I ended up in paid, accountable ministry, er [P: Yes] for me that's a radical difference. That, I avoided it as long as I could until I couldn't avoid it any more. I gave in to it. So I ended up graduating and my husband was posted to Germany so I went...

P: When did you, sorry, when did you get married?

A: End of 3rd year. And so we went to Germany and the Canadian Forces had a regulation there that if you were in Germany you couldn't apply for teaching jobs, you had to have been teaching in Canada in order to apply. So that there were a whole group of military wives with teaching degrees and we couldn't do anything. Um, so I ended up trying to create jobs for myself. And I worked at the Centre for a while with young offenders, the Social Work Office hired me for a year because they needed someone to do counselling in French and they couldn't find a Canadian with the qualifications so they took the best unqualified person they could find. So I got some phenomenal on the spot training there. Er, taught English as a Second Language to ... soldiers, but it was almost as if there was a checklist of things I needed to learn to do and I spent 4 years in Germany learning to do those things. It was extraordinary. And then I came back to Kingston and when I was pregnant with my second child walked into Chalmers... the Sunday after Christmas... and things just dropped into place in about a month.

P: Now when you say you walked into Chalmers, you walked in looking for a job or...

A: No, on a Sunday morning. Um, my ex-husband was not Christian, wouldn't define himself as Christian and didn't go to church and it was at that point that I decided that I couldn't wait any longer, I hadn't been worshipping and decided that now I really needed to be doing this and if he couldn't handle coming that was all right, I'd go on my own. And I walked back and it was like coming home.

P: So, OK. Your first experience of Chalmers in Kingston was as a [A: Worshipper] member of the congregation. [A: uh hum] Um. What happened next?

A: They did a very, very good job of welcoming me. And, er, very quickly sensed that that's where I was supposed to be. And that ministry was where I was headed. Although I didn't realize that at the time. So that they involved me in what was going on. And I guess the significant turning point in my self-realization was when one of the student ministers came and to me and asked me

to be a part of his support committee. And so that involved meeting on a weekly basis to do theological reflection around ministry and that was the shift out of, just, "just" in quotes being a member of the congregation, to moving to a more intentional... some kind of leadership role.

P: OK, now, I don't want to jump the gun, but... so there was a change and it felt like a change [A: Yes] So... did you find yourself having to do anything that you hadn't previously done? If you were dealing with theological reflection with someone who was training to become an ordained minister, did you find that you were having to read material that you hadn't read before or was it not that kind of a meeting?

A: I think always when you're in a stretching period you read things you haven't read before. Or you read things you've read before with new eyes. So that, for example, daily prayer had been a part of my life for a long time, reflecting on how my decisions mirrored my faith had been a part of who I was for a long time, tying scripture into that on a daily basis was new. So that was a significant change.

P: And then, how long did that go on?

A: Two years. [P: Every week] Yeah. And it became more than that. Given the situation that we were in, we met as a group once a week but we also met individually at least one or two each week. And so, in helping him, and being a part of his process, it was also process for me. And, er, the ministers we were working with at the time were very clear on that long before me.

P: Did they express that to you?

A: Not initially... Not until I was ready to hear it. They did very well.

P: Right. But eventually they said... by the way...

A: Oh, I can still remember the moment. I walked into Joyce's office because I was very, very upset with the way that a particular thing was going with the student we were working with and couldn't understand why I was so distressed about it, why is this bothering me so much, and she looked at me and decided the moment had come and said "Because its what you ought to be doing".

P: And your reaction was...

A: Dead silence. [LAUGHS] Because it made perfect sense, but I hadn't been conscious of it. But at that moment I heard truth.

P: Right. So it wasn't, your reaction wasn't "You must be out of your mind" or...[A: No] It was... Why didn't I think of that...

A: That's right. They had lead me very carefully over a long period of time and by then I had been in the pulpit, I had planned worship, I had started fellowship groups, I had led the study groups, I had facilitated the Sunday School, all of those things in that context, with them just saying, well, it would be a real help to us... and me trusting them in their process to say "All right, if you think I can help with that, I could do that".

P: It seems to me that you're describing being immensely committed to what was going on in this congregation [A: Oh, definitely] being an extremely active, committed part of it at a time when you had very small children. [A: Oh yes] How did that help, hinder, interact... was what was happening at home one track and what was happening at church another? [A: Oh no] Did they interact pleasantly or..

A: Well anyone with young children will say there are times when it interacts pleasantly and times when it doesn't. Um, my whole God-concept was changing. And it changed as a direct result of my ****, so that the whole sense of total commitment came home with a vengeance. And the concept of God as mother which I hadn't had before came home. So the willingness to be present, the willingness to do things that one may not necessarily want to do, but that one could see were best for the family, for the community. Er, and realizing that the nurturing went both ways, the importance of self-care. And the importance of very simple ritual to the life of a family and a congregation, so that I did that with children on my hip and that seemed very natural and very normal. That they are a part of my life and my faith is a part of my life. To separate them made no sense at all. And the community very definitely came together so that there was the wife of a student minister, not the one I was working with, who came to get Stephanie, who at that point was a new-born, three mornings a week. She lived just down the street from the church and she'd come and get Stephanie and take her for a couple of hours and bring her back. That worked very nicely and Wayne and Joyce worked very well with a 2 1/2 year old, sort of wandering around, borrowing pencils to colour and playing and we all stopped what we were doing when someone needed to be hugged or read to. It was probably one of the healthiest working models that I've been a part of.

P: Extraordinary. Right, so, um, we're back in this office [A: OK] and someone's just said "It's because that's what you should be doing" and you thought "Ah, yes, of course" Right, what happened next? So, was a... was there a period of time when this, when you sort had to acclimatize yourself to this [A: No] or was there a formal process that was set in train as a consequence of a decision or... how did it...?

A: Oh... there are a whole series of things in there. This is where private life and professional life get all mixed up. Um, I preached that Sunday, that was a Friday, I preached on the Sunday and the professors at the Theological College, most were a part of the congregation, and after the service [P: Its Queen's, is it?] Yeah. Cliff Elliot, er, whoever was Principal of the Theological College at that time talked to me at the end of the service and said I want to see you in my office tomorrow. This is only 48 hours after Joyce has enlightened me, er, and I said OK, fine and the children's father came home to be with them during the day so that I could go and do this, er, I walked back through the door with application forms for the M.Div programme just thrilled and delighted, to discover that Steve had received a posting message to Ottawa. All in the same time frame. And so then, hard choices. Was I going to stay in Kingston and do the M. Div or was I going to Ottawa. And we agonized over that for about six weeks and I finally decided that I would move. And that meant not doing the M. Div and we purchased a house in Orleans in the April and the day that the purchase went through I was meeting with UCW people of Kingston Presbytery and got the 'phone call at noon saying that we had the house, walked back into the room and said Well, its final , we're moving, we've bought the house, there's this new United Church that will be built just 4 blocks from the house, all I need to do

now is convince them that they need a Staff Associate. One of the women sitting there said Oh, you don't need to do that. My daughter was the second minister up until 2 weeks ago, she just resigned. And so I walked back into the kitchen and called the church and applied and they interviewed me and I started.

P: Right. OK. So remind me again, a Staff Associate is a... a person who is involved in the ministry, you don't like the word "ministry", the official ministry, the clergy ministry of a congregation, but is not an ordained minister.

A: We're not clergy... We are in paid, accountable ministry. The United Church feels compelled to be very clear about the fact that we aren't clergy.

P: So a Staff Associate is one who assists paid, accountable ministry of a...

A: You would probably find a few of us who would agree with that, the vast majority of us would take great issue with that. What we are is people with skills that the training for ordered or commissioned ministry does not offer. And they're skills a congregation needs in particular, they're large group skills, the maybe social work skills, so that a given congregation may have a specific need, um, that they can't get met by someone who is ordained or commissioned - Orleans United Church had a Sunday School of 400 children [P: Um] and a teaching staff of 50 and what they needed was someone who could run a school.

P: Right. And was that you?

A: That was me. So they had a person in place but they needed someone to work with that person and facilitate the ministry. [P: Right] So that I wasn't hired to run the Sunday School, I was hired to help person to run the school, to develop the skills to do that ministry. And to work with their teams...

P: And that person that was running the Sunday School was a [A: Member of the Congregation] a volunteer.

A: Yeah. And that is my style of ministry always, the servant-leader. Because I very much see my role in a congregation as helping the congregation with their ministry.

P: Um. OK. And you were at Orleans for 3 years?

A: No, no. Just under a year. Because Steve got posted to England [P: Right] and the congregation is a third military, so when I went to them and said Steve's leaving Easter weekend to go to England for a year, um, I committed to you for a full year, which would be 'til the end of June, I will stay and honour that, but you need to know that that's part of what's happening is that he's leaving and they got together and said Oh no, no, you should go with him. So that's the way that happened.

P: Now, that almost a full year, that was a positive experience?

A: Oh definitely. Definitely, it was very hard work. Um, very, very hard work, it was the year I was there that my team-mate and his wife separated and so that I, a lot of my load after Christmas was helping the congregation deal with that. And I ended up on my own for a month because he needed to take a month of. So on some level it was trial by fire. [P: Um] But I was incredibly supported.

The gentleman who is now Chaplain General, Dave Este, was a member, used to be a member of that congregation, and so, he was incredibly supportive. It was just a gift to have him there, so that as I was working things through and needed someone to check with, he was always right there.

P: So this time period served to confirm... what [A: Yes] what had been realized and etc. at Kingston. [A: Yeah] And then your involvement with the church in England [A: Uh hum] ... was it positive, enjoyable?

A: Oh yes. I tend to see life as positive. It had its moments. I was in an area, it was quite rural, um, the Church of England was wrestling with the concept of women in accountable ministry, um, so that I created controversy just by my very existence. And could pack any church I was going to as soon as they knew there was a female in the pulpit. The fact that it was a colonial female made it more of a side-show and more people came. But I had instances of, and part of my job was lecturing, and so I'd walk into the first class and they would just assume that I was the Chaplain's secretary or the Chaplain's wife. And so it was constant. And what that did for me was to force me to re-look at whether I truly believed, er, that I was called to ministry. Because of, not in spite of my gender.

P: Right. OK. This has raised some... your, your, there was nothing in your previous, or was there, was there anything in your previous background, your upbringing at home, your experience of church, your experiences of church, um, as an adult... that... gave you pause to consider if, at length or in depth, the question of gender and ministry. I mean, obviously, from what you said, the church in Kingston, there were men and women in accountable...

A: Yes, that's right. And that had been my experience as a child, as well. The church I was a part of had a deaconess.

P: Right, the tradition goes quite a way back in the United Church.

A: And it was part of my personal experience, it wasn't just theoretical, I actually, as a child was part of a worshipping congregation where I saw a woman, probably about a quarter of the time leading worship, but was active in the Sunday School which was where I was. I had always just taken that as a given. [P: Right] But I was also aware that this wasn't true for all Christians, because my best friend was fundamentalist Baptist and thought it was sacrilege.

P: But was it, the experience in England, um, caused you to think more about this than perhaps you'd done before or...

A: Because I had always taken it as a given...

P: And here were a bunch of people that didn't.

A: ... that I then had to be able to articulate quite clearly why it was a given. [P: Right. OK.] which I had never had to do before, because I was also in a denomination where it was also taken, at least officially, as a given. [P: Right] And I'd never had to stand up for it. [P: Yes] Whereas this time I had to plant my feet quite firmly and say I do believe it is possible for God to call a woman to ministry. Not only possible but probable. And what was fascinating for me was that once people had experienced worship with me, they found the holy in that and it became a non-issue. But they had to experience it and be open to the

experience first.

P: OK. So, you'd gone to England knowing you were just going for a year [A: Uh hum] so, and then you came back to Ottawa or to Kingston?

A: No. Came back here. Came back here. The October I was in England, I got a 'phone call from Tom Sherwood, he was my team-mate in Orleans, and, er, just out of the blue, he'd tracked down the 'phone number and suddenly this voice on the other end said "They're advertising your job, apply." And that was the position here. And I didn't want to come here. I had been part of the support group for the previous female minister here and there was no way I wanted to come here. And the more Tom talked, the more I thought "OK, I will apply" because you can only offer God the opportunity to work, so I'm not going to preclude this, I'm just going to hope like mad and crazy that this isn't it. And I applied and I didn't hear anything and I didn't hear anything and then I got a 'phone call, um, and I didn't hear anything and then I called the day after we landed and they had scheduled me for an interview.

P: Nice of them to let you know.

A: Yeah. But that is how each of the ministry things has happened. [P: Uh hum] Its come out of the blue and its required a response from me that's opened up the possibility. And then all else follows.

P: OK. Yeah. And so you were interviewed and offered the post and accepted.

A: Uh hum. Yeah. And they drove me to Montreal to meet Jack.

P: Right. Yes, of course, because he wasn't...

A: We were called as a team.

P: ... two people at the same time. You'd not met him before?

A: No. Not at all. But within 2 minutes we were fine. I walked in the door, we shook hands and he said "I talked to Wayne, he said this'll work". That's all I needed to know, because Wayne was part of the team that I'd been with in Kingston, who had worked with Jack, sort of, 15 years previous. [P: Right] The theology fit, fit very, very well.

P: And so its been during this period while you've been here that you've pursued formal theological studies? [A: Yes] And where have you been doing that?

A: I took one course at Queen's but the commute is just not tenable, so I've been working at St. Paul's and, er...

P: Doing what? Theology or Pastoral Studies or...

A: Oh, theology. A fair emphasis on Spirituality and Scripture and I'll have to narrow that down one way or the other eventually, I haven't done that yet.

P: So what are you enrolled in or...

A: I'm not enrolled in anything at the moment.

P: A special student taking courses in theology. [A: Yeah] Are you enjoying it?

A: Oh, thriving on it. It gives me, er, new insights, new knowledge, I'm trying to choose courses that reflect back on the life of this congregation. So that it informs the preaching in just a dramatic way and the pastoral care. Its also personally very nurturing because it gives me a community that's Christian and supportive, er, where my role is not always leadership. And so that's had a very healthy effect, just across the board... good things.

P: OK. That's great... If I can move along. I'd like to [LAUGHTER]. Well, no, we won't actually, I want to give you an opportunity to, you've already given quite clear indications of how you, the way, the ways in which you might begin to answer this, but if I can ask you to, um, speak about your understanding of the nature of ministry, you've already mentioned a few things, but, um, ministry in general terms and more particularly, your experience.

A: We're talking about paid, accountable ministry here?

P: Well, we might get there, but if you want to talk about it [A: OK] your general understanding of what ministry is, who ministers are, who they minister to, with or for and then how that, er, perhaps is exemplified by your particular experience.

A: OK. I'm not sure how useful this is going to be. Er, ministry is all of life. Its who you are, its the way you are, each moment, with each person... I think the striving is therefore for every moment to be offering to God... so that it reflects Christ's love... and furthers somehow the coming of the Kingdom...

P: So... so all Christians are ministers... by definition...

A: Uh hum. Oh, definitely.

P: Are all human beings ministers?

A: Yes.

P: So you can be a minister without being a minister?

A: Oh, definitely. I think you become more effective the more conscious you are and the more intentional you are and, um, that it may be that as children we are most effective, when we are neither conscious nor intentional. So that's a paradox that I wrestle with but children are some of the best ministers because they are very much in touch with their own needs and the needs of other people and they respond without hesitation, they're very responsive and giving and then as we age we lose that and we start to edit things out and it therefore requires us to be intentional as we get older to free ourselves again to be fully present for a person. A 2 year old child does a very, very good job of being fully present within themselves and for the flower or the dog or the person they're with... And we lose that as we age. We need to reclaim it intentionally.

P: OK. So... its, yeah, so, ministry is a general human trait which is, um... its more, more what? A person who describes themselves as a Christian [A: Uh hum]

which is certainly a meaningful self-description, it seems to me, because there are large numbers, presumably, for whom a meaningful self-description would be non-Christian [A: Uh huh] or non-believer...[A: Those are very different things] Yeah, in some cultures. Um... is, is there a specifically Christian quality to ministry, or it just more self-conscious, more intense than general human ministry?

A: I'm not sure I'm comfortable with the separation... If we believe, as I do, that we're dealing with embodied Christ... and part of that blends in with the Native Spirituality and part of it is very, very Christian and embodied Christ, then there is Christ in each one of us. [P: Uh hum] And then as a matter of meeting that and embracing it. So to say that "human trait", er, if we take embodied Christ as human trait and acknowledge that when we say "human" we mean physical, emotional, spiritual, then yes, it is human trait. And it is in each one of us. Whether or not we would choose to label it as that.

P: Right. But there are some people who do label [A: Yes] Is that a meaningless label?

A: No, I don't believe so. It is a way in which they have chosen or have been chosen, er, to express what they believe. So that in my experience people come and label themselves as Christian, have had some positive experience of corporate church... and they are not necessarily the only ones who are Christian, but the ones who tend to label themselves that way are either active members of a Christian community in some formal sense or have been and have consciously chosen to step outside of it for a period of time, but there are deeply Christian people who would choose not to label themselves that way. In particular, my experience of people living with AIDS, where the corporate Christian church has rejected them for a whole host of unfaithful reasons. They would actively choose to say no I'm not Christian and yet embody Christ's love. In ways that are phenomenally effective.

P: Yes. OK. So, really, the difference, or the meaning of the term "Christian" as a label, as a self-description is in terms of the connection with a formal, worshipping, Christian community, for instance, a congregation.

A: In my experience, in the cultures I've been part of, yes.

P: Right. So, within that, this brings us very neatly, within most, not all, but most, Christian communities, Christian congregations, there are a particular group of people who, for instance, in some cases are in paid accountable ministry. So, what, if anything, again, is the difference between your ministry, as a paid accountable minister, and the ministry of all human beings? Can you answer that, is it possible to answer that in the same general terms that you've been talking about or can you only now start to say Well, here's a list of some of the kinds of things that I do and other people don't do? Do you see what I mean? There are some distinctions that can be made only at a very concrete level. I'm not leading you. I'm actually asking you. Or I don't intend to.

A: Uh hum. I'm thinking what I would do is start talking and you can stop me at the point at which you think I've answered what you may be asking me. [P: Uh hum] Er, I believe that in any community, the community life works best if people share tasks. And so that's true in the family, its true in a work place, its true in church, and so... the best use of people's gifts are to raise up the things

that they're good at and that frees other people to be good at the things they're good at. So that, in a family, for example, you will find out that parts of that community do more cooking than others and parts do more household repairs and its not that the others couldn't develop the skill, that's where the giftedness is, that's where the pleasure is, that's where the necessity is. And my theology is very Quaker and I would be very, very happy in that community other than that my experience has been that life works best when there is someone who does, um, weaving in the community. And so my role here is as weaver. And its just keeping track of where things are and where people are, where holes need to be mended, where threads need to come together. Taking an overall look at the picture that's unfolding and then inviting other people to look at that: OK, are we happy with the way that this is coming together and if not then what can we change? So its a way of being in community that's different. It would necessarily be me that was doing that, but in this place and in this time, the community has chosen for it to be me.

P: Now,at... excuse me...

A: Did that do it?

P: No, that's excellent. [A: OK] If I can pursue that, again, to use your own example... my experience of Quakers comes from books, but to use them, as your own example, there are, and I don't just think the Quakers, some communities that do not feel the need for this, er, weaver... now, you said its been from your experience that communities are happiest when there is that, um, so that's just a sort of personal... I mean, you clearly wouldn't judge the Quakers [A: Oh no] as lacking something. Would you judge them as being more gifted? Their communities, their congregations are able to function without this...

A: Its quantifying something or ranking something that I don't think is quantifiable.

P: Well, try it again, but this time in more traditional, blunter terms. There are some Christian traditions that judge paid, ordained ministry as a bad thing. Certainly Bretheren, Quakers, some of the Mennonites, they say this is a bad thing and we shouldn't have them.

A: I have been heard to say that ordination is a bad thing...

P: And.

A: And, the er...

P: Does that not mean your taking money under false pretences?

A: Well [LAUGHTER] [P: Sorry] No that's quite OK. No, not at all because I'm not ordained. Um. And there's some intentionality around that. No, I think that in small communities that... analogy: geese formation, where one leads and then falls out and then another leads [P: Yeah]. In a small group it becomes very clear when the leader's becoming tired and needs to fall back and someone else needs to move forward, so that in a small grouping, um, the total mutual responsibility is possible because the communication is good....

[END SIDE ONE]

A: ... size there's a need for someone to be in the midst of what is happening and yet aware of the process.

P: Right. So it really is, again, in blunt terms, a matter of practicalities. There are optimum attributes, qualities of communities that make a facilitator, a weaver, an accountable minister, a preference. Just for the health and the...

A: I believe so, yes.

P: Sorry, to go back, you're not ordained and presumably that's a choice.

A: Yes. Very conscious choice.

P: And you're not going to be because you don't, your theology doesn't approve of it.

A: At this moment that's true. [P: Right.] I would not preclude that changing. There are certainly a significant number of people who are attempting to help me work through that so that it's possible for that to change. Because I'm very much a part of the denomination, so polity would indicate that what I do would require ordination. So just how that's going to unfold, I will continue to be unclear, for a while yet. We'll have to see. Yes, it's a very intentional choice, the United Church speaks of ordination setting aside, whereas, um, Staff Associates come out of the midst of and my theology is very much an out-of-the-midst...

P: Right. Now, OK, but again... out of the midst where? Presumably at the moment, out of the midst of this particular congregation [A: Uh hum] of Glebe St. James [A: Yes] So, perhaps one of the ways to approach this would be to talk about your relationship with this community, this particular congregation. [A: OK] Um, what is it... maybe this way, what, if anything, is it about this congregation that effects whatever it is, if anything, that you do here, or you find yourself doing or being here, um, that, perhaps is different from, well, for instance, your experience in Orleans, your experience in Kingston? Is, would, again, I don't want to lead you, but... would one describe individual congregations as exhibiting individual charisms that mark them off, one from another?

A: I believe that Christ is enculturated. Embodied in a particular place, in a particular time. So that the way that is embodied is different at any point in time and in any group of people.

P: Right. So, what, can you be specific? What are some of the ways that Christ is specifically... embodied here at Glebe St. James that would distinguish it from... Orleans United, Dominion-Chalmers, whatever? I mean there are...

A: Those are radically different groups [P: Well exactly] and we can all smile when we have a sense that their different, articulating how they're different [P: That's what I'm interested in] is an interesting thing.

P: There are, I mean we're in an urban setting, we're not in, Jack's case, rural Manitoba where there's one United Church and one little community and often the connection is quite, seems to be seamless [A: Uh huh] We're in Ottawa. What passes for a city. There are a large number of United Church congregations, all with their own history and local tradition.

A: OK. For this one, um, people are here because this is critically important to them. The vast majority of people who are members of this community, as adults, are incredibly over-programmed. They're in really, really high-pressure jobs that take an incredible amount of their time, um, and this is not Oh, gee, I have nothing to do on Sunday morning or Oh, gee, I've nothing to do on Wednesday night, I think I'll go to church. This is: this is critically important to me, er, it is nurturing, it is sustaining, it is challenging and I am choosing this as a significant priority in my life. They couldn't be here otherwise. Um... and that's different from you find some places [P: Uh hum] Some places there's simply an expectation that you go to church. Here it is almost the expectation that if work gets in the way, you won't come and yet people consistently choose to make room for this and that is what they are doing. Er, people are members of this specific congregation for a whole variety of reasons, there's a very strong community, a very strong support for one another, personally, professionally, spiritually. They have to want to make the hard choices. So, this is not a "feel good" congregation. If there are hard things to talk about, we're going to talk about them. There's enough diversity that on any topic we happen to choose to discuss, there are going to be people whose viewpoints span the entire spectrum. And feel quite strongly about that, passionately about that, but who are open to hearing one another. This congregation went through quite a watershed in the mid to late 80s. And it resulted in people who did not have an openness, reaching a lack of comfort that required them to find some place else to worship. So that there's still people here whose viewpoints span the whole spectrum, but they're people who're prepared to enter into community and to listen and to hallow the diversity.

P: OK. So it seems as if it should follow on almost straight on from that, so given that description of this particular Christian community [A: That's the adults] Right, if we can stick with them for a little while [A: I want to talk about the children as well, though] What does that say about the weaver, the paid, ordained minister? What, if any, particular qualities or tasks distinguish ministry here than elsewhere?

A: They were very specific in what they were looking for. They had a fair sense of the qualities they needed. Between Jack and I, I think they've managed to put a team in place that gives them both the safety-net and the challenge they need. There was a definite requirement... that whoever came be very open, er, there continues to be a need for an approach that is: Let us discover truth as community. As opposed to: This is the truth and will be pronounced from the pulpit. So that it's a questing, a searching, a celebrating. I describe my role, sometimes, as that of lover. That there's a real need for Christ's love, the acceptance, the acknowledgement that God created us this way and is with us in each moment so that the congregation, this congregation seems to need a constant reminder that God is with us. That may a reflection of what they do professionally, stress, the fact that they're put in daily situations where the horrors of the world come crashing down upon them. They needed both a gentleness and a liveliness, so Jack and I embody each of those.

P: I haven't forgotten about your children, but can we, because it does seem as though, it would just carry straight on [A: Sure] Can you speak now, in the light of what you've just said, about your role, again you might not like the terminology, as worship-leader and specifically, as preacher? How does what you've just described, you've described, the needs of the congregation as that effects your role, or the role of any minister?

A: OK. Each thing we do in worship is very intentional. And so there's a theology around that, there's a pastoral care element around that, er, preaching as pastoral care, if you want to slide right into preaching, is quite a strong element of what I do. But each moment of the service ties in and we continue to alter and to weave that. We've just recently started lighting a Peace candle near the beginning of each service, where as a part of that lighting we name it as prayer. But we name a particular country and that's different each week. But it was very clear to us that part of what people were bringing to worship each week, with them, were concerns in their work as Treasury Board, or as Foreign Affairs, or as Refugee Board, er, Archives, and just a whole range of what people did involved things internationally. And that was part of what they were bringing to worship and part of, a way of opening up was the need to offer that. So that happens now before our Prayer of Approach and Confession.

P: You talked about, or you mentioned "Preaching as Pastoral Care" [A: Uh huh] Could you expand on that? Could you talk about that?

A: I could talk about almost anything... Call it Pastoral Care, call it Ministry, call it prayer. When we interact, that's what we're doing and what we're doing effects the spiritual, emotional, physical well-being of the people we meet and so, there are certain needs, certain issues, in particular that are emotional, that are spiritual, although some physical as well, that people bring into a worship context that makes it relevant for their life. I think there has to be a part of each moment of worship that acknowledges the reality of the people who are there, so that part of my preaching style, in almost every sermon there comes a moment in which I may list in rapid fire 6 or 8 examples that are drawn from the lives of the people there with out naming people and places and trying to have things that are general enough that a whole range of people can opt in and say Oh yes, that's a part of my life. Um, and they may be very personal things, they may be community things, they may be Ottawa things, Canada things, international things, but, um, its quite intentional that naming and that happens virtually each time I preach, there will be, like, 2 minutes of rapid fire, er, that span those and what that appears to for people is to help them enter and identify this as very personal for them... I think there needs to be a time to acknowledge the people who are with us who are in a grief state so that God as sustainer needs to be held up at some point, each and every time... the God with us, you're not alone, each and every time...and there are moments in the life of a congregation where what they hear needs to be very challenging and very "in you face", but those times are very rare. That there are far more often times in this congregation which the challenge has to be there but the challenge has to be very gentle... very open, connected with the fact that people have wrestled with these things for all of time and that part of being Christian is the wrestling, the struggling, the faith is the asking the questions and that answers may or may not be an option.

P: Can I just ask you a few specific questions about preaching? [A: Sure] You follow the lectionary? [A: Yes] So, now... when you preach do you... do you feel any obligation or any sense that you should address the Gospel reading in particular [A: No] or it can be any of the readings or none of them?

A: I have never done none of them. So the sermon has always come out of, at least one of the readings.

P: Right. And this would be part of the, this would happen in sermon

preparation? [A: Uh hum] How does that happen? Do you prepare a sermon a long time ahead of time? Or very close to when you're going to preach?

A: It gets back to my concept of embodied Christ in this place and this time. So, to prepare a sermon 5 months in advance, it may be a wonderful sermon when its written, it may or may not have any reflection of the life of the congregation at the time at which its preached and it has to, so I don't think that really long range planning is healthy or faithful. We do rough block 3 months in advance, where we read through all of the readings. Sometimes we intentionally choose to follow a particular story line so that the lectionary, last summer and into the fall in the Old Testament followed some wonderful stories and we intentionally decided to follow that story line through the worship for that time period... and then as far as actual nuts and bolts preparation, a fortnight prior, there's a lectionary group of United Church Ministers and we gather and we read through and sometimes then in that context one reading speaks very, very clearly to the life of this congregation, um, and so its at that point that at least one reading becomes eliminated and then we, on any given Sunday we will read, Old Testament, New Testament and may or may not do the Psalm.

P: Um, but, when you are going to be preaching on a particular Sunday, you will have, given that long term and mid-term... preparation, do you commit to paper what you're going to preach or do you preach ex tempore?

A: I've tried both ways. It still works best for me when what I have in front of me is a verbatim, now whether or not I follow that rigidly when I'm up there doesn't seem to make a difference, but by and large the experience most Sundays is that I have written as I intend to speak. And that is what happens.

P: And that's done sometime in the week previous.

A: Yes. Now the research has been done over the fortnight. [P: Yeah] And a gathering and a thinking and a praying, but then when its actually ready to go, its usually the Thursday or the Friday, but I have already written the Call to Worship, the Prayer of Approach and Confession, done hymn selection. So that begins for me a truly clarifying process around just what it is at this moment that that reading's speaking to me about. So that before the Thursday or Friday, its really clear, its then just how am I going to do that?

P: Yes. You know what you want to say, its just a matter of how you're going to say it. [A: Uh huh] OK. Tell me about the children.

A: Children and teens, that's part of who this congregation is. Its not part of who they were. So that in 4 years they've gone from 22 children and 2 teens to somewhere between 60 and 80 children on any given Sunday and over 20 teens and over 30 young adults. And it has involved the older adults in the congregation, um , embracing the giftedness of the younger people and worship becoming far less formal, the style of sermon has altered radically, there's a lot more story telling, the theme conversation has been from sort of 2 minutes of entertainment for the children to being on the average between 5 and 10 minutes long, which has gut the sermon time, so its now 10 to 12 minutes as opposed to 20. So, both of those things are for the adults and so there's been a real learning around story telling that has happened and a celebrating that it has and its another way that the diversity is acknowledged. Things have become more

visual, the style of music has changed, somewhat, so now there's just this wide range of things musically... that's an acknowledgement that you may not like every part of the service or every part of the service may not work in a worship way for you, but there will be a part that does and you know that there is a part for the person sitting beside you and there's many different parts and that's not only OK, that's good. Yeah.

P: And this, clearly, as far as you're concerned is a good thing. [A: Uh hum] The children, the young people, the effect they have had...

A: We are the whole people of God.

P: If they weren't here, there'd be something lacking.

A: Oh, yes. Whole bunch of noise, a whole bunch of chaos, but also a lot of joy. And a lot of teaching. And a lot of ministry.

P: As you're probably aware, I was trying to get a questionnaire administered here... One of the questions I asked the respondents to complete a sentence, they were given a series of possible choices, um, but I wonder whether you might be willing to try and, in a sentence [LAUGHTER] it can be multi-claused, um, I just ask people to complete the sentence which begins "The heart of Christianity is..."

A: [PAUSE] I don't have to multi-clause that at all, because I would say that the heart of Christianity is love.

P: The heart of Christianity is love. Now that was succinct. Terse, to the point. [LAUGHTER] Thank you very much indeed, I really appreciate this.

[END TAPE]

APPENDIX B: Transcripts of sermons

From: First United Church Jan. 9th 1994

Preacher: Sharon Moon

Just as I look as these sculptor, sculptures, I am aware that every one of them has come from what we call the two-thirds world. One comes from Kenya, the big one, one comes from Korea, the wooden one and the onyx one comes from Mexico. The creating Spirit that is, er, present among... the two-thirds world is often quite amazing. All of our scriptures today are about beginning and that's, I guess, appropriate as we, some of us anyway, struggle to begin a new year, to get kind of geared up, to meet this January... and as we begin to start to unlock the meaning of this birth that we have just celebrated... some of you know, I've been dealing with more of the other end of the spectrum in the last little while, for since Christmas Eve, I've been dealing with an Aunt who is, remains in critical condition because of a brain aneurism and she's holding her own but she's still, remains in critical condition. I've also been spending time with a lot of folks this week who have been dealing with various kinds of deaths. Physical or emotional, spiritual and you know, I coulda done with an old "Yea, though I walk through the valley of death" scripture today... and yet rather than that, what do we get but scriptures about beginning. Nothing that allows me to focus on endings or on "ain't it awful" or on Christmas blues, post-Christmas blues, or on frozen cars or frozen feet. Instead these scriptures challenge us to be in touch with the God of beginnings, the God of newness of life. The God of creating, the God of re-creating. And its been a real challenge for me. I told my kids yesterday I was writing this sermon that I was, um, giving birth to something and it was a breach birth and you know what that means because they were calling me to connect with power and with possibility rather than with chaos and with hopelessness. And they've done that and I hope they may work some of that

creating power in your life as well. The passage from Acts speaks about the beginnings of the church and Paul's question to them about the Holy Spirit "Had they received the Holy Spirit when they believed?" Now many of us wouldn't really know how to answer that question. If I came up to you and said "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" um, I don't know how you would react. I usually find that question ends up being asked by, to me, by people who really could not give one hoot about what the Holy Spirit is doing in my life in terms of creating me, rather its usually asked by people who are trying to see whether I'm inner or an outer. Whether I'm somebody to be excluded or somebody to be included in the real category of Christian, the born again real category of Christian or whether I'm just one of those wishy-washy liberals pretending. And usually, whether we've received the Holy Spirit by people who are asking that kind of question, there's a set of very narrow rules about how, what the Spirit is and how we know one has received the Holy Spirit. I guess for me, the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit interacts with creation and with my own life and with what I see in other people's lives is something much more elusive. Its much more difficult to explain, its much more difficult to stick in a little box. Its deeper. Its more creative. And its much more radical in the sense that it goes right, more to the core and the depths of who we are. The Spirit's about the capacity to be fully alive. Fully alive in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. And that truly is a gift of God. Its about that energizing, creating, sustaining power at work in the very core of creation... and its the source and the power for life that one is able to draw upon when absolutely everything seems hopeless and chaotic. And when you don't even know what it is that you need to ask for, its as if the Spirit, Paul says, groans through you with a prayer too deep for words. And its that same Spirit that was at work in the Priests' account of

Genesis that was read today. The irony is that the Priestly account of Genesis, the very first words of the Bible are written much later than the Second Story of Creation which comes in the second part. It's the same spirit that was present at Jesus' baptism. In the Genesis story that---- read from today we're reminded that in the beginning God and in Hebrew that's "Beginnings God", "Beginnings God creatingness". That's the way those words, it's like word pictures and they're parallels: beginningness, newness, Godness, sacredness, holiness and creatingness. Those are the three pictures that are in that verse. In the beginning God was and God was creating and God was bringing order out of chaos. God, that's comforting. God was bringing order out of chaos. Out of what had no form and what was just emptiness and void, without light. Order out of chaos. For this late 20th century generation there's a strange majesty and mystery about this language that other generations haven't been able to grasp. We didn't know anything about Chaos Theory when they wrote this book, the Bible. But we also can hear a different element to it, a kind of warning or threat because it is possible we know in this generation as no other generation has ever known that that formlessness and that void to be again and indeed for us as a generation, as a species, to bring that about. And so the fragility of creation... And it was the ru'ah, I love that word, every chance I get to use it I do because that's the word in, in Hebrew, the ru'ah, the Spirit of God, the breath of God, the wind of God. And this was moving over the waters. Just love that imagery. And we can be thankful that that is also true, eternally true. And it's not just some vision of something that happened in a remote past, in some mythical dream world but this God who created the heavens and the earth is still in the process of creating and still moving over the deeps. For every moment a million stars are being born in the wombs of the great galaxies. That's a good thing to remember when you

think that your life is so important and what's going on in your own life is, um, is where its really at. That a million stars are being born every moment in the wombs of the great galaxies. And as we think about the Spirit moving over the waters preparatory to calling forth land and other forms of life, we're reminded also of the oceans that are still the source and guardian of life on this planet and how fragile we're beginning to realize they are. For if the oceans are destroyed, then we too will be. And yet... the creating Spirit still moves over them. As an instrument for further creation. And we, as never before, are being invited to play our role as co-creators rather than destroyers. And the voice of God called light into being. And there was light. Not only God called light, but there was light. For when God speaks in Hebrew its a word-action. When I speak a concept might be born. When God speaks, the reality of thing is born. Creation in the Genesis story is really the spoken thought of God. And the more we know of new physics and some of the new mysteries of, of scientific theory around creation, the more the universe begins to resemble a great thought rather than a great machine. Indeed, there are those who postulate that its one living organism called Gaia and it has a finite power to heal. Now the priest who wrote this account of creation were certainly not scientists in the 20th century understanding of this word and they were certainly not historians or journalists interested in some kind of so-called accuracy, reporting of provable facts. They were concerned with meaning and with mystery and with sacred power. The kind of thing that can only be grasped through myth and through story. Not only were they concerned with saying God was the source of it all, but that both light and dark, both order and chaos are part of an integrated creation. Are companions of the creation and of the creator. That the universe is not alien and unfriendly. But that at its very source is the creating breath of love and that

Spirit is the one in whom we all live and move and have our being. And there's another thing they were concerned with saying. They were concerned with saying that what God had created God saw was good and God said it was good. It was good. And that's a fundamental attitude in Judaeo-Christian, Christianity which is different from a lot of other religious traditions. And indeed in our own tradition it's been lost and distorted for many centuries. The created matter that earth, that flesh, that blood, that body that creation is good. That matter is not something less than spirit. That matter is not something evil as some philosophies would have portrayed it. That matter is not some prison in which the spirit is imprisoned and from which it tries to escape to become fully potential. Matter is God's creation. And therefore it is sacred. And it is good. And it is matter that creation continues. And that's a fundamental idea that changes the whole way we approach the earth and our bodies. In this season of, season of waters breaking in the God-forsaken town of Bethlehem and of new life emerging out of the chaos of that time of, the darkness of the political turmoil and the military threat and the economic mess and physical discomfort that was all part of that birthing we're reminded yet again of God's love affair with creation and with embodiment. For in spite of all the obstacles to and at his birth, Jesus did survive, he had to become a refugee but he was a survivor and he did grow up... and he did begin his ministry. And in our scripture today, that --- read, we found him at the river Jordan, that sacred river through which the Israelites had had to pass to enter the new life of the promised land, that healing river in which Naaman had bathed to cure him of his leprosy. Jesus had chosen to leave familiar places and to go out into this wilderness. In the wilderness he meets up with people who are looking for a different way who are trying to find more integrity in their personal living. Trying to find a different way of being in

harmony with God and with themselves and they're following a man John, a prophet, the one who leaped in Mary's womb, er, Elizabeth's womb when Mary's mother went to visit him. We're told in another gospel. He's John, Jesus' cousin. He told them that... that life had to change right to the very core and that cosmetic changes on the surface were not enough. That radical, root transformation had to take place and his message was both abrasive and also very attractive. Jesus was baptized with this baptism that he used to symbolize the dying of the old and the rising to the new, that kind of radical turn about that's required in lives. Its seen as a new beginning. Its seen as a commitment to turn one's life around and to chose a different way. The baptism of John was not an end but it was rather a beginning of a process for choice for life. For life that would attune itself to God. For God's unfolding word in our times. And Jesus chose to be baptized by John in that historic, sacred river... that's been a problem for a lot of the church who have seen it as a cleansing of sin and who are coming from that place. I don't find it a problem at all because I think Jesus chose to put himself in transformation in, um, solidarity with people who were seeking transformation of life. The kind of, er, new transformation that John was preaching about. In this time of baptism and if you can hear the echoes of the Genesis account of creation, Jesus received the Spirit which hovered over the water. The Spirit was hovering this time symbolized as a dove. And God's creating word, the same as in the Genesis account, words of affirmation. "You are my beloved, in whom I delight." I like that so much better that "in whom I am well pleased". I think that's much better translation. "In whom I delight." Jesus finding himself as God's delight - the beloved in whom I delight. I love that image. God saw that it was good. Same thing. From this baptism as from all baptisms came a new beginning, a new sense of ministry and calling and empowerment.

It wasn't a road map all laid out with a plan of dots that if Jesus just followed he'd get to the treasure. It was a, not a beginning that came without suffering or without struggle, the very next words if you read your Mark account, are that Jes, the Spirit immediately led him out into the wilderness and he went through a time of great trial. And struggle as he tried to figure out what the meaning of all this was. What did it mean? To be God's beloved? What did it mean to be the one in whom God delighted? Sometimes he might have said, like, y'know, you've heard the, I have heard Jewish friends say, so why don't you choose somebody else, eh? He might have felt like that sometimes. I don't know. But... he had to work with what the meaning was of his experience and the Spirit was continuing to create. Creation was continuing in Jesus' life. The Spirit was moving, making new. Unlocking possibilities. Baptism for each one of us is a beginning, a time of letting go of old values and of taking on of new ones. Rooted in being a child of creation. And as in Jesus, we too have to struggle with that call to discipleship and to kind of wrestle with discovering the special thing that is hidden in us. What special gift it is that we were created to be. What angel has been locked in us? given to us? That we are called to bring to birth, to have created, to allow the Spirit of God to create... Its the creating Holy Spirit that helps us release those angels locked in what looks like the chaos and the raw materials that have been given. Its the Spirit that allows us to see possibility for something new to emerge. Its the Holy Spirit that sustains us... with possibility when we don't feel that any possibility is there. Its the Holy Spirit that allows us to dance with joy and hope when there seems so little to celebrate. And to feel new life deep within even when so much of the old way is dying... The World Council of Churches has as their theme "Come Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth". The Holy Spirit renews our lives, it

renews the earth. It helps us to rebirth us, ourselves to be rebirthed. Come Holy Spirit rebirth us in your life-giving waters. Breath hope and possibility into our chaos. And sustain us with your affirmation that we too are your beloved and your delight. Amen.

First United Church Nov. 7th 1993 (No recording)

Preacher: Sharon Moon

In our scriptures today we are reminded in the Psalms of the importance of telling the next generation the stories and the community's experience of how God had been with them through trying times in the past. And it is clear in that psalm that not only the happy, successful parts are to be told, but also the dark sayings of old. Remembering was seen as an important way of teaching for the future generations.

In the letter to the Thessalonians, the confused people are told that they are not to grieve as others, as those who have no hope. Grieving with hope, remembering with hope is how Paul says the community is to encourage one another. Grieving in a way that does not only look backwards, but also looks to the future with hope.

In Matthew, again the theme of being between times, is present. The women in the story have been given the role of tending and guarding the light. Since fire, and light was one of the most precious gifts, it was a tremendous responsibility to guard it, to keep it burning, to care for it, to make sure that it would be there for those who would come later.

A few blocks from here, in the Peace Tower at the Parliament Buildings, there is a special room with a special book with the names of all the Canadian men and women who died in the First World War. Beside it is a Bible. And above it is a light that never goes out. This light is tended, and is a reminder to all our leaders and to all who visit of what has happened in the past, so that we can remember and learn to live in peace.

In our own church, we have a rose window that is a memorial to those from this congregation who died in World War 2. As well we have plaques at the front of our church which have names of those who used to sit in these very pews who have been killed in wartime. The pulpit from which I preach was a gift in memory of an airman from this congregation who was killed.

There are some in this congregation who fear that this next generation will not remember this story, will not value the courage and the sacrifice, will forget, and the story, and the memory will disappear.

Some of us in my generation find it hard to remember something that we never experienced, and fear anything that would glorify war as a good way of solving conflict. What does it mean for this congregation, with its diversity of experience, to remember with hope, to remember to the future?

I have in this past week been trying to imagine what it would be like to have been the minister of a congregation where on Sunday I might have to come in to announce that ----- had been killed in action - A Euphemism for having his head blown off with shrapnel, or being blown to pieces by a bomb, or had been lost at sea when his ship or plane went down, Imagine what it would be like for you as a community to hear that we had lost one of our own children at 18, or 20 or 22 years of age, a young man we had all watched grow up in our Sunday School as a child, a boy we had watched grow into an adolescent and join our youth group, a young man whom we had watched fall in love and wondered if we might all be hearing about a wedding soon. What would it be like for us to know this young man's mother and father, brothers and sisters? What would it be like for us to know that his fiancée was sitting in the pew in front of us, her future dashed? What would it be like not knowing when the war was going to be over, if ever? What would it be like not knowing which side was going to win? What would it be like to be in that

horrible waiting, grieving, hoping time?

I can only enter such a reality in my imagination. Some of you have lived through exactly what I have been talking about in your own experience. Some of you have come from countries where war is going on still, and this kind of violence, and death, and fear have been part of your life still in this decade of the 20th Century. For although there has not been a world war since 1945, there have been more localized conflicts which have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

Remembrance Day is celebrated at the 11th hour of the 11th month each year because that was the moment the guns stopped firing in world war 1. It is remembered with silence, because it was the moment of silence could be finally experienced. It is a celebration of peace, and of the longing that this war would be the last war, the war that would end all wars. Veterans of WW 1 could not imagine, after the horror they had experienced that they would ever be insane enough to go to war again, if only they could remember.... if only they could remember If only they would take some silence to reflect, and let the meaning of war, and the cost of war sink into their souls. World War 1 was the war that destroyed any romanticization of war. No one who experienced the stench and rot of trench warfare, and poison gas (as did my grandfather) ever came back unchanged. Many were destroyed in spirit, even if their physical bodies returned.

The human race is only beginning to learn that war and violence are not the way of solving problems. Canadians involved in both wars hoped that the war they were fighting would be the last one, would be the one that would end war forever. World War 2 veterans hoped that this war would end tyranny and oppressive regimes. Would that hope had turned out to be true. Since World War 2, Canada's main military role in the world has been in a

Peacekeeping role, working mostly with the United Nations trying to diffuse situations, trying to verify arms control, and distribution of humanitarian assistance, trying to create the kind of climate in which peaceful solutions can be negotiated by politicians. Canadians have put their lives on the line monitoring ceasefires between Iran and Iraq, between Arabs and Israelis, between Afghans and Pakistanis, between warring factions in Cyprus, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, between Croats and Serbs in Former Yugoslavia, between warring clans in Somalia. Tens of thousands have been involved since 1947 in this and other peacekeeping work, and 88 Canadians have died while serving in this work.

We are still as a world struggling to understand what Peacekeeping will mean for the future. We will make mistakes, as I feel we have in recent years in Iraq and Oka, as General Lewis Mackenzie feels the UN is doing in former Yugoslavia, and we do this because we are so new at this process, and sometimes have not changed our thinking as a species far enough to truly be people of peace. But we have also moved in very positive directions since the beginning of the century.

AS Christians we need constantly to be living in hope for peace. We need to be holding up that light, and working for the kind of justice that will create the climate for peace to flourish. The best tribute that we in these times can pay to those who have had their lives and their futures taken from them as a result of war, is to work to build the kind of world where this will never have to happen again, for anyone, anywhere. We live in between times, between memory and hope. We live with the longing for peace, and the reality that for many in this world that has not yet arrived. But if ever we get cynical and lose Peace with Justice as the goal for which we struggle, we are in peril of losing our souls, and of trivializing the memory of those who have

gone before. Let us take a time to remember and to reflect, especially those who have lost their lives. Let us keep silence before this awesome history.

From: First United Church (No recording)

Preacher: Sharon Moon

Voices from the wilderness are never very easy to listen to. They come from a place many of us would rather deny existed. They come from the edge, from the dry barren places in the world, and in our own lives. They remind us that how things are is not how God intended them to be. They remind us of our own lack of wholeness, and of the culture's lack of wholeness. They demand change. They cry out for repentance - for looking straight into the face of reality, and choosing to turn around and go in a different direction.

In scripture the wilderness is always the place of testing, of radical formation and transformation. The wilderness is where one goes when one time has ended and one is waiting to be born. It is where one resists evil and being co-opted by evil. Israel left slavery in Egypt, but had to spend years in the wilderness, before they could become a people of God. The reading from Isaiah comes to a people in the wilderness of exile in Babylon. The experience of exile for the Jews was not only because of the attitude of the Babylonians. It was also a refusal of the Jews to assimilate, the refusal of the people to be co-opted to the dominant culture that surrounded them. And here the messenger proclaims comfort to the people, and promises one who would come to lead them home. They are to prepare for the coming.

Jesus at the beginning of his ministry chooses to go out into the wilderness, and to be baptized by this Old Testament, prophet-like character John, the adult child of Elizabeth that we talked about last week. Some kids are like that when they grow up. They don't take the easy route their parents would have chosen for them. I used to feel that John was a bit of an odd-ball, but increasingly I find him more and more interesting and even to identify with him in some ways. There was a lot of deep dissatisfaction with

the way things were in John's day. Israel was living as a captured, occupied people. Religion was in captivity to the culture far too often. A lot of people were only concerned with how to survive. And yet, there must be more, there must be more. John gathered in the wilderness a lot of people seeking the more; seeking a different vision for living. John's message was radical, it went to the root (which is the meaning of radical). It was not enough to make just a few minor adjustments in the way things were. It was going to demand repentance. Turning around and going in another direction. Bringing lifestyle and the whole society into harmony with Shalom - God's vision for the world.

Voices still call for repentance, and they almost always come from the wilderness, from the marginalized, from the edge, from the powerless places both in the culture and in our own psyches. This week there are two important days in which voices from the wilderness are crying - Prepare a new way - prepare a way of peace - a way of justice. Last Wednesday was World Aids Day. Around the world persons living with HIV, and with AIDS, and those who have been affected by this dreadful disease were speaking out, breaking the silence, demanding to be heard, and seen, demanding that the wall of denial and shame around this disease be broken down, demanding justice in treatment, in housing, in employment, demanding that responsibility be taken for the tainted blood that was given in transfusions, demanding that we take this illness seriously and education around it seriously.

Tomorrow in this church, and across the nation, women and men who are committed to end violence against women and children will gather. We will remember the 14 women murdered in Montreal, but we will remember the women and children being murdered and violated every year. This year a study on Violence against women has come out saying that one in every two women is a victim of violence during her life. For some of us that was no

surprise. I have been using those numbers in public speaking for 5 years now. To create a world with zero tolerance for violence and abuse will require nothing less than the kind of radical restructuring of our thinking that John the Baptist called repentance. It will require us to stand up and challenge sexist jokes, sexism in the workplace, in the schoolyard, in our homes and in our court system. It will require us to be willing to talk about things people don't want to hear about, to break the silence, to take down the wall of denial that keeps this evil going.

Just two examples of voices in the wilderness. There are many more. Voices crying for transformation of our living - voices concerned with the future of our earth, with endangered species, and the rainforests that are disappearing, voices concerned with pollution of the water and air and earth that sustain life, voices crying out against human rights abuses, against discrimination because of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability. Voices crying out against militarization. Voices from the third world. Voices from the edge, from the powerless. Voices calling out that God's way of peace and wholeness might be prepared, that what seems like mountains in the way of this justice, might be brought down, and the deep valleys of despair and hopelessness might be lifted up and that the rough road to God's peace and justice might be made smooth, so that it might come as God would have it come. Repent - Prepare the way for our God.

From: First United Church (No recording)

Preacher: Sharon Moon

In our readings for the 3rd Sunday of Advent, our scriptures are words about a God who acts powerfully, a God whose presence turns life upside-down, to create a justice that is waiting to be born in the world. Both of our scriptures also speak of vocation, of being called by God to be partners in bringing to birth this vision. But it is not simply a matter of having a heavy weight of responsibility laid on the one called. The scriptures also speak about the kind of empowerment and the energizing that both the prophet Isaiah, and the young woman Mary experience as they find themselves part of the proclaiming and making real, the vision of God's shalom. Because of this, both of them are able to do more than ever they thought possible. The scripture from Isaiah is what Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth, when he announced it as the mandate for his own ministry with the words "Today this scripture is fulfilled in me." So these words are for me some of the most important in all of scripture.

The reading from Isaiah is a promise of freedom and justice, and of restoration. But remember to whom it was originally addressed - to those who had been defeated and led out of their homeland into exile in Babylon 660 years before the birth of Christ - to a people who had lost hope, lost a sense of centre, lost a feeling of God's supporting presence. They were dispirited - the Spirit had gone out of them - They were a people who no longer looked toward the future, or had any sense of their own identity - people who experienced themselves as strangers in a strange land - who didn't belong to the culture and customs and ways of Babylon yet who did not have the freedom to leave - for they were in captivity - both from external forces, and increasingly from internal forces - despair, hopelessness, resignation.

I don't know about you, but I meet a lot of people like that - people in captivity - Some are in captivity to poverty, or violence, or childhood traumas - Some are in captivity to consumerism, or meaninglessness, or powerlessness or fear. And I know that there have been times in my own life when I have recognized myself as an exile - a stranger - with hope running low -

I invite you today to listen to these words from the perspective of one in captivity. You may want to be thinking of whole people, like the refugees from Guatemala, who are in a very real exile in Mexican camps, longing to return home. Or you may feel connected to the sense of exile in yourself or the experience of someone you know. Where does this image of the stranger in a strange land connect most for you? Where can you most connect with loss of hope, being dispirited, being in captivity? Indeed you may want to spend some time reflecting on what holds you in captivity? What keeps you in exile? And then from being in touch with this experience, to hear the word of hope the prophet offers to those exiles, but also words that Jesus announces as his mission and ministry.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me - because God has annointed me to preach good news to the poor

What would good news to the poor be? What would a messenger of good news to the poor look like? All Christians are annointed to ministry, not just people who wear funny robes like me. Do you feel annointed of God to preach good news to the poor? Do you feel the Spirit of God upon you? How does this image of ministry inform our own congregation's mission and ministry? And where do we experience good news being preached, enacted, to our own poverty?

God has sent me to bind up the broken hearted

Where do you experience you^y broken, hurting heart in need of binding-up - in need of healing and caring? Is there any way you can

imagine or let yourself experience God wanting to do that? Do you hear the call within yourself to the ministry of binding up wounded hearts?

God has sent me to set free the oppressed, to proclaim liberty to the captives

Where do you connect with the experience of oppression? Do you feel in your very bones the injustice in our world? the violence in Central America, Haiti, Iran, Bosnia, and the list could go on and on - Are there ways you experience oppression or captivity in your own life? Are you the oppressed or the oppressor, captive or captor? or perhaps both? What would setting free be like? What would it feel like? What would have to change for that to happen? Is there some way that you are called to set captives free? Can you feel this as your part of bringing to birth God's vision of shalom?

God has called me to proclaim the recovery of sight to the blind

Where do you feel blind? What are you blocked from seeing - in yourself, in the culture, in your family, in the world? how would things change if you were able to see? What would need to happen if that were to be? Are you called to open others' eyes, to help them to see?

And then hear - but let yourself experience in your whole being, these healing images from Isaiah - Touch the place in yourself where you have known loss and hear these words of comfort. God calls me to comfort all that mourn. Those that have experienced deep loss to give them beauty to wear as the ashes of mourning to give them the oil of joy as their mourning oil, and to give them a robe of praise instead of the heaviness which clothes them. And then later God has clothed me with the garments of salvation and with the robe of righteousness. Salvation and righteousness are words that have become hard for us to hear after they have been used by so many fundamentalist Christians in exclusive, judgmental ways. But salvation is a

word that means healing, and righteousness means being in right relationship - living with integrity and justice. These are indeed images of God's desire to bring healing. And the images go on: images of restoration to desolated land. They shall build in the old areas of waste and desolation. They shall repair ruined cities and the desolations of many generations. What would it mean for us to restore the desolations of many generations. For some it might be breaking family patterns of abuse, of addictions, or lack of sharing real feeling - Others may think of restoring healing to the ravaged earth - surely laid waste, and cumulatively violated by many generations - Or perhaps to be part of the healing of the violent divisions between races, sexes between first and two thirds world - between rich and poor. So much desecration still in our world in our lives - so much need for restoration, for salvation, for renewing, for rebuilding. And a sense that this is not just for our own selves, but is part of a vision of a God who longs to turn upside down destruction, oppression, suffering desolation, both on a personal level but also in the society.

And this is what Christmas is about -

Mary knew this, when on meeting her cousin Elizabeth she cries out what we now call the Magnificat. It is a powerful song of praise to a God who turns life upside down. God has scattered the proud in their imagination - brought down mighty kings from their thrones - lifted up the lowly - filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands - This is not the meek and mild Mary the church has often tried to sell us as the prototype for a submissive female role. Mary had no saccharine sentimentality about the birth of her child. She frees herself from the image of the Christmas pageants of most of our childhoods. For she knew that the upside-downing God was at work in her, and would be at work in her child.

So watch your step as you approach this manger. It may fool us all. The tiny baby we seek may turn our lives upside down. The infant may lead us in ways we had not planned. We may be given visions of a different way - we may be called and annointed by God's Spirit to a life of ministry. This baby might put thoughts and feelings and ideas and actions into our minds that we didn't expect. It may lead us to new life - It's a dangerous manger as someone once said.

But then what kind of God would come as a helpless vulnerable child anyway?

From: First United Church (Recording Made)

Preacher: Sharon Moon

What a futile thing to try to ?shush it? when they're so excited and so energetic. I'd like to thank our new Liturgical Dance Group for their very powerful rendition this morning of the Annunciation story and of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. In most churches that story is not going to be read today. In most churches that story isn't read until the th ... the er the last Sunday before Christmas. Now I don't know about you but have you ever heard about a baby being born with a pregnancy of one week? What more powerful image of hope and waiting and expectancy is there than the image of pregnancy? What more powerful image can there be for Advent season? And so I always like to bring the Annunciation story early on in Advent. As you saw there were a lot of mixture of feelings around Mary's discovery of the pregnancy and I wonder why? Her pregnancy was something that was certainly something she was not expecting. It wasn't something she was looking for or something that she wanted. And all of a sudden her life was turned upside down. You ever had a pregnancy like that? Um? I see a few smiles. You ever had a pregnancy where, um, you had some ambivalent feelings about it? at the beginning? Mary sure had some pretty ambivalent feelings - There's just a whole mixture of images and feelings around impregnation and pregnancy when we start to think about our own experience. I wonder what it was like for your parents when they found out they were pregnant with you. You might just want to take a minute to think about that. You may know. They may have told you that story. Or you may be completely unaware. Some of you may have been adopted in which case even more

ambivalence surround all of that and wondering what that was all about. Some of you know the story of your adoption and some of you may not. Some of you may have been cherished, hoped for children, planned children. Some of you may have been a total shock. Something that upset the whole system and how has that affected how you've lived out your life and how you've felt about it? There are people in this congregation for whom pregnancy is something very real at this time or has been very real for them, we've had a whole rash of babies born. We should have had everybody born at this kind of time so we could have been watching the pregnancy and the birthing going on. I think we had our Advent back about last fall, back about August was our Advent time in this congregation because of all the birthing that was going on. But there are people for whom becoming pregnant has been an incredibly painful, painful, painful story and infertility is something that has touched many people here and is something that affects how we feel about pregnancy. There are those here who have lost pregnancies and not really had a place to talk about that because the culture for the most part doesn't allow grief when its a child that doesn't come to term. There are probably those who have chosen to end pregnancies at a certain time in their lives and that also is part of the reality of the image of pregnancy and how do we react to it? It stirs up just all kinds of things... It certainly does in me. I have two birth children and both of the pregnancies have totally different stories to them and as I hear of Mary's anxiety and what was going to happen to her I can relate to some of that even though in my case they happen to both be chosen, planned children. One took one day of planning, the other took 10 months but er anyway things like that happen too don't they? So lots and lots and lots and lots of images around pregnancy. Some have never been pregnant and would have wished to have been - men have never been able to

give birth to children. And yet in this season of Advent this is a time for anyone whether you're a man, whether you're an 85 year old woman who's never had a child, whether your tubes are tied, whether whatever, whatever it is about your life its the time when we're all invited to bear Christs life, to bear the seed of God. To allow something to be born in us, to allow something new, a new thing to create new life in us. And new life, as Mary discovered, can be pretty upsetting. It sure caused a lot of trouble with the guy she was engaged to. You know the rest of the story. She was going to get put aside quietly rather than as the normal, the normal er thing that could have happened was that she could have been stoned. Joseph was going to be nice and put her aside quietly. It created the kind of tension probably in her own family and in her own, um, er home-town, a small town where she had to get out of town and go on a trip to Europe, go visit the aunt, in order to bear this child anonymously. Maybe that's the case for some of you, or you may know other people for whom that's the case. Mary went to Elizabeth. To somebody else who was in the same boat. Somebody who understood that things were a-changing and that this life of God that was birthing in them was something very special, very holy and it would change the world. They're certainly portrayed as women who recognized in one another that God has been active and that life is about to burst forth. And they seem to be in this little cocoon of support for one another. Mary's away from home long way away from home. Zechariah the temple priest, the theologian in the family's been silenced, oh I love that image, been silenced, um, by the Holy Spirit and so the two of them have this little cocoon for a time to get ready and to reflect and to try to understand the meaning of what is going on ... Advent is a time for us to sort out what it is that we're being invited to give birth to. Where the seed of God wants to come and be in us and to be given birthtthrough

us. And its a time for us to sort out the meaning of that. And maybe it will be disruptive to our lives, it often is and would pray that we would have our Elizabeths, our friends, people going through the same thing, maybe, who might be able to give us the support and the understanding ear, sometimes just being with somebody who knows is all that's necessary. I'm going to invite us to do a guided imagery meditation around the Annunciation. I invite you just to shut your eyes and to make sure that you're in a really comfortable place in your body, that your body's being well supported and begin to notice your breath, this spirit of life, this gift of God which we so seldom pay any attention to but is there to sustain us, is there to create space in us... and as you still yourself, as you allow yourself to create sacred space, if you notice that there are things that you are thinking about, worries that you have, let them just gently pass away like clouds just being blown by the wind... and just focus on breathing and on the space that is being created inside by this breath... I invite you to imagine yourself in a sacred place, a place where you feel safe and connected, a place where you can go to meet the holy, maybe indoors, maybe outdoors, maybe day or night. Just try to get yourself grounded in a place where you can prepare to meet the messenger of the Holy One... And now become aware that this messenger, this one who carries insight and meaning from God is arriving in the place where you are... what do you notice about the messenger? is it a person or more just a feeling, a sense of presence?... Mary felt afraid when the angel came to her, what feelings arouse, arise in you?... Mary's angel invited her to bear a child, what seed of God does the messenger invite you to take into the core of your being at his time of your life?... listen for what God might be asking of you to allow to grow in you at this time... and notice your reactions... do you notice misgivings or uncertainties or... is it a joy to embrace this change?

Something else perhaps... are you able to be really honest about how you feel about this invitation?... let yourself try to imagine what would happen inside you if you said Yes to the invitation to life... are there things that you would need in order to be able to say Yes?... What might happen if you were to bear the seed of God in your own life story?... Let yourself imagine what might happen in the heart of God... Let us continue this time of prayer and reflection, responding with the sung response "Oh Lord Hear my Prayer" when I say "And so we pray to our God".

First United Church

Preacher: Sharon Moon

If you're following your bulletin, you may think I'm standing up too soon and I've missed the anthem. That's not the case. We would indeed need such a healer who could heal fevers and demons and illness today, illness has decimated our choir and also our Kidsing Choir and so our choir will be singing at a later time, a different piece from the piece they had originally intended.

Both of the scriptures that were just read are scriptures that deal with pain and suffering and also with healing. And with the vision and the promise that heals. The words from Isaiah 40 that David began reading aren't words that have just come out of the sky somewhere, they aren't words that don't have a context. They aren't words that are just trite little, nice religious formulas. You know, the kind of thing that you might see on bumper stickers. They're not bumper sticker words. They're words that are spoken right into the core of pain and into the core of suffering. Some of you probably have experienced the difference between those kind of words, you know, the kinds of sayings that are like bumper sticker sayings that people just so tritely hand out. And they mean nothing. And yet exactly those same words that come out of the context, a true context, can be so powerful and they can cut right through to the core. And that's what Isaiah 40 is about. They're spoken to the heart of a defeated and a despairing people who are in exile in Babylon, 500 years, more than 500 years before Jesus was ever born. They're words spoken right into that pain and that suffering and into that hopelessness. Into that profound experience of homelessness. Of not being at home. Yesterday I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Sun Yung Chung from Korea speak and she spoke about the profound sense of

theological homelessness in Western European colonizing theology. Many of us have a sense of spiritual homelessness. Those who were living in Babylon might have been saying things like "God has abandoned us", "God has forgotten us, we have failed God and now we are being punished - Lookit, we're just at the mercy of the powerful, we can't do a thing, the Babylonian emperor is running everything, all we are is foreigners and strangers in a strange land. And we will never go home. And God doesn't care about this, if indeed there is a God. God doesn't care. God maybe absent and indifferent at best, or maybe, even at worst, against us". Those were, if you read Psalm 137 and some of the other Psalms of the Exile, those are the kinds of feelings, a lament, pouring out, the crying out that sense of absence. That angst and despair into which Isaiah is speaking words of hope. Words of comfort in the really true sense of that word, bringing "forte", bringing strength, bringing power. To those who were completely mired in their own suffering and blinkered, whose vision was limited, to their own painful, self, suffering experience and we're all like that when we're in the middle of our suffering, that's all we can see. Isaiah calls them to a knowledge of the mystery... of God. The mystery of creation. The mystery of the Creator. The wonder and the majesty of the cosmos. And at this one they call Yahweh is nothing less than the life force that threw into creation, spun into creation, the incredible diversity and mystery of all that was there. The unnameable one, the one who could not be named. I will be who I will be. I am who I am is the name that was given to Moses. Isaiah uses beautiful nature images that came from his own situation, he was reaching to the highest and the deepest he could imagine. The most mysterious and awesome realities that he knew from his time. If he was speaking today, he might well speak of the awesomeness of whole galaxies that are being born every minute. He might well have spoken of the mystery and grandeur that we know through the Space

programme and through astronomy, so much more do we know of the vastness of this cosmos and yet it still remains a mystery. He might also have spoken of the wonder of that same cosmic dance right in here, right in the smallest particle of creation, in every cell of our body and in everything that is even smaller than cells, in the infinite vastness of inner space, as someone has called it. So he calls first of all to that mystery, to that mystic experience of creation and then he speaks directly about power to people who feel as though they are under the political power and thumb of other people who don't care about them. Who want to do nothing but abuse them. God is not behind that kind of power, says both our Psalm and our reading from Isaiah. God brings down these powerful rulers into nothingness. God blows the evil wicked judges away, with a breath of wind. Ah there are some here who wish that that had been possible, that some unjust judges had been blown away when they have handed down unjust judgements. The image says they will be like young plants, teeny little seedlings that are just stuck out, they haven't even taken root yet, they think they're so great and yet the wind comes along and blows them away. No wonder people living in oppressed situations find so much of scripture a powerful, liberating force. A powerful force for salvation, for healing as that's what salvation is. A powerful force for liberation. For God, we hear over and over and over and over again in scripture is on the side of the weak, on the side of the hurting, on the side of the violated. And yet still there is suffering and still there is violation. This cosmic God, Isaiah says, is not indifferent or blind to what is happening. This cosmic God, the one who did all of this creation, is for you, cares infinitely about the injustice that is happening. And although it certainly didn't mean that the Exile ended tomorrow for the people of Israel, it did mean that they were given new eyes and new hope and a sense of connectedness and solidity with which to look at the world and with which to look at what they had to live through. No matter

how tired and hopeless you feel, Isaiah says, this God will not grow weary. God's understanding is unsearchable. God gives power to the weak and to those who are completely out of strength, Isaiah says, God gives them strength. To those suffering the kind of pain can really break people's backs, the kind of pain that threatens to embitter and to make people give up on life, to those who are completely at their wits end, this God gives strength, this God gives power. To those at their wits end trying to find their place in life, on modern earth, their life means. To those who are at their wits end with unemployment, to those who anguish trying to raise children and who see children making choices that they cannot only support, not only not support but they feel are destructive to children that have to make those choices. To those suffering as they live through deaths of relationships that they hoped would bring healing and they hoped would bring mutuality. To those enduring the pain of seeing their loved ones wasting away with the onslaught of incurable disease and to those who must live that walk. To those living the hell of abuse, to those recovering and going through the courageous hell of recovery, to all of these Isaiah holds out the vision of a cosmic life force, a creating energy of the universe that has compassion, that has infinite unconditional love. That cares, that cares about justice, that gives increased strength and power. Even those who are young grow weak, says Isaiah, and it makes me think certainly of the suffering of the young people in our own society these days, in our own culture with all of the joblessness and not knowing what the future holds, the uncertainty of all that. Nothing to hang on to. Everything seems to be falling apart. The rootlessness of living in a culture whose value system is destructive, actually destructive to the soul. Actually destructive to spiritual wholeness. What on earth can we offer young people to give them strength and help them not grow weary in the situation in which they are living? A rule-centred moralistic theology is not going

to be life-giving for them. Is not going to give them any freedom, any salvation, any healing. Or any strength. Then comes the amazing image, I just love this image, its one of my favourites from scripture, God will raise you up on eagles' wings, there's a song written about that now, God will raise you up on eagles' wings. You shall run and not grow weary, you shall walk and not grow weak. I was told recently of the story of how a mother eagle teaches her young to fly. She pushes them out of the nest. Not very ceremoniously. She just pushes them out of the nest. And they struggle to fly. She watches very, very carefully. She cares whether they're going to be able to fly. And if they don't fly, she soars, goes underneath them and catches them on her wings and carries back up because they're not quite yet ready. She takes them back to the nest but she's going to push them out again. I think its a beautiful image. For the way God works with us. A beautiful, beautiful image, that we do need to fly but there are wings to catch when we can't. And there are wings on which we can be rescued and held up back to safety... This God in Isaiah is one who cares for both the inner and the outer self, the wounded soul and spirit but also the political and economic wounding. They're both there and not seen as separate and Christianity has sometimes separated those things in what I think is a very disastrous way. Isaiah calls the people to a vision of wholeness that heals, a vision that enables people to carry on and to create exactly that vision in their own lives. We seem to see that exact God working in the passage from Mark. The God acting through Jesus, who pays attention to pain, who pays attention to the urgency of suffering. There's no sense that God is the one who has caused it. But God does not run away from it. Jesus does not run away from it. Does not deny it, he meets it head on with compassion and power. I'm surprised again, yet again, because scripture always does surprise me that the urgency of salvation in both of these scriptures seems to be connected with people's individual concrete pain.

That that is exactly where salvation happens. That's exactly where salvation happens. I have in my office a poster that says "The Pain draws me to the spiritual and the spiritual allows me to enter the pain". In the scripture from Mark, Simon's mother-in-law is healed first, she has a fever. Some of our people at home with 'flu might wish that could be Simon's mother-in-law today. By the way, did you notice that that's Simon's mother-in-law? Simon Peter's mother-in-law? The Rock on whom the celibate church and celibate apostolic succession is founded was married. Anyway, that's not in the sermon. But isn't it delightful. God's got a terrific sense of humour. OK, so Simon's mother-in-law gets healed. Then everybody comes to the door. The whole town, it seems, is in pain. Everyone is searching, the hunger is enormous. And isn't it always enormous? Something I've noticed, perhaps spoke to me particularly, that even Jesus with his healing power doesn't seem to have been able to do it all. It says many were healed, not all were healed. And early the next morning, Jesus goes out to be in his inner space, in the inner journey within himself, with his God. Centring in that God and, I've spent a lot of my time in the last few days wondering what Jesus' prayer might have been about. What was his prayer? What was going on with Jesus in that silence? I wondered if he was saying something like Oh my God, what have I unleashed? What have I unleashed? People have these amazing expectations and what have I to offer them but this little teeny bit of healing I have? I can't do it all by myself, maybe that. Maybe Jesus was concerned about his ministry getting distorted and just called off into doing individually for people and healing individually rather than preaching something else. That's what the theologians say but I don't buy that. It doesn't make sense to me. It doesn't make sense to me, maybe it does to you, I have to say it because that's what the books say. But I wonder what Jesus might have been searching through. I wonder what he might have been seeking for. Was he drinking in God's

affirmation for what he had done? Was he reaching out for power? I don't know, I don't know. All we really know is that the disciples were pretty ticked off with him when they came to get him at dawn. Of course, I'm always impressed that anyone's up at prayer at dawn, as a non-morning person. "Everyone is searching for you" they say. "Everyone is searching for you" as if they're demanding that he get out there and do his thing. But Jesus, compassionate and wise as he was, was not driven either by that need or by their demand and he says something that is puzzling "Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." And that's what he did. He left the unhealed in Capernaum still demanding and he moved on to preach elsewhere. A paradoxical, humbling ending to a very full day of healing. He'd unleashed this healing power and it seemed almost as if he's saying, at least as I hear it now, Well, its up to you to continue this, its up to you to make this thing happen. So, some interesting things. Different ways of thinking about healing. Healing from vision. Healing from letting go. Taking space inside. Healing that demands other people take responsibility for their healing as well. May we have the wisdom of Jesus to seek out the inner space to renew the well-springs of our faith to allow God to carry us on her wings, to allow our own inner wounded souls and spirits to be healed. To get the strength that we might indeed also become agents of healing and agents of justice to embody God's strengthening and healing power for others and for our earth. Amen.

From: First United Church (Recording Made)

Preacher: Sharon Moon

That story really isn't about capitalism ...[LAUGHTER] ... That's a story about trust - about what kind of image... the servants had of ... the master - in this case the storekeeper and in the one case the people knew, the first two employees they knew that the master really believed in them and really expected great things and as a result they were able to do great things. They weren't afraid. The third person thought that the store owner was somebody who would punish them and who would judge, judge her and so as a result she kind of closed herself off and closed off what she could do with what she did. I think a lot of us are like that with God. That when we're able to feel God as the one who empowers us, gives us strength and the encouragement and the faith in ourselves to do more then we're able to flourish and when we're so afraid that God is looking over our shoulder and keeping the naughty and nice list then and going to punish us, then we do become very closed in and we don't use the gifts that we have and we don't celebrate our gifts. So I encourage you to think about your own prayer life and how you relate to God and who God is for you because who God is for you is going to determine how you use your gifts and how you are for yourself.

We've been involved over the last month or so in something very special in this community: an Every Member Stewardship Visitation and its been really

the congregation visiting the congregation and finding out the gifts that are here. Finding out the talents that are in this particular community and they are many; and they are many. And we're only beginning to unlock them and to, to begin to find, to discover them. Its been a very exciting time. Its been a lot of work. Its been a t... a real act of faith for people to visit. Its been a real act of faith for visit, for those who are being visited to receive the visitors and the stories I've been hearing have been stories of excitement about getting to know each other and finding out who the people are that you're, that they're worshipping beside and I think it, if when all is said and done that that may in fact be the greatest gift that has been discovered, the gift of friendship and the gift of deeper connections and in the community and so today we're going to be receiving and dedicating the gifts from that particular program. But these envelopes on which are written both financial pledges but also pledges of time and talent this is only part of the gifts. The gifts also include all of the stories and all of the experiences that went with that visitation.

First of all I would ask that the stewards who organized all this to stand up. Those of you that are on the committee of stewards will you stand up. These are the people who originally initiated the Every Member Visitation and this was a lot of work and we thank you for your faithful stewardship. You shall receive a promotion [LAUGHTER]. And now I would like to ask all of the visitors to stand just so that you know who has been involved - not the visitors to the church, the visitors in the stewardship campaign. Yeah, OK. The visitors who visited in the stewardship campaign. Sorry, I didn't make that clear. Almost the whole choir. We thank you for your ministry of stewardship. And we thank also all those who received and welcomed those who were visiting. I would invite you to come forward now with the gifts. We

heard in our story about how God multiplies gifts when we use the gifts that we've been given and invest them and use them then God multiplies them. Let us pray.

God you multiply our gifts when we risk using them, using what you have given and we find indeed that we have much more rather than less. We dedicate these gifts and all of the stories that go with them for the work of God in this place and in the world. Thank you for the work of the committee of stewards. Thank you for all those who visited. Thank you for all who welcomed them and dared to risk responding with their time, their talents, their financial support. May they all be multiplied by your Spirit for Christ's ministry of justice and love in this place and in our world. We celebrate your spirit alive in this place as we raise our alleluia.

First United Church

Preacher: Sharon Moon

Today both our Hebrew scripture and our reading from Mark invite us to reflect on the way we dare to face the unknown. We read in Genesis about a God with a sense of humour. Two elderly people, Abraham either 99 or 100 depending upon which verse one is reading and Sarah who is 90 years old, are told by God that they will be the ancestors of a multitude of nations. Abraham laughs at the ridiculous idea. A chapter later it is Sarah who roars with laughter at such a thought.

When Abraham was 75, God had called them out of Ur in the Chaldees and they had been willing to leave their families, their established way of life, to head off into the unknown, to go to live among strangers. They had done this with no guarantee, nothing but the promise that God would go with them and that they would be blessed. More than 20 years later came the covenant of land and children, at least this is how the ancient story is told. They were challenged to believe in hopeful choices when it seemed quite ridiculous to do so.

I think of people I have known in this community who have had to live with many changes, and to risk going into the unknown. Change can be quite fearful for anyone. But aging brings its own unknown. Having to make a choice to leave one's home to go into accommodation that requires less work, or that has a care component to it, can be a real facing of the unknown. There can be a lot of grief at the change required. Having to learn to live with the loss of a partner, ones friends, to have power in one's own life and of

one's own health is also part of the unknown one face as one ages. The circle becomes smaller, the capacity to choose and to control diminishes. What one can look ahead to changes with age. This was brought home strongly to me this week when in visiting a seniors residence to do a worship service, many of the people told me that they had not risked going out most of the winter because of the very icy conditions on our sidewalks this winter. They were virtual prisoners in their own apartment building. It is strange to think that venturing out to church or to the grocery store becomes the unknown, when one's balance is precarious.

But there are other journeys into the unknown one faces too. A 27 year old woman had experienced physical abusive treatment as a child, and constant put downs, has learned that the best way to meet people is to hurt them before they get the chance to hurt her. She has learned, You can't trust anyone. You need to be on top, the smartest, the toughest and never let anyone near enough to hurt you. And she kept proving her truth that everyone was out to get her by the reality she created by her behaviour. But to her great shock, she is in the process of falling in love for the first time, and is meeting not only a partner, but a community of her partner's friends and family, who not only do not want to hurt her, but actually seem to like her. Learning to trust, daring to risk taking off, or at least loosening the armour so she can breathe is absolute hell. It is completely unfamiliar territory. It feels as if everything familiar is being taken out from under her. It is hard for her to dare to face into the unknown, but she is beginning.

A 55 year old man who has always had his life fall into place, comes home one day to find that his wife really was serious when she had been telling him that she could not take their marriage any more. She has gone and his life goes through a turning inside-out and upside down. He quits his job, goes on a trip around the world and is cracked open by what he sees. He connects with his spiritual self on this pilgrimage and returns home to completely make over his life, and his life style. He begins a 12 step programme, some therapy and begins to seek out his religious roots. He is looking for a job that can use the skills he has in ways that are in harmony with his values. But this future is still quite unknown. It is a risky, costly business to make such change.

In the passage from Mark, we read of a different kind of unknown which Jesus is talking about. This is a very difficult scripture for many reasons. First it puts into Jesus' mouth words about his cross and death and resurrection, that I have trouble imagining him actually having said. This gospel like all the gospels is a product of the early church, post crucifixion and resurrection. We need to remember also that it was written to a group of people who were enduring great suffering and oppression. I think some of these words are very much coloured by this early church experience.

But there is another reason this passage is difficult. It has been used in the history of Christianity in ways that have been quite destructive. An abused wife I know, has been told by her priest that she should just take on her cross of beatings and not complain because she was suffering for Christ's sake. A gay man I

know was told, again by a religious leader, that he should just deny his orientation and take up the cross of living "normal" life and get married. In many parts of the world, this passage has been interpreted to poor people in such a way that they should simply endure their suffering, their lot in life and not work for justice. When this passage is used by people with power to keep people without power in their place, to keep people accepting oppressive suffering or to maintain an evil status quo I think it is being terribly distorted. I think Jesus would be horrified that his words had been used in these ways. Jesus was talking about the journey to transformation and the need to dare to face the unknown.

This passage comes immediately after the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi, that Jesus is Messiah. In Mark, Jesus doesn't seem at all thrilled that they are saying this. He rebukes them (strong language in Greek) not to repeat this. The disciples have seen the healings, heard the preaching. They seem to think they are in on a good thing, a climb to power, a path to the top. Jesus wants to make sure that they realize that there is a costly side to all of this. Peter rebukes Jesus when he says that the way ahead has real suffering in it. He does not want to hear about the hard stuff. He wants plastic Jesus who will bless him and bring him good life, and prosperity. Jesus in turn, rebukes Peter, with a vehemence that is powerful. "Get behind me Satan. You are not siding with God but with humans." Could Jesus' strong reaction be because it reminded him of exactly his own struggle in the wilderness - his temptation to take the easier route - to avoid pain - perhaps to avoid the who call altogether?

Jesus then goes on to speak of a process in which one needs to face into dying and rising, to let go of one's ego self, in order to follow. The word used for cross in Jesus's words to take up the cross, is the same word that is used for tent pegs. I wonder if later translators who knew about the crucifixion used the cross translation. It may have meant something like this: If you will follow me, you need to stop running your own life and let God invite you to pull up stakes and follow. You have to give up security and control of your own lives in order to risk moving into the unknown with me. You can hang on to what you've got, but if you do, you will be missing being fully alive. You'll lose living the Reign of God in your life. There is some real letting go that has to happen. There is a process of transformation, of letting go in order to find your God self, your sacred self whom you are meant to be. You have to risk being changed, having your values changed. having your life style changed, having your ways of looking at life changed, having the choices you make in life changed. If God values are running your life, you may find yourself invited to walk paths you never thought possible, to lead your life in ways that seem foolish to those living with values formed by the culture.

In our Experiment in Practical Christianity, we worked with this scripture at our last session. Some spoke of the losing of self, as the shedding of false selves, of selves that had adapted to survive in the world. Others spoke of needing to let go of images of the self that were not true, and letting go of illusions. Taking up the cross, meant also a number of things - daring to take on the truth of who one was - daring to live to the fullness of

one's gift and potential, daring to risk standing in solidarity with oppressed people, daring to change one's consuming life style that was complicit with injustice, daring to struggle for justice, daring to be free, daring to risk being fully alive.

In this Lenten period, I invite members of the congregation to join us in an experiment called Struggling to Have the Mind of Christ. In it, each person covenants to spend some time each day trying to experience the people in their lives, and the way they spend their time through the eyes of Christ. We are invited to call to mind the person's in the group, but also other people in our community and our congregational community, to think about what we will be doing or have done that day, the choices we are making and try to experience it as Christ might see it. This is one way, it seems to me that all of us can be part of letting go of a kind of self-centred control of our lives and allow God's Spirit to unlock who we really are, and who God would like us to be. And it will undoubtedly lead us into unknown, uncharted territory in our lives

From: First United Church (Recording Made)

Preacher: Rev. Jamie Scott

Let us pray. Gentle Spirit we would ask that you would be with us to help us to open our eyes to see, our minds to understand and our hearts to respond, for we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

For I was hungry and you gave me no food, thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, in prison and you did not visit me. And they will answer Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or in prison and did not take care of you. And then he will answer them Truly, I say to you inasmuch as you did not do it to one of these the least

members of my family, you did not do it to me.

I find this passage from Matthew both beautiful and frightening. Its a story of surprises. A story of assumptions of humility and self-righteousness, of blindness of genuine compassion. As much as any other, this parable proclaims the heart of the gospel. God's concern for those who are considered the least among us. In fact, its more than concern. Jesus is saying that God identifies with those who society considers weak or unimportant or vulnerable or disposable. Invisible. Jesus reveals an over-riding care for those who are in need. He doesn't say "You didn't pay attention to those who are important, to those who matter among my family, those with power and influence. He said "Inasmuch as you didn't pay attention to the least, to those who appear not to matter, to those who don't count, to those who have no power or influence, to the weakest, to those who need you most. To the nobodies, then you didn't do it to me." That's what this parable is about, isn't it? Its about whether we pay attention to those who are so often invisible. Who are so easy to dismiss, to look right through, to ignore. Its about not seeing the humanity in people. Not seeing the image of God in them. Perhaps we know in our own lives what it feels like to be invisible. To have others look right through you as if you weren't there. Those who the Lord places on his left are very surprised when they are told that they have neglected the needs of Christ. When did we see you in need? they ask. We didn't, we didn't see you. If we'd seen you we would surely have helped you but it wasn't you. And the Lord answers "Not only did you not see me, you didn't see those in need standing right in front of you. They were invisible. You didn't see the poor. They were invisible to you and you considered them an inconvenience as they panhandled on the street. But I was there with them for they are my brothers and sisters. You didn't see the immigrants and the refugees who sought acceptance and

friendship in a strange country. They were invisible to you as you muttered to your friends that they should all go back where they came from. But I was there with them. I was among them. For they are my family. You didn't see the naked and the vulnerable for they were invisible to you and you felt that since you had been able to take care of yourself, then they should be able to take care of themselves too. But I was there with them. In the midst of them. You didn't see the prisoners. They were invisible to you. And anyway they're only getting what they deserve because they're bad people and we're afraid of them so we want to get rid of them. Lock them up and throw away the key. But I was there with them. Because I am them. This parable calls us to pay attention. To open our eyes and hearts to those around us, not only in their need but in their common humanity. In their sharing of the family with us. Those in prison are listed among the least. So this reading is particularly appropriate today as today is Prisoners Sunday. The Chaplaincy Division of the Correctional Services of Canada designates this day to encour.. to encourage congregations to pay attention to those who are in our prisons. To focus on the person of the prisoner, their dignity, their needs, their concerns and those of their families. Its particularly easy as you may know for those who break the law to become invisible. Many of us feel afraid of them. They have broken the law. Some have hurt others terribly. They have been convicted of a crime and the penalty is prison. They are stigmatized with labels like criminals, offenders, convicts. They are no longer persons but categories defined by their crime. So they become invisible to us. Not only because we don't want to see them but because we lock them away far from sight in Correctional Institutions. Out of sight, out of mind. And many people in our communities want to keep it that way. They call for longer sentences, for harsher penalties. They oppose half-way house in their neighbourhoods or

they lobby for the return of the death penalty. The final solution. And I'm sure we can all be tempted to feel that way at times. To feel that if we could just get rid of all the rotten apples in the barrel the rest of us could be OK. Could live in peace. But that temptation leads us to separate ourselves from others. To objectify people. To see them no longer as part of the human family and it leads to disposable people. But Jesus is saying "These persons are members of my family." They are persons and he identifies with them. What they have [um] many of them have experienced invisibility long before they ever reached the court room or the prison door. We know that our prisons are full of the least in our society. Those who have already been devalued because they are poor. Because they are have mental disorders or learning disabilities. Because they are victims of childhood abuse or addiction or racial discrimination. Prisons are warehouses for people society doesn't want. Who don't matter. Who are faceless and nameless. Invisible. And because they don't matter, prisons remain brutalizing and dehumanizing places that reinforce in prisoners society's judgement that they are rejected, they are forgotten, they are worthless. I want to read for you an article written by a prisoner in one of our B.C. institutions. Its title "Can you really understand?" Written by a man named George. George writes:

"I'm doing a book and in the last 16 months, I've been trying to express to my relatives and friends how we the Cons live in institutions. I mean, how do you say it? How do you spit out on paper what you want known to some special someone or just a straight john. Simple words, funny little remarks on a piece of paper can never tell of the loneliness, the doubt, the bitterness, the frustration which are the constant companions of everyone in my grey world. No-one could ever know. No-one who hasn't been a blue-clad faceless numbered nothing can ever understand. I can't tell them but I can try. I can

try because when this human meat-grinder spits me back out into the world its I'm going to be different from all the straight johns who've never been in hell. And I want someone to understand. To understand that if I seem hostile and defensive it is because every face of my grey world is a threat to the mellow soft secrets that I keep inside me. I cannot trot out gentleness because nothing in prison is gentle. I cannot show kindness because in my world kindness is weakness and to be weak is to invite more hurt. I dare not exhibit love because the wolves of my world are bars and mocking locked doors that would rip it to bloody shreds. I cannot bring out and demonstrate my loneliness or hunger because they become a bone-deep ache that even I cannot reach or soothe. People on the outside have to know that while they are watching fat babies growing into healthy youngsters, I am watching healthy youngsters have their guts and minds twisted and ripped and being turned into emotional cripples. While the young men they know are learning their trades, I am listening to the belches of 400 miserable men in a human zoo. Don't pity me, people. But understand me and the way I changed inside because they stripped away my identity and self-respect. Changed day after day by being treated like an idiot child. Changed by the indignity of having been forced to scurry about like a mindless fool every time a voice barks or a bell rings. Never being able to escape the uncaring and hostile eyes. Living in a fish bowl where you can't even squat on the toilet bowl without an audience. Can you begin to see the shell forming? The first of many calloused layers of rigid resistance that serves as my protection for the human warmth and for sanity. Can you begin to see how stripped naked and having degrading fingers searing, probing can leave wounds on pride and dignity that are a long time healing? Can you understand the ugly smell of walking by a nice guy's cell and seeing clots and puddles of blood from slashed wrists

and throat slashed because he couldn't take it any longer. Can you understand the mark it leaves to see some friend's mind snap under the strain or watch him become a walking vegetable from drugs. And seeing these things can you understand how the you that is really you is driven deeper inside seeking refuge? Can you understand that in the face of constant assault upon your personality you are forced to turn off your emotional faucet. Dry up feelings of pity, compassion, indignation, repugnance or lose your mind? You survive by playing a role. By acting out a part for the benefit of indifferent eyes. Hiding away what you really are from the contamination of your soul-sick world. You become a stiff-legged individual ready to snap at other individuals prepared to dodge the cold toe of authority's boot and night comes all too quickly after another grey day and with it the gut-twisting loneliness. Can you understand that when I sit with somebody in a visiting room with other desperate souls my eyes are silently pleading for understanding for comfort for something I can cling to during those damn lonely nights. Can you understand that I can't speak of my feelings and that if I tried all that would come out would be a voiceless croak. Can you really understand that we Cons don't hear the drumbeat to which most people march their lives. That the master drummer of our destiny is as old as time and demands of us a more intricate step. Can people beyond the wall really know what its like to be in prison?

There are many Georges in our prison system, both male and female. Canada has the second highest rate of incarceration in the Western world after the United States. We seem to like putting people in gaol. For all sorts of things. The vast majority of inmates in our Federal and Provincial institutions are there for non-violent crimes. Yet we seem to be addicted as a society to the notion that despite all the evidence to the contrary, prisons are

an effective and appropriate way to solve social problems. But if incarcerating those who have committed crime makes society safer, the United States would be the safest country in the world. The U.S. incarceration rate has quadrupled over the last twenty years until there are now over one million inmates annually in State and Federal prisons. Despite that record incarceration rate, the U.S. has also had the most murders, the most rapes, the most robberies in 1990, leading their own Senate Judiciary Committee to call the country the most violent and self-destructive nation on earth. Presently, nearly 500 prisons are under construction in the United States where they will continue to confine the least among them. In these prisons inmates are stripped of their humanity and rendered invisible. This is how the Los Angeles Times described Pelican Bay: a new Californian prison which the Governor describes as state of the art. Quote: Pelican Bay is entirely automated and designed so that inmates have virtually no face to face contact with guards or other inmates. For twenty-two and a half hours a day inmates are confined to their windowless cells. They don't work in prison industries. They don't have access to recreation. They don't mingle with other inmates. They're not even allowed to smoke because matches are considered a security risk. Inmates eat all their meals in their cells and leave only for brief showers and 90 minutes of daily exercise. They shower alone and exercise alone in miniature yards of barren patches of cement enclosed by 20 ft. high cement walls covered with metal screens. Their doors to the cells are opened and closed electronically by a guard in a control booth. End of quote.

Is this the lead that we in Canada want to follow? These prisoners are not only invisible to society, they are invisible to each other and to themselves. How can we expect that by putting someone in an environment like that, they will ever come out a well-adjusted human being? It is more likely

that they will have lost their humanity altogether. How many men and women in prison see nothing but their own apparently obvious ugliness? Jesus is calling us to see these people, to really see them. To recognize the image of God in them. To see their beauty and their potential and their goodness as well as seeing the harm that they have done. Jesus is calling us to care for them as brothers and sisters, members of one family. How can we do that? How can we begin to develop the ability to see and care? I believe that we do it by participating in prison visitation programs that meet inmates on a face-to-face basis extending care and assuring them that they are not forgotten. I believe we do it by going beyond the visitation and asking hard questions about our criminal justice system. About why so many people are put in gaol and about what we're expecting to accomplish by prison. Its becoming increasingly clear that imprisonment, like slavery before it, is immoral and destructive to the cagers as well as the caged. I believe we do it by learning more about the root causes of violence and crime in our communities and by taking responsibility for the social problems that spawn criminal behaviour. I believe we do it by supporting alternatives to incarceration that put the emphasis on healing the broken relationship, healing the wounded individuals be they victims or offenders or their families or the surrounding community. And by having them all, empowering them all to participate in reaching a solution to the problem that has been created. We must move beyond scapegoating and punishing if we truly see Christ in our neighbour. I believe we do it by recognizing the rest... the need for restraint of those few who exhibit dangerous behaviour but insisting that the kind of restraint that is used and the help that is offered during that time reflect our concern for the God in every person. Finally, I believe we see and respond to the humanity of those in prison by getting in touch with our own

experience of being invisible or imprisoned. Haven't we all been unfree and prisoners in some personal way? Maybe we know what its like to be imprisoned by fear... or shame ... or prejudice or addictions or poverty. Perhaps we've felt invisible because of our gender or our age or our colour or the job that we hold or don't hold. Maybe we can relate to the experience of being labelled and stigmatized because of our past. Perhaps we've even done something that made us feel like rejecting ourselves. What did it feel like ... to experience ... those things and what did we need? Were there people who saw the image of God in us? Who saw our goodness and our beauty, our potential, our human face? And did their faith in us help us to believe in ourselves? Did the value that they placed in us help us to begin to value ourselves? and their acceptance of us help us to accept ourselves? The promise of the parable is that Christ identifies with us when we're in the midst of that kind of struggle. With our struggles with imprisonment. God is present even when we feel that we don't count. Perhaps especially when we feel that we don't count. But that that presence of God is often made known to us through people we do not recognize. Through them God says to you and me you are precious. I care about your interests and your needs. You are not invisible. You are loved as part of my family. Extend that same love to other members of my family. Even to the least. It is out of our experience of that love and acceptance that we can reach out to others. We are able to extend love even to those who appear unlovable because we know with unshakeable conviction that they are children of God, that they are our brothers and sisters. That God calls us to be alive and presence - present in their midst. Amen.

Appendix C: Theme Conversations

Theme Conversation with Children Nov. 28th '93

S: Would the children come forward, please?...

[Sounds of movement]

Lots of things different around here today.

Lots of things different.

I'm going to ask you to do the children's time today, because I know that you know this, probably better than I do at this stage in the game.

D'you know the beginning of what we're celebrating today?

What's the beginning?

Advent.

What does "Advent" mean?

Some of you that have been here before know this.

[...]

Four weeks 'til Christmas.

And what's four weeks 'til Christmas about?

Four weeks 'til Christmas is what?

[...]

The play's going to be part of that.

What else?

Its when you're...

[...]

waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting.

Do you like waiting?

[...]

Does anybody out there like waiting?

No?

You don't like waiting?

They don't like waiting either.

I hate waiting too.

But, you know, there's different ways to wait.

You can wait as if nothing ever's going to happen and as if you don't believe really anything's going to happen.

Or you can wait with hope.

And today, we're going to be talking, in the service, about waiting with hope.

Waiting as if we're expecting something to happen.

One of the things that, in when we light the candle, we're going to using the word "restore", "restore us".

You know what that word means?

"Restore"?

Have you ever had an old piece of furniture that got all yucky?

Y'know, maybe it got all scratched from too much use?

You want to come over here, ...?

Yeah?

Was scratched from too much use and, or maybe it got some paint on it or maybe kids kicked it too much when they were little.

Did you ever have any furniture like that around?

And it got looking yucky?

And then what you had to do was to sand it down and to take off the old paint and the old varnish and then you restored it.

You made it just like new.

[...]

And part of waiting for hope is, waiting with hope is waiting for God to restore

us. To make us like new again.

Because sometimes when we don't feel like new, when we feel all broken down like that piece of furniture, we also need God to restore us.

We've got an awful lot of purple around here.

Purple's the season, the colour of the Advent season.

Some churches use blue now, but in this church we're still using purple.

And that's to remind us that it's a time for looking inside, preparing and thinking about stuff inside.

We've also got our Advent wreath.

Some of you might have Advent wreathes at home as well.

Do you know what the circle of the wreath is about?

--- knows. ---, you come on up here and you tell us the story of the Advent wreath.

I'm sure you know it even better than me.

[...]

And what about the green?

[...]

About growth, right.

So, God's never-ending love and about growth.

Even in the middle of winter when it's nothing much grows, eh?

It's believing that there's going to be growth.

And you know why we have the four candles?

[...]

You're awfully good at remembering that.

Hope, yeah.

This is the Christ one, here and then hope and then, um, what's the other one?

I haven't got it either.

Peace.

Peace, hope, love... joy.

This is the joy candle.

Yeah.

Qualities that if we have those in our waiting, it's going to make a lot of difference. And today we're going to light the very first candle.

To remind us of this.

We're also have a tree over here.

It's a different kind of Christmas tree.

It's a mitten tree.

And some of the kids that might not have mitts and hats and scarves in this cold weather, we bring them here every Sunday, or we can even bring them in the week and we put them on our tree and those are given to some of the kids that might not have those things.

This year for our White Gift Sunday, we're also asking people to stuff socks.

Now, in the bulletin, it tells you to stuff a sock and it doesn't tell you to stuff the other sock in.

Now if you're going to give socks to somebody that's got cold feet, one sock isn't going to do much good, eh?

So, the idea is that you take the other sock and part of what you stuff it with is the other sock.

Ok?

And then, this one is stuffed with, oh, there's a toothbrush in there, I'm not

going to open it up, because it's not Christmas yet.
But --- made this for us to think about the kinds of things that might be useful to people who don't have too much.
The kind of stuff that would be luxury.
Like a toothbrush to me isn't luxury, it's something I have to have, but to somebody that doesn't have any money and it's a choice of buying food or a toothbrush, that's what they have.
We've been told, though, over at --- that what they would like to have for some of their clients are socks that are filled with things like shampoo and, um, oh, I don't know, and um, all different kinds, razors, all different kinds of things like that. You could also put warm gloves in here, that sort of thing.
And some treats too, maybe some nice candy treats or something.
To help people out that don't have as much as we do.
So that's going to be for White Gift, that's going to be on the 12th.
And I invite you to, everybody in the congregation.
We hope to get between 60 and 80 for the clients at ---.
So that's another Advent project.

I'm going to ask --- if she'll come and help me light the Advent Candle.

Theme Conversation with Children Jan. 9th 1994

S: Would the young people come forward, please.
I have some Green Books, but we're going to sing "Spirit of Gentleness" so some of you need to bring a Green Book with you as well.
[Sounds of movement]

Are you back at school and, after the holidays?
Starting again, eh?
Hard work starting again, isn't it?

There's a story told about a very famous sculpture, sculptor.
His name was Michaelangelo.
And he lived in Italy.
And Michaelangelo, one day, was going down the street and he had this huge, humungous, great big piece of, big square thing, of, um, of rock.
And, pushing it and pushing it and being so gentle to make sure that it doesn't fall over and, y'know, really taking a lot of care and working and working and working and it was hot, hot sun.
And he's working so hard with this big old piece of what looks like junk.
This piece of rock.
So, there was somebody sitting out on their balcony.
And she wondered what on earth was going on and so she said "Why are you working so hard over that old piece of stone?"
You know what Michaelangelo, they say he said?
He said, "Well, there's an angel in that stone that's trying to get out, that's trying to be released."
And you know what?
He took that stone home and in his studio, sculpting it and working with it, he did release this wonderful angel.
I don't have any Michaelangelos, although I've been to France, I mean to Italy and I've seen some, but they wouldn't let me bring them home.
But I've brought some sculptures... that once were just plain old boring hunks of something.
Some kind of, this was some kind of stone, this was just a piece of wood, just a piece of a tree and this was a different kind of stone.
And somebody was able to see in those stones something, or in the wood, something that nobody else could see.
And was able, by working with what was there, to create things that are very beautiful.
That's creation.
That's creating.
We heard the story about God creating the world today.
But, you know, the creating still goes on.
And sometimes I feel as if the creating is still going on, I know it is, is still going on in me.
And as if there might even be an angel in there trying to get out.
Some people may think its been an awful long time coming, but you know its as if there are gifts and the real person that we are, that God means us to be is in there trying to get out, trying to be known, trying to be created.
But you know, sometimes we need other people to help us with that.
Without the sculptor, without Michaelangelo or whoever was the sculptor of these pieces, that wouldn't have happened.
That creation wouldn't have happened.

So, everything was there, but without the work of the other person, it wouldn't have happened.

And so I would invite us, do you ever see a poster "Be patient, God isn't finished with me yet"?

You ever seen that poster?

Bet you some of the other folks have.

"Be patient, God isn't finished with me yet".

God isn't finished with any one of us.

God's continuing to create us and to make us new and bring out what is in us.

And God does that sometimes through other people, through our families, sometimes through people that love us and care for us and that, er, listen to us and help us to become what it is that we were intended to be and we do that for one another as well. We listen and really care and pay attention to them, one of the things that we're doing is helping them to become the angel God intended them to be.

And so I'm going to invite us to sing a song about the Spirit and a Spirit that continues to create, continues to make new, sometimes we say God, sometimes we say Spirit.

Its #108, its in the Green Books, "Spirit of Gentleness" and it speaks about the way that God keeps on creating and making new.

Theme Conversation with the Children Feb. 27th 1994

S: Would the young people come forward, please.

[Sounds of movement]

Well, come from all over the place here.

You can sit on some of these. Here, let's take some of these out, you can help each other.

Have a seat.

Great.

Some of those are big enough that even two people could, thanks very much. Ok.

I don't know.

I didn't hear anybody laugh today when --- read the scripture.

But you know what?

I think people should have been laughing.

Know why?

What was God's promise to Abraham and to Sarah?

Did you hear it in the scripture?

[...]

That they're going to bear children.

Right.

How old are they?

A hundred years old!

How old's that?

[...]

Sorry, can't hear you.

[...]

About 90 years older than you.

Nine times as old as you.

That's older than any of these old people sitting here.

That's twice as old as most of your grandparents.

And nobody laughed?

We're too serious in church.

You know, that's a really crazy promise.

Isn't it?

But it shows that God doesn't work the same way that everybody else works, you know?

And, holy smokes, there were a whole pile of, er, children and a bunch of people that came from Abraham and Sarah.

And you know what they called their son?

Because one was born.

Does anybody know the name?

Isaac.

And do you know what Isaac means?

Laughter.

Because everybody was laughing.

Abraham was laughing, Sarah was laughing.

I mean they were on the ground laughing.

This was so ridiculous.

God doesn't work the same way we do.

God multiplied people that God didn't, that nobody thought could be multiplied.

I want to figure out a little bit about multiplying.

Some of you are old enough that in school you're doing multiplying.

And some of you probably don't know about multiplying.

OK.

If you got two and two and you add them together, what do you get?

[...]

Four.

If you got two and two and you multiply them, what do you get?

[...]

Four, doesn't seem to be any difference.

Does it?

But, I need some helpers here.

Do you want to stand up and help me?

Put all your fingers up, because you're ten.

If you got ten and, can you help too?

Because you can be another ten here.

And you multiply them, how many are we going to need here?

Come on ---, you come and help.

You come and get me all the people I'm going to need to show to how many we're going to need.

They don't all have to come from over here, either.

Some of them can come from back there.

OK, so get them all up here.

[Sounds of movement]

Is that going to be right?

Yeah.

So, we got these two tens.

You're not part of it over here, you come on over here.

Yeah.

Because you're the two tens that were multiplied to begin with.

Everybody put your fingers up.

That's how much you get if you multiply ten times ten.

That's a lot.

That's a lot, a lot, a lot.

That's a hundred.

Right.

That's the kind of way that God works in our lives.

Multiplying.

And making things bigger than we ever thought was possible.

One thing that in Lent we're doing to multiply is our Lenten coin boxes.

I showed them to you last week, showed them to the congregation.

I don't know about you, but when I watch the television and I see all the people who are starving and the war in Bosnia, it does something inside me and it makes me feel really scared and also, like, "What on earth can I do?"

Because I can't fly to Bosnia and I can't go to Somalia.

And so, like, what can I do?

And one of the ways in which we can do something, even with whatever little bit we've got, is we can give to something like this.

In our Lenten time we can put our 25 cents and our 10 cents in here and God will multiply this with people from all over Canada who are saving this kind of money also during Lent, all over the churches, not just our church.

This isn't just for our church, but other churches are doing this, too.

During Lent.

And so the 25 cents maybe, or the dollar, or however much it is that you save during Lent will go with other money and it will be multiplied and will be able to be sent to places like that where we can't go.

So we need to remember that God doesn't work the same way that everybody else

works and that God multiplies things that we don't seem to think are very important. Like 99 and 100 year old people.
And like gifts that we give to this kind of a fund.
OK.
Thanks very much for your help.

APPENDIX D: Copy of Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please answer all the questions.
2. Indicate your response by placing an "X"
in the appropriate space; thus: [X]
or
by writing a number in the space provided; eg..4..
3. For any question, if you wish to elaborate on your
answer please use the back of the sheet for your comments.
4. When you have completed the questionnaire, please mail
it in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Thank you for your co-operation.

1. Are you MALE []
FEMALE []

2. Are you SINGLE []
MARRIED []
DIVORCED []
WIDOW/WIDOWER []

3. Do you have any children?
YES []
NO []

If NO, please go to Question #5.

4. How many children do you have?
How many are pre-school age?
How many are elementary
school age?
How many are junior-high or
high school age?
How many are older than
school age?

5. How old are you?
24 or under []
25 - 34 []
35 - 44 []
45 - 54 []
55 - 64 []
65 or over []

6. Please check the category that **best** describes your occupation.

I am retired []

I am a full-time student []

I am a full-time homemaker []

I am unemployed []

I have a part-time job outside
of the home []

Please specify the nature of
your work (eg. plumber, teacher etc.)

.....

I have a full-time job outside
of the home []

Please specify the nature of your
work (eg. plumber, teacher etc.)

.....

7. What level of education have you completed?

I did not finish high school []

I finished high school []

I have a diploma or other
qualification from a community
college []

I have a Bachelor's degree
from a University []

I have a higher degree from
a University []

8. What kind of work do (or did) your parents do?

FATHER (please specify eg. homemaker, plumber, teacher etc.)

 MOTHER (please specify eg. homemaker, plumber, teacher etc.)

9. What level of education have your parents completed?

	FATHER	MOTHER
Did not complete high school	[]	[]
Completed high school	[]	[]
Diploma or qualification from a community college	[]	[]
Bachelor's degree from a University	[]	[]
Higher degree from a University	[]	[]

10. Did your parents attend church when you were growing up?

Never	[]
Occasionally	[]
Frequently	[]
Regularly	[]

11. What was the denominational affiliation of your parents when you were growing up?

None	[]
United Church	[]
Anglican	[]
Roman Catholic	[]
Presbyterian	[]
Other	[]

If Other, please specify

.....

12. How long have you been coming to this church?

- a few weeks []
- a month or two []
- about six months []
- about a year []
- between one and
five years []
- between six and
ten years []
- more than ten
years []

13. How often do you attend this church?

- every week []
- most weeks []
- occasionally []
- rarely []

14. When you come to this church, do you usually come alone,
or with others (eg. family, friends)?

- Alone []
- With others []

15. If you come with others, are they

- Family []
- Friends []

16. Why do you come to this church rather than another?

Listed below are 8 reasons that could be given.
Please rank them in order of importance by writing the
appropriate number in the space provided.
(1 = most important, 2 = next most important etc.)

I come because of the programmes available for
children

I appreciate the music during the service

The sermons are very good

I feel I belong to a community when I
come to this church

I appreciate the commitment that this church
shows to issues of social justice

The Gospel is communicated clearly in
this church

This church reaches out to welcome all
sections of the community

The Gospel message is made relevant to
modern life in this church

Is there another important reason that is not
listed? If so, please specify

.....

.....

17. What qualities do you look for in a Minister of a church?

Listed below are 8 qualities.

Please rank them in order of importance by writing the appropriate number in the space provided.

(1 = most important, 2 = next most important etc.)

A Minister should be:

a good listener

someone who cares for members of
the church and visits them

someone who is there for people
in times of crisis

someone who embodies the values of
the Gospel in the way they live

someone who gives an example of
Christian morality

someone who creates an inclusive
and welcoming church community

someone who communicates the Gospel
clearly and in a relevant fashion

an effective preacher

Is there another important quality that is not listed?
If so, please specify

.....

.....

18. What are the qualities of a good sermon?

Listed below are 8 qualities.

Please rank them in order of importance by writing the appropriate number in the space provided.

(1 = most important, 2 = next most important etc.)

A good sermon is one that:

is based solidly on the Bible

makes Christianity relevant to
modern life

teaches clearly Christian doctrines
and beliefs

explains Christian teaching about
moral issues

relates Christianity to social issues

provokes reflection that leads to
personal change and growth

teaches about prayer and spirituality

facilitates the experience of the
transcendent

Is there another important quality not listed? If so,
please specify

.....
.....

19. Which of the following **best** describes the sermons that you hear in this church?
(Choose only one)

they expound Christian doctrine clearly []

they teach about the Bible []

they relate Christianity to modern life []

they show the relevance of Christianity to issues of social justice []

they foster personal development []

they provide moral guidance []

Other []

If Other, please specify

.....

.....

20. Which of the following **best** describes the preacher(s) that you have heard in this church?
(Choose only one)

they use lively illustrations to grab your attention []

they make their topic relevant by relating it to current events []

they concentrate on the Bible text []

they show how the Bible has relevance to our modern society []

they share their own life experiences in order to make their message meaningful []

they are able to make the listener respond to their message imaginatively and emotionally []

21. What do you think is the **best** way to get the most out of the sermons that you hear?
(Choose only one)

Read the Bible beforehand []

Take notes during the sermon in order to study and reflect on afterwards []

Pray and meditate beforehand []

Educate oneself about the Bible and theological issues by reading []

Cultivate a spirit of openness and calm during the sermon []

Try to enter into the Bible passage imaginatively []

Other []

If Other, please specify

.....
.....

22. What kind of skills do you think you need to cultivate in order to get the most out of the sermons you hear?
(Choose only one)

The ability to concentrate and remember []

The ability to follow the development of an argument []

The ability to imagine yourself in the events that are related []

The ability to respond emotionally to what you hear []

Other []

If Other, please specify

.....
.....

23. If you wanted to understand a Bible story, a Bible passage or teaching, what would be the **best** thing to do? (**Choose only one**)

Read it over carefully, perhaps more than once []

Read books about the Bible to gain an understanding of the relevant background []

Pray for guidance []

Imagine yourself in the passage or story []

Meditate on the images or ideas that are presented in the passage or story []

Other []

If Other, please specify

.....

.....

24. In your opinion, which of the following is the **best** way to complete the sentence given below? (**Choose only one**)

SENTENCE: "The heart of Christianity is ..."

a personal experience of Jesus as Saviour []

belief in God and in Jesus as Son of God []

an understanding and experience of the spiritual realm beyond everyday life []

following the example of Jesus []

belonging to a community of those who share the same faith and experiences []

putting into practice the commandments of God as taught by the Church []

Other []

If Other, please specify

.....

.....

25. In your opinion, which of the following is the **best** way to express one's Christian faith in practice?
(Choose only one)

by showing commitment to issues of social justice []

by supporting the Christian community financially and through personal involvement []

through volunteer efforts in the local community []

by passing on Christian values to your family []

by leading an honest, moral life []

Other []

If Other, please specify

.....

.....

26. Which of the following **best** expresses your belief?
(Choose only one)

Jesus was divine in the sense that he was God living among us []

Jesus was divine in the sense that while he was only man, he was called by God in a unique way []

Jesus was divine in the sense that he embodied the best in humanity []

Jesus was a great man and teacher, but not divine []

27. Which of the following best expresses your belief?
(Choose only one)

The Bible is the Word of God and provides
authoritative answers to all questions []

The Bible is the Word of God and must be
interpreted for each generation by the Church []

The Bible is the Word of God and speaks
directly to each individual without the
need for any help or interpretation from
outside []

The Bible is the Word of God but must be
seen as the product of particular times
and cultures []

The Bible is the Word of God, but, equally,
so are many other writings []

There are many ways that God communicates
with us just as much as or more so than
the Bible []

.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

If you have any comments that you wish to add, please use the
space below or the reverse side of the sheet.

If you would like to talk in person about any of the topics
raised in this questionnaire, I would value the opportunity
to talk with you . If you wish to do this, please add your
first name and a telephone number where I can reach you.

APPENDIX E: Statistical Summary of
Questionnaire Returns

```

1 0 SET WIDTH=102
2 0 TITLE "ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS 1994"
3 0 DATA LIST/
4 0 CHID 1 SEX 2 STAT 3 CHIL 4 AGE 5 OCC 6 EDLEV 7 DADDOCC 8 MOMDOCC 9 DADED
5 0 10 MOMED 11 PARATT 12 AFFIL 13 HOLD 14 HOOF 15 ALON 16 WHYA 17 WHYB 18
6 0 WHYC 19 WHYD 20 WHYE 21 WHYF 22 WHYG 23 WHYH 24 MINA 25 MINB 26 MINC 27
7 0 MIND 28 MINE 29 MINF 30 MING 31 MINH 32 SERMA 33 SERMB 34 SERMC 35
8 0 SERMD 36 SERME 37 SERMF 38 SERMG 39 SERMH 40 SERDES 41 PREDES 42
9 0 SERMOS 43 SERSKI 44 BIBSTO 45 COMSEN 46 BESTEX 47 JESUS 48 BIBLE 49
10 0 ELAB 50 CCNT 51

```

THIS COMMAND WILL READ 1 RECORDS FROM THE COMMAND FILE

VARIABLE	REC	START	END	FORMAT
CHID	1	1	1	F1.0
SEX	1	2	2	F1.0
STAT	1	3	3	F1.0
CHIL	1	4	4	F1.0
AGE	1	5	5	F1.0
OCC	1	6	6	F1.0
EDLEV	1	7	7	F1.0
DADDOCC	1	8	8	F1.0
MOMDOCC	1	9	9	F1.0
DADED	1	10	10	F1.0
MOMED	1	11	11	F1.0
PARATT	1	12	12	F1.0
AFFIL	1	13	13	F1.0
HOLD	1	14	14	F1.0
HOOF	1	15	15	F1.0
ALON	1	16	16	F1.0
WHYA	1	17	17	F1.0
WHYB	1	18	18	F1.0
WHYC	1	19	19	F1.0
WHYD	1	20	20	F1.0
WHYE	1	21	21	F1.0
WHYF	1	22	22	F1.0
WHYG	1	23	23	F1.0
WHYH	1	24	24	F1.0
MINA	1	25	25	F1.0

05-JUL-94
20:10:15

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS 1994
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

AMDAHL 5860

VM/HPD 4.2

MINB	1	26	26	F1.0
MINC	1	27	27	F1.0
MIND	1	28	28	F1.0
MINE	1	29	29	F1.0
MINF	1	30	30	F1.0
MING	1	31	31	F1.0
MINH	1	32	32	F1.0
SERMA	1	33	33	F1.0
SERMB	1	34	34	F1.0
SERMC	1	35	35	F1.0
SERMD	1	36	36	F1.0
SERME	1	37	37	F1.0
SERMF	1	38	38	F1.0
SERMG	1	39	39	F1.0
SERMH	1	40	40	F1.0
SERDES	1	41	41	F1.0
PREDES	1	42	42	F1.0
SERMOS	1	43	43	F1.0
SERSKI	1	44	44	F1.0
BIBSTO	1	45	45	F1.0
COMSEN	1	46	46	F1.0
BESTEX	1	47	47	F1.0
JESUS	1	48	48	F1.0
BIBLE	1	49	49	F1.0
ELAB	1	50	50	F1.0
CONT	1	51	51	F1.0

11 0 MISSING VALUES SEX STAT CHIL AGE OCC EDLEV DADCCC MOMCCC DADED MOMED
12 0 PARATT AFFIL HOLO HOOF ALON WHYA WHYB WHYC WHYD WHYE WHYF WHYG WHYH
13 0 MINA MINB MINC MIND MINE MINF MING MINH SERMA SERMB SERMC SERMD SERME
14 0 SERMF SERMG SERMH SERDES PREDES SERSKI BIBSTO JESUS BIBLE (9)/
15 0 VALUE LABELS
16 0 CHID 1 "FU" 2 "DC" 3 "GSJ"/
17 0 SEX 1 "MALE" 2 "FEMALE"/
18 0 STAT 1 "SINGLE" 2 "MARRIED" 3 "DIVORCED" 4 "WIDOW"/
19 0 AGE 1 "24 OR LESS" 2 "25-34" 3 "35 - 44" 4 "45 - 54" 5 "55 - 64"
20 0 6 "65 OR MORE"/
21 0 OCC 1 "RETIRED" 2 "FULL-TIME STUDENT" 3 "FULL-TIME HOME MAKER"
22 0 4 "UNEMPLOYED" 5 "PART-TIME WORK" 6 "FULL-TIME WORK"/
23 0 EDLEV 1 "NOT FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL" 2 "FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL"
24 0 3 "COLLEGE DIPLOMA" 4 "B.A." 5 "HIGHER DEGREE"/
25 0 DADCCC 1 "MANUAL/UNSKILLED" 2 "SKILLED BLUE COLLAR" 3 "MANAGERIAL"
26 0 4 "ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL" 5 "CIVIL SERVICE"/
27 0 MOMCCC 1 "MANUAL/UNSKILLED" 2 "SKILLED BLUE COLLAR" 3 "MANAGERIAL"
28 0 4 "ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL" 5 "CIVIL SERVICE"/
29 0 DADED 1 "NOT FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL" 2 "FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL"
30 0 3 "COLLEGE DIPLOMA" 4 "B.A." 5 "HIGHER DEGREE"/
31 0 MOMED 1 "NOT FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL" 2 "FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL"
32 0 3 "COLLEGE DIPLOMA" 4 "B.A." 5 "HIGHER DEGREE"/
33 0 PARATT 1 "NEVER" 2 "OCCASION." 3 "FREQUENTLY" 4 "REGULARLY"/
34 0 AFFIL 1 "NONE" 2 "UNITED C.C." 3 "ANGLICAN" 4 "R.C." 5 "PRESBYTERIAN"
35 0 6 "OTHER"/
36 0 HOLO 1 "A FEW WEEKS" 2 "A FEW MONTHS" 3 "6 MONTHS" 4 "1 YEAR"
37 0 5 "BETWEEN 1 AND 5 YEARS" 6 "BETWEEN 6 AND 10 YEARS"

```

38 0      7 "MORE THAN 10 YEARS"/
39 0 HOOF 1 "EVERY WEEK" 2 "MOST WEEKS" 3 "OCCASIONALLY" 4 "RARELY"/
40 0 ALON 1 "ALONE" 2 "WITH FAMILY" 3 "WITH FRIENDS"/
41 0 WHYA 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
42 0 WHYB 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
43 0 WHYC 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
44 0 WHYD 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
45 0 WHYE 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
46 0 WHYF 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
47 0 WHYG 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
48 0 WHYH 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
49 0 MINA 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
50 0 MINB 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
51 0 MINC 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
52 0 MIND 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
53 0 MINE 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
54 0 MINF 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
55 0 MING 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
56 0 MINH 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
57 0 SERMA 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
58 0 SERMB 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
59 0 SERMC 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
60 0 SERMD 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
61 0 SERME 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
62 0 SERMF 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
63 0 SERMG 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
64 0 SERMH 1 "A" 2 "B" 3 "C" 4 "D" 5 "E" 6 "F" 7 "G" 8 "H"/
65 0 SERDES 1 "DOCTR." 2 "BIBLE" 3 "MODERN LIFE" 4 "SOCIAL JUSTICE"
66 0      5 "PERSONAL DEV." 6 "MORAL GUIDE." 7 "OTHER" /
67 0 PREDES 1 "LIVELY" 2 "CURRENT" 3 "BIBLE" 4 "RELEVANT" 5 "SHARE EXP."
68 0      6 "IM./EM."/
69 0 SERMOS 1 "READ" 2 "NOTES" 3 "PRAY" 4 "EDUC" 5 "CALM" 6 "IMAG" 7 "OTHER"/
70 0 SERSKI 1 "CON/REMEM" 2 "FOLLOW ARG." 3 "IMAGINE" 4 "EMOTION" 5 "OTHER"/
71 0 BIBSTO 1 "READ" 2 "BACKGR." 3 "PRAY" 4 "IMAGINE" 5 "MEDITATE" 6 "OTHER"/
72 0 COMSEN 1 "EXP" 2 "BELIEF" 3 "SPIRIT" 4 "EXAMP." 5 "COMMUNITY" 6 "COMMAND"
73 0      7 "OTHER"/
74 0 BESTEX 1 "SOC. JUST." 2 "SUPPORT" 3 "VOLUNTEER" 4 "FAMILY" 5 "MORAL LIFE"
75 0      6 "OTHER"/
76 0 JESUS 1 "GOD" 2 "UNIQUE MAN" 3 "BEST HUMAN" 4 "TEACHER"/
77 0 BIBLE 1 "AUTHORIT." 2 "INTERPRET" 3 "DIRECT" 4 "CULTURE" 5 "EQUAL WRITINGS"
78 0      6 "OTHER WAYS"/
79 0 ELAB 1 "YES" 2 "NO"/
80 0 CONT 1 "YES" 2 "NO"/
81 0 BEGIN DATA
219 0 END DATA

```

CHID

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
FU	1	54	39.1	39.1	39.1
DC	2	57	41.3	41.3	80.4
GSI	3	27	19.6	19.6	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 138 MISSING CASES 0

SEX

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
MALE	1	52	37.7	38.8	38.8
FEMALE	2	82	59.4	61.2	100.0
	9	4	2.9	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 134 MISSING CASES 4

STAT

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
SINGLE	1	41	29.7	30.4	30.4
MARRIED	2	59	42.8	43.7	74.1
DIVORCED	3	18	13.0	13.3	87.4
WIDOW	4	17	12.3	12.6	100.0
	9	3	2.2	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 135 MISSING CASES 3

CHIL

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
	1	59	42.9	43.7	43.7
	2	8	5.8	5.9	49.6
	3	11	8.0	8.1	57.8
	4	9	6.5	6.7	64.4
	5	48	34.8	35.6	100.0
	9	3	2.2	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	135	MISSING CASES	3		

AGE

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
24 OR LESS	1	2	1.4	1.5	1.5
25-34	2	12	8.7	8.9	10.4
35 - 44	3	28	20.3	20.7	31.1
45 - 54	4	21	15.2	15.6	46.7
55 - 64	5	25	18.1	18.5	65.2
65 OR MORE	6	47	34.1	34.8	100.0
	9	3	2.2	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	135	MISSING CASES	3		

OCC

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
RETIRED	1	52	37.7	38.0	38.0
FULL-TIME STUDENT	2	4	2.9	2.9	40.9
FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER	3	5	3.6	3.6	44.5
UNEMPLOYED	4	1	.7	.7	45.3
PART-TIME WORK	5	16	11.6	11.7	56.9
FULL-TIME WORK	6	59	42.8	43.1	100.0
	9	1	.7	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	137	MISSING CASES	1		

EDLEV

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
NOT FINISHED HIGH SC	1	9	6.5	6.6	6.6
FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL	2	22	15.9	16.1	22.6
COLLEGE DIPLOMA	3	24	17.4	17.5	40.1
B.A.	4	38	27.5	27.7	67.9
HIGHER DEGREE	5	44	31.9	32.1	100.0
	9	1	.7	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	137	MISSING CASES	1		

DAD0CC

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
MANUAL/UNSKILLED	1	31	22.5	24.0	24.0
SKILLED BLUE COLLAR	2	42	30.4	32.6	56.6
MANAGERIAL	3	30	21.7	23.3	79.8
ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONA	4	22	15.9	17.1	96.9
CIVIL SERVICE	5	4	2.9	3.1	100.0
	9	9	6.5	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	129	MISSING CASES	9		

MOMOCC

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
MANUAL/UNSKILLED	1	89	64.5	69.5	69.5
SKILLED BLUE COLLAR	2	17	12.3	13.3	82.8
MANAGERIAL	3	15	10.9	11.7	94.5
ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL	4	6	4.3	4.7	99.2
CIVIL SERVICE	5	1	.7	.8	100.0
	9	10	7.2	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 128 MISSING CASES 10

DADED

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
NOT FINISHED HIGH SC	1	48	34.8	37.5	37.5
FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL	2	29	21.0	22.7	60.2
COLLEGE DIPLOMA	3	16	11.6	12.5	72.7
B.A.	4	14	10.1	10.9	83.6
HIGHER DEGREE	5	21	15.2	16.4	100.0
	9	10	7.2	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 128 MISSING CASES 10

MOMED

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
NOT FINISHED HIGH SC	1	43	31.2	33.6	33.6
FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL	2	39	28.3	30.5	64.1
COLLEGE DIPLOMA	3	27	19.6	21.1	85.2
B.A.	4	14	10.1	10.9	96.1
HIGHER DEGREE	5	5	3.6	3.9	100.0
	9	10	7.2	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 128 MISSING CASES 10

PARATT

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
NEVER	1	6	4.3	4.4	4.4
OCCASION.	2	18	13.0	13.2	17.6
FREQUENTLY	3	21	15.2	15.4	33.1
REGULARLY	4	91	65.9	66.9	100.0
	9	2	1.4	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	136	MISSING CASES	2		

AFFIL

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
NONE	1	5	3.6	3.6	3.6
UNITED C.C.	2	81	58.7	59.1	62.8
ANGLICAN	3	5	3.6	3.6	66.4
R.C.	4	6	4.3	4.4	70.8
PRESBYTERIAN	5	22	15.9	16.1	86.9
OTHER	6	18	13.0	13.1	100.0
	9	1	.7	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	137	MISSING CASES	1		

HOLO

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A FEW WEEKS	1	5	3.6	3.7	3.7
A FEW MONTHS	2	1	.7	.7	4.4
6 MONTHS	3	6	4.3	4.4	8.8
1 YEAR	4	8	5.8	5.9	14.7
BETWEEN 1 AND 5 YEAR	5	41	29.7	30.1	44.9
BETWEEN 6 AND 10 YE	6	19	13.8	14.0	58.9
MORE THAN 10 YEARS	7	56	40.6	41.2	100.0
	9	2	1.4	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	136	MISSING CASES	2		

HOOF

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
EVERY WEEK	1	55	39.9	41.0	41.0
MOST WEEKS	2	52	37.7	38.8	79.9
OCCASIONALLY	3	19	13.8	14.2	94.0
RARELY	4	7	5.1	5.2	99.3
	7	1	.7	.7	100.0
	9	4	2.9	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	134	MISSING CASES	4		

ALON

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
ALONE	1	72	52.2	53.3	53.3
WITH FAMILY	2	53	38.4	39.3	92.6
WITH FRIENDS	3	10	7.2	7.4	100.0
	9	3	2.2	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	135	MISSING CASES	3		

WHYA

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	4	2.9	4.2	4.2
B	2	4	2.9	4.2	8.4
C	4	7	5.1	7.4	15.8
E	5	3	2.2	3.2	18.9
F	6	1	.7	1.1	20.0
G	7	7	5.1	7.4	27.4
H	8	69	50.0	72.6	100.0
	9	43	31.2	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	95	MISSING CASES	43		

WHYB

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	15	10.9	12.5	12.5
B	2	20	14.5	16.7	29.2
C	3	14	10.1	11.7	40.8
D	4	13	9.4	10.8	51.7
E	5	6	4.3	5.0	56.7
F	6	8	5.8	6.7	63.3
G	7	37	26.8	30.8	94.2
H	8	7	5.1	5.8	100.0
	9	18	13.0	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	120	MISSING CASES	18		

WHYC

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	28	20.3	22.2	22.2
B	2	17	12.3	13.5	35.7
C	3	22	15.9	17.5	53.2
D	4	20	14.5	15.9	69.0
E	5	18	13.0	14.3	83.3
F	6	14	10.1	11.1	94.4
G	7	2	1.4	1.6	96.0
H	8	5	3.6	4.0	100.0
	9	12	8.7	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	126	MISSING CASES	12		

WHYD

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	41	29.7	34.5	34.5
B	2	16	11.6	13.4	47.9
C	3	13	9.4	10.9	58.8
D	4	13	9.4	10.9	69.7
E	5	16	11.6	13.4	83.2
F	6	11	8.0	9.2	92.4
G	7	8	5.8	6.7	99.2
H	8	1	.7	.8	100.0
	9	19	13.8	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	119	MISSING CASES	19		

WHYE

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	18	13.0	15.3	15.3
B	2	17	12.3	14.4	29.7
C	3	12	8.7	10.2	39.8
D	4	15	10.9	12.7	52.5
E	5	16	11.6	13.6	66.1
F	6	21	15.2	17.8	83.9
G	7	18	13.0	15.3	99.2
H	8	1	.7	.8	100.0
	9	20	14.5	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	118	MISSING CASES	20		

WHYF

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	22	15.9	17.7	17.7
B	2	20	14.5	16.1	33.9
C	3	15	10.9	12.1	46.0
D	4	17	12.3	13.7	59.7
E	5	17	12.3	13.7	73.4
F	6	17	12.3	13.7	87.1
G	7	13	9.4	10.5	97.6
H	8	3	2.2	2.4	100.0
	9	14	10.1	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	124	MISSING CASES	14		

WHYG

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	16	11.6	13.7	13.7
B	2	16	11.6	13.7	27.4
C	3	23	16.7	19.7	47.0
D	4	15	10.9	12.8	59.8
E	5	19	13.8	16.2	76.1
F	6	16	11.6	13.7	89.7
G	7	10	7.2	8.5	98.3
H	8	2	1.4	1.7	100.0
	9	21	15.2	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	117	MISSING CASES	21		
WHYH					

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	22	15.9	19.0	19.0
B	2	15	10.9	12.9	31.9
C	3	19	13.8	16.4	48.3
D	4	16	11.6	13.3	62.1
E	5	13	9.4	11.2	73.3
F	6	18	13.0	15.5	88.8
G	7	9	6.5	7.8	96.6
H	8	4	2.9	3.4	100.0
	9	22	15.9	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	116	MISSING CASES	22		

MINA

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	6	4.3	5.0	5.0
B	2	8	5.8	6.6	11.6
C	3	11	8.0	9.1	20.7
D	4	14	10.1	11.6	32.2
E	5	22	15.9	18.2	50.4
F	6	21	15.2	17.4	67.8
G	7	25	18.1	20.7	88.4
H	8	14	10.1	11.6	100.0
	9	17	12.3	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	121	MISSING CASES	17		

MINB

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	9	6.5	7.3	7.3
B	2	15	10.9	12.2	19.5
C	3	11	8.0	8.9	28.5
D	4	13	9.4	10.6	39.0
E	5	23	16.7	18.7	57.7
F	6	25	18.1	20.3	78.0
G	7	16	11.6	13.0	91.1
H	8	11	8.0	8.9	100.0
	9	15	10.9	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	123	MISSING CASES	15		

MINC

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	10	7.2	8.1	8.1
B	2	18	13.0	14.5	22.6
C	3	15	10.9	12.1	34.7
D	4	32	23.2	25.8	60.5
E	5	21	15.2	16.9	77.4
F	6	16	11.6	12.9	90.3
G	7	10	7.2	8.1	98.4
H	8	2	1.4	1.6	100.0
	9	14	10.1	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	124	MISSING CASES	14		
MIND					

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	20	14.5	15.9	15.9
B	2	16	11.6	12.7	28.6
C	3	11	8.0	8.7	37.3
D	4	20	14.5	15.9	53.2
E	5	13	9.4	10.3	63.5
F	6	15	10.9	11.9	75.4
G	7	20	14.5	15.9	91.3
H	8	11	8.0	8.7	100.0
	9	12	8.7	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	126	MISSING CASES	12		

MINE

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	4	2.9	3.3	3.3
B	2	13	9.4	10.7	13.9
C	3	14	10.1	11.5	25.4
D	4	16	11.6	13.1	38.5
E	5	11	8.0	9.0	47.5
F	6	11	8.0	9.0	56.6
G	7	17	12.3	13.9	70.5
H	8	36	26.1	29.5	100.0
	9	16	11.6	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	122	MISSING CASES	16		

MINF

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	44	31.9	36.1	36.1
B	2	14	10.1	11.5	47.5
C	3	20	14.5	16.4	63.9
D	4	9	6.5	7.4	71.3
E	5	8	5.8	6.6	77.9
F	6	10	7.2	8.2	86.1
G	7	11	8.0	9.0	95.1
H	8	6	4.3	4.9	100.0
	9	16	11.6	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	122	MISSING CASES	16		

MING

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	39	28.3	30.2	30.2
B	2	29	21.0	22.5	52.7
C	3	20	14.5	15.5	68.2
D	4	15	10.9	11.6	79.8
E	5	12	8.7	9.3	89.1
F	6	6	4.3	4.7	93.8
G	7	2	1.4	1.6	95.3
H	8	6	4.3	4.7	100.0
	9	9	6.5	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	129	MISSING CASES	9		

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	21	15.2	16.5	16.5
B	2	25	18.1	19.7	36.2
C	3	25	18.1	19.7	55.9
D	4	9	6.5	7.1	63.0
E	5	10	7.2	7.9	70.9
F	6	14	10.1	11.0	81.9
G	7	9	6.5	7.1	89.0
H	8	14	10.1	11.0	100.0
	9	11	8.0	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	127	MISSING CASES	11		

SERMA

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	28	20.3	22.8	22.8
B	2	10	7.2	8.1	30.9
C	3	8	5.8	6.5	37.4
D	4	10	7.2	8.1	45.5
E	5	10	7.2	8.1	53.7
F	6	9	6.5	7.3	61.0
G	7	24	17.4	19.5	80.5
H	8	24	17.4	19.5	100.0
	9	15	10.9	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	123	MISSING CASES	15		

SERMB

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	42	30.4	34.7	34.7
S	2	23	16.7	19.0	53.7
C	3	20	14.5	16.5	70.2
O	4	9	6.5	7.4	77.7
E	5	12	8.7	9.9	87.6
F	6	9	6.5	7.4	95.0
G	7	6	4.3	5.0	100.0
	9	17	12.3	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	121	MISSING CASES	17		

SERMC

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	10	7.2	8.4	8.4
B	2	22	15.9	18.5	26.9
C	3	14	10.1	11.8	38.7
D	4	12	8.7	10.1	48.7
E	5	16	11.6	13.4	62.2
F	6	18	13.0	15.1	77.3
G	7	17	12.3	14.3	91.6
H	8	10	7.2	8.4	100.0
	9	19	13.8	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	119	MISSING CASES	19		

SERMD

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	4	2.9	3.4	3.4
B	2	10	7.2	8.5	12.0
C	3	18	13.0	15.4	27.4
D	4	26	18.8	22.2	49.6
E	5	13	9.4	15.4	65.0
F	6	17	12.3	14.5	79.5
G	7	13	9.4	11.1	90.6
H	8	11	8.0	9.4	100.0
	9	21	15.2	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	117	MISSING CASES	21		

SERME

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	6	4.3	5.0	5.0
B	2	15	10.9	12.5	17.5
C	3	26	18.8	21.7	39.2
D	4	22	15.9	18.3	57.5
E	5	24	17.4	20.0	77.5
F	6	15	10.9	12.5	90.0
G	7	6	4.3	5.0	95.0
H	8	6	4.3	5.0	100.0
	9	18	13.0	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	120	MISSING CASES	18		

SERMF

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	40	29.0	32.8	32.8
B	2	27	19.6	22.1	54.9
C	3	17	12.3	13.9	68.9
D	4	15	10.9	12.3	81.1
E	5	8	5.8	6.6	87.7
F	6	6	4.3	4.9	92.6
G	7	5	3.6	4.1	96.7
H	8	4	2.9	3.3	100.0
	9	16	11.6	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	122	MISSING CASES	16		

SERMG

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	6	4.3	5.0	5.0
B	2	20	14.5	16.7	21.7
C	3	11	8.0	9.2	30.8
D	4	21	15.2	17.5	48.3
E	5	18	13.0	15.0	63.3
F	6	19	13.8	15.8	79.2
G	7	21	15.2	17.5	96.7
H	8	4	2.9	3.3	100.0
	9	18	13.0	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	120	MISSING CASES	18		

SERMH

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
A	1	7	5.1	6.5	6.5
B	2	7	5.1	6.5	13.1
C	3	8	5.8	7.5	20.6
D	4	10	7.2	9.3	29.9
E	5	7	5.1	6.5	36.4
F	6	14	10.1	13.1	49.5
G	7	13	9.4	12.1	61.7
H	8	41	29.7	38.3	100.0
	9	31	22.5	MISSING	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	107	MISSING CASES	31		

SERDES

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
DOCTR.	1	25	18.1	18.8	18.8
BIBLE	2	17	12.3	12.8	31.6
MODERN LIFE	3	43	31.2	32.3	63.9
SOCIAL JUSTICE	4	15	10.9	11.3	75.2
PERSONAL DEV.	5	21	15.2	15.8	91.0
MORAL GUIDE.	6	7	5.1	5.3	96.2
OTHER	7	5	3.6	3.8	100.0
	9	5	3.6	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	133	MISSING CASES	5		

PREDES

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
LIVELY	1	3	2.2	2.3	2.3
CURRENT	2	16	11.6	12.4	14.7
BIBLE	3	30	21.7	23.3	38.0
RELEVANT	4	36	26.1	27.9	65.9
SHARE EXP.	5	15	10.9	11.6	77.5
IM./EM.	6	29	21.0	22.5	100.0
	9	9	6.5	MISSING	
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	129	MISSING CASES	9		

SERMOS

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
READ	1	3	2.2	2.2	2.2
NOTES	2	5	3.6	3.6	5.8
PRAY	3	3	5.8	5.8	11.6
EDUC	4	13	13.0	13.0	24.6
CALM	5	76	55.1	55.1	79.7
IMAG	6	18	13.0	13.0	92.8
OTHER	7	8	5.8	5.8	98.6
	9	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	138	MISSING CASES	0		

SERSKI

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
CON/REMEM	1	56	40.6	41.8	41.3
FOLLOW ARG.	2	20	14.5	14.9	56.7
IMAGINE	3	24	17.4	17.9	74.6
EMOTION" 5 "OTHER"	4	20	14.5	14.9	89.6
	5	14	10.1	10.4	100.0
	9	4	2.9	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	134	MISSING CASES	4		

BIBSTO

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
READ	1	27	19.6	20.1	20.1
BACKGR.	2	40	29.0	29.9	50.0
PRAY	3	10	7.2	7.5	57.5
IMAGINE	4	4	2.9	3.0	60.4
MEDITATE	5	44	31.9	32.3	93.3
OTHER	6	9	6.5	6.7	100.0
	9	4	2.9	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	134	MISSING CASES	4		

COMSEN

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
EXP	1	15	10.9	10.9	10.9
BELIEF	2	36	26.1	26.1	37.0
SPIRIT	3	16	11.6	11.6	48.6
EXAMP.	4	32	23.2	23.2	71.7
COMMUNITY	5	5	3.6	3.6	75.4
COMMAND	6	20	14.5	14.5	89.9
OTHER	7	13	9.4	9.4	99.3
	9	1	.7	.7	100.0
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 138 MISSING CASES 0

BESTEX

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
SOC. JUST.	1	11	8.0	8.0	8.0
SUPPORT	2	38	27.5	27.5	35.5
VOLUNTEER	3	4	2.9	2.9	38.4
FAMILY	4	12	8.7	8.7	47.1
MORAL LIFE	5	47	34.1	34.1	81.2
OTHER	6	23	16.7	16.7	97.8
	9	3	2.2	2.2	100.0
TOTAL		138	100.0	100.0	

VALID CASES 138 MISSING CASES 0

JESUS

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
GOD	1	71	51.4	53.8	53.8
UNIQUE MAN	2	36	26.1	27.3	81.1
BEST HUMAN	3	15	10.9	11.4	92.4
TEACHER	4	10	7.2	7.6	100.0
	9	6	4.3	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	132	MISSING CASES	6		

BIBLE

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
AUTHORIT.	1	23	16.7	17.2	17.2
INTERPRET	2	14	10.1	10.4	27.6
DIRECT	3	7	5.1	5.2	32.8
CULTURE	4	40	29.0	29.9	62.7
EQUAL WRITINGS	5	4	2.9	3.0	65.7
OTHER WAYS	6	46	33.3	34.3	100.0
	9	4	2.9	MISSING	
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	134	MISSING CASES	4		

ELAB

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
YES	1	29	21.0	21.0	21.0
NO	2	109	79.0	79.0	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	138	MISSING CASES	0		

CONT

VALUE LABEL	VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUM PERCENT
YES	1	16	11.6	11.6	11.6
NO	2	122	88.4	88.4	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	TOTAL	138	100.0	100.0	
VALID CASES	138				
	MISSING CASES	0			