

Religion, Modernity and Homosexual Ordination
In a Liberal Protestant Denomination

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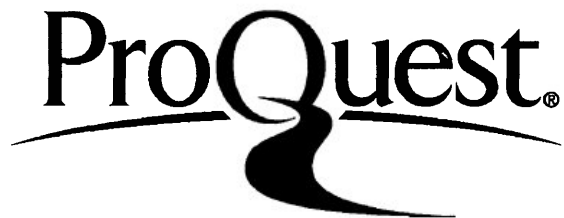
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Abstract

The United Church of Canada's General Council determined that all members could be considered for ordained ministry regardless of sexual orientation in 1988.

The membership was not unanimous in this matter.

This research tests the hypothesis that the response to homosexual ordination will reflect social differences which are related to modernity.

The research involved a survey questionnaire completed by members/adherents of a United Church of Canada congregation in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

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Chapter One

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA AND ITS DEVELOPMENT AS A TWENTIETH CENTURY CHURCH

a. History of development of the United Church of Canada

The United Church of Canada is a uniquely Canadian denomination whose origins:

lie in the social factors and historical processes which shaped the development of nation-wide denominations through a series of inter-confessional unions in the nineteenth century. The frontier of Canada was immense, sparsely populated and northern with a harsh climate. Its challenges eroded old denominational loyalties and competition and led ... to a practical ecumenicity through the pooling of resources and the co-ordination of other activities.¹

It was in 1902 that the Presbyterians in Canada began discussing union with the Methodists in Canada. A short time later, the Congregationalists in Canada also joined the deliberations. By 1908, a basis of union between the three denominations was ready for presentation to their respective memberships.

While not all Presbyterians were in favour, "the pressure from the rise of local union churches in the western provinces, in anticipation of union, continued the momentum. On June 10, 1925, the United Church of Canada was formed...."²

In the end, however, about one-third of the Presbyterians decided to pass up the opportunity of union with the Methodists and Congregationalists. (They continue to operate as the Presbyterian Church of Canada.) Church union, in Canada, did not end there. In 1968, the Canada Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined the United Church of Canada. Negotiations, however, for union with the Anglican Church of Canada broke off in 1975 after thirty years of discussion.

One can visualize a church that is prepared to de-emphasize formal theology in its quest for inclusiveness. It did so back in 1902, and continues to this day. Compromise is often said to be the Canadian way, and such an approach has been used to avoid division among its followers within the United Church of Canada. This compromise is even expressed on the official church crest. On the crest is an open Bible to represent Congregational Church roots. Congregationalists had emphasized that God's truth makes one free. Congregationalists also promoted spiritual freedom and civic justice. The burning bush on the crest is for the Presbyterian heritage. The bush is on fire but not destroyed, to represent indestructibility. Presbyterian roots brought to the United Church of Canada dignity in worship and the authority of scripture, along with an emphasis on education. Methodism brought to the United

Church an evangelical zeal along with fellowship. The dove on the United Church crest represents Methodism. In addition to these three symbols of past traditions are found Latin words "ut omnes unum sint", which translates to read "that all may be one" expressing the church's concern that it be seen as both a united and uniting church. The church goes out of its way to be seen as ecumenical in its approach.

b. Church Structure

The church, incorporated under the Federal United Church of Canada Act, has by-laws and written procedures found within the "manual" of the church. The denomination is a conciliar democracy. However it operates in a fashion that:

individual church members do not elect representatives to all levels from the local one, as is the case in public politics. Rather, each level elects to the next one up. And those who are elected are not "representatives" of a district or constituency - although they should give caring attention to where members stand. Rather, in making decisions each delegate or commissioner must weigh the gospel, the members' views, and the larger health of church and society.³

The basic unit is the pastoral charge. Pastoral charges are composed of one or more congregations, sometimes

sharing ministers. Pastoral charges report to presbyteries; presbyteries report to conferences; conferences report to General Council, and General Council meets once every two years to deal with church policy. At each General Council a moderator is elected. Moderators do not set church policy, but rather committees report to General Council on church policies. At the moment, there is some debate about the fact that of the approximately 400 official delegates to General Council half are clergy and half are ordinary members of congregations suggesting the ratio of clergy to lay is out of balance in relation to numbers represented. The issue seems to be whether or not the clergy, who control half the votes, are in accord with members of the denomination. Some see this as not democratic in structure at the moment.

There is a full time officer of the church called the Secretary of General Council who is responsible for coordination of policy. "The policy of the United Church is set by the General Council, but the work of this court is done through its administrative structure and through the appointment of special committees and commissions, as well as standing committees, to deal with particular projects and to make recommendations to the council."⁴

General Council, as mentioned, meets once each two years and is the "highest court". It is composed of an

equal number of ministers and lay members called commissioners. Conference, on the other hand, meets annually to elect a president. All ministers within the conference are members of the conference, with lay members from presbyteries appointed in equal numbers to the ministers. There are twelve conferences in Canada. They ordain and settle ministers within the conference charges and also oversee presbyteries within their conference. Presbyteries are made up of all ministers within the presbytery bounds with an equal number of lay members from pastoral charges within said presbytery. There are approximately ninety presbyteries in Canada. (Cambrian Presbytery in Northwestern Ontario has the largest area in all Canada extending from the Manitoba border in the west, to Marathon in the east, and from the international border in the south, to Balmertown in the north. Within the jurisdiction are found twenty-nine pastoral charges.) The role of a presbytery is to monitor pastoral charges within the jurisdictions of the presbytery, just as conferences monitor presbyteries. Presbyteries also supervise candidates for ordination along with the overseeing of pastoral charges. Pastoral charges can be made up of one or more congregations depending on circumstances. Smaller congregations often share ministers. There are approximately 2,000 pastoral charges within the church at

this time, composed of approximately 4,000 congregations. Pastoral charges hold annual meetings to nominate and elect members to various positions within the pastoral charge and further to elect members to serve on both presbytery and conference.

Pastoral charges have administrative constitutions, approved by presbytery, allowing for them to establish duties and responsibilities within the pastoral charge.

The denomination has several types of ministers: ordained, diaconal and lay. Those ordained are at the top of the "pecking" order. They can officiate at baptisms, funerals, communions and weddings. They also preach the Sunday sermons and provide pastoral care. Diaconal ministers are those with less formal education and, most often, are mainly trained in the Christian education field. Another level of those ministering to congregations are called staff associates. Staff associates assist the senior minister by sharing the workload. Pastoral care is a key area of an associate's responsibility. Associates will assist with communions and may also preach, along with conducting funerals. Members of the denomination can also become lay ministers. Lay ministers can lead in worship, preach and conduct funerals. They need special permission from presbytery, however, to officiate at baptisms,

communions and weddings. Such permission is given only in exceptional circumstances.

Yet, it is still a bit hazy as to where the line between all these type of ministers begins and ends. Is the difference based on education or responsibility? Is ordination simply something left over from a different era when wearing a full clerical collar was a sign of authority? (Most ordained ministers within the United Church these days do not wear a clerical collar.) I recall hearing an Anglican priest desirous of moving over to the United Church of Canada as a minister say the reason for doing so was that in the United Church he saw no "middle person" between God and the congregation. This is certainly different from the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican situation where the priest is indeed the so-called "middle person". Therefore one can conclude the role of the minister is not so formal in the United Church and, because of this, it would follow that there could be additional types of ministers within the denomination due to a less structured environment. However, the church has not come to grips with what being ordained means in relation to the other types of ministers. At one time ordination may have brought prestige, but the church also claims that all its members have a ministry. Is the ordained minister, then, the "first among the equals"? One

does not find anything formally written on the subject of ministry as it applies to the ranking order. There is a sense, however, that congregations accept the ordained minister as having a higher calling. When congregations have a choice they seem to want an ordained minister. As for educational differences, "the ordained minister will normally have a university degree and three years of theological training. The diaconal minister will have a three-year course. The lay pastoral minister has spent six weeks over three summers, and for the staff associate there are no specific educational requirements."⁵

Money hardly separates these types of ministry since the spread between the ordained and lay pastoral ministers is only \$1,185.00 annually according to the 1992 salary guide. Going to school for six years rather than six weeks does, however, earn the title of "reverend". The various forms of ministers within themselves must perceive some subtle difference because many eventually go back to educational facilities to qualify for full ordination. The key difference is that the sacraments are given by an ordained minister with other ministers only being allowed to serve the sacraments with special permission. Serving sacraments refers to the special occasions when the congregation takes communion - the drinking of wine (in the

case of the United Church of Canada instead of wine it is grape juice) and the eating of bread. This formal process is called communion and symbolically represents the drinking of Jesus Christ's blood and the eating of Jesus Christ's body. It is the most sacred ceremony conducted within the church, along with baptism. This special status assigned to ordained ministers has disturbed some ministers, even ordained ones. Former church moderator Anne Squire states: "We live and work in a church where ministers of word and sacrament are accorded more 'worth' than ministers of education, service and pastoral care. ... We deny certain aspects of ministry to those not ordained ... simply because they lack a certain form of training."⁶

One can conclude, then, there is a form of hierarchy even if it is less pronounced than in episcopal denominations.

c. Beliefs

The makeup of the denomination covers the full spectrum from the most liberal to the most fundamentalist, with the majority of members being somewhere in the centre. Ralph Milton writing on the United Church comments:

We are not a confessional church. We don't have a creed or formula which you have to say or sign before you can become a member. Nor do we demand that you use a certain set of religious words, or pray in a

certain way, or believe in a particular interpretation of the Bible. We do have convictions! We don't believe in formulas. Faith is a living thing. If you try to nail it down, you kill it. We have a "Creed" ... which expresses much of what the people of our church believe. We say it often together. But it's just a statement. It's always been changed as the church changes. It'll be changed again. (By the way, that doesn't mean that God changes. It means our understanding of God grows.)⁷

The Church, then, is constantly being reformed with time. The United Church Creed, in part, reads: "We are called ... to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil"⁸ It is the 'justice' concept that has brought the issue of homosexuality to the General Council debate.

Getting an exact handle on the belief system within the United Church of Canada is somewhat difficult. This is due to the fact that the church does not force views on its members. Readings suggest that earlier work done by both Crysdale and Bibby struggled with the same dilemma. Macleod's work on religious commitment indicators comparing 1975 data to 1964 data shows that there has been slippage within the denomination on the matter of belief.⁹ Fewer members in 1975 accepted the statement "I know God exists" than had been the case in 1964. The actual numbers were 43% in 1975 as compared to 53% in 1964. On the issue of acceptance of Jesus as the Divine Son of God, numbers fell from 58% in 1964 to 41% in 1975. During the same time frame, on the issue of there being life after death,

percentages fell from 57% to 54%. A growing uncertainty about beliefs seems to have prevailed in this eleven-year period. Even on the matter of being certain to have found life's meaning the numbers fell from 41% to 33%. Church attendance came down as did regular reading of the Bible and regular prayer during this same period of time. According to Macleod's analysis of Crydale's research, liberalism had the upper hand over conservatism within the belief system. Bibby's research supports this finding. In fact, his data show that on the matter of "positive belief in God, the divinity of Jesus, and life after death; private prayer; the experience of God's presence; and Biblical knowledge . . . only 22% of United Church members endorsed all six items...."¹⁰ Bibby came to the conclusion that members of the United Church of Canada were 'unfocused' or 'fragmented' on matters of belief.

The 1960s and early to mid 1970s was a special period of crisis to the faith. Bibby's data indicate a significant drop-off of church attendance had occurred during this period of time. It is his conclusion that this was brought about by "modern industrialization and post-industrialization".¹¹

Even though church attendance fell during this time frame and the years following, the United Church of Canada still did not waiver in its stand to resolve social

injustice. A scan of the topics studied by the United Church General Council commissions, committees, and task forces includes topics like poverty, immigration, abortion, ethics and genetics, environment, social welfare, religion in public education, and human sexuality. The list certainly could be said to show that the United Church of Canada had become much more like a social movement and less like a church which often accepts a role separate from the state. In this case, the United Church became deeply involved in things considered the realm of the state.

d. Sociodemographic determinants

Using the 1981 Canadian Census data, Tim Heaton's study "Sociodemographic characteristics of religious groups in Canada"¹² reveals interesting findings about those identifying themselves with the United Church of Canada - 15.6% of the total population of Canada indicated the United Church of Canada as its religion on the census return. Only the Roman Catholics were higher at 46.5% of the total population. Under level of education as compared to total population Heaton found, within the United Church of Canada, the post secondary level of education was 41% compared to the total population's 39%. Likewise, of those with 11-13 years of education, United Church people composed 28% compared with the total population's 26%. Only in the level

of education less than 11 years did the total population average exceed that of the United Church. In that category, it was 35% for the total population and 32% for the United Church of Canada. Therefore, it can be concluded that the average education within the population associating themselves with the United Church of Canada exceeds the national averages.

Heaton also showed, when looking at occupations, there are more professionals within the United Church of Canada as compared to the national average (26% to 24%). As for clerical/sales/service types, his data show no differences since they are both at 40%. However, in the blue collar/farmer class, the United Church percentage is 34% while the national average is 36%. Therefore, Heaton indicates the United Church has more people associated with it from the professions and less from the blue collar/farmer category than the national average. Conversely, this also says less individuals from occupations of blue collar or farmers identify with the United Church of Canada than the average of the total population. No doubt this occupational choice also explains why the average income of persons identifying with the United Church of Canada is \$13,693.00 compared to the total population showing average income of \$12,993.00.

Tim Heaton's data supports findings of Henry Macleod, whose study also "reveals a tendency for the membership

to be predominantly British in origin, well-educated, above average in income, and possibly higher in occupational stature than the general population."¹³

All this indicates "the United Church leadership has to deal with an educated membership, which has definite expectations about the role and responsibility of the church. Lay members are more likely to question traditional beliefs and practises and to expect more responsibility and greater lay involvement, along with changes in liturgy."¹⁴

This point is supported by Heaton's data comparing socioeconomic status of the United Church of Canada membership to evangelical churches such as the Pentecostals and the Salvation Army. We find in the United Church that 41% of its membership have a post secondary education compared to 33% for the Pentecostals and 31% for the Salvation Army. When looking at those having an education of less than grade twelve, there are only 32% in the United Church, but 45% for the Pentecostals and 44% for the Salvation Army. Likewise, the United Church has more professionals within its membership than these other two churches. The numbers are 26% for the United Church as compared to 19% for the Pentecostals and 20% for the Salvation Army.¹⁵

When we use these socioeconomic data in conjunction with Bibby's findings, we see that in the matter of

religious beliefs the average United Church member is less willing to accept formal church doctrine than is the case with conservative churches such as Pentecostals or the Salvation Army. For example, we find under 'life after death' the percentage accepting this particular belief within the United Church to be only 68% as compared to the conservative churches at 88%. Under the heading of those 'experiencing God', the number is 34% in the United Church and 82% in the conservative churches. The data also reveal that members of conservative churches are committed to Christianity in greater percentages: United Church 38% and conservative churches 75%. Commitment to organizational involvement is also higher within the conservative church element. Conservative church attendance is 73% compared to 35% for the United Church of Canada.¹⁶

Macleod's 1979 research reveals that "sixty-five percent of the United Church's pastoral charges and 78% of its preaching places (congregations) are found in communities with 30,000 or fewer people. ... about half of the United Church's pastoral charges have fewer than 250 families and may be divided among several congregations on the charge."¹⁷

While its membership has fallen off, as have most mainline denominations in recent years, it still boasts a

membership upwards of a million followers. It very much intends to remain a modern church in society.

e. Reputation

This denomination has always been active in matters which it considers as social justice and outreach. It has never been known to be shy about taking on contentious issues. Examples include: boycotting Nestle products because of that corporation's promotion of powdered milk formula as an alternative to breastfeeding of babies in Africa, and boycotting lettuce from California in an effort to help unionization of field workers.

Macleod further states that the "United Church is committed to social service, to reform individuals and to transform the culture and society through providing social services and working for social justice"¹⁸

As a result, besides operating theological schools, the church as part of its outreach runs health care facilities, chaplaincies, inner-city missions, emergency shelters and senior citizen complexes. Likewise the church encourages close relationships with other Christian communities such as the Canadian Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. The United Church has apologized to the native community of Canada for being enthusiastic in promoting its

own brand of religion in detriment to native spirituality. The church has attempted to make its buildings more accessible to the handicapped.

The church also became a trend setter by electing a woman moderator in fact two of them within a relatively short time frame. This is simply a continuation of the openness it provides to females. The first woman ordained as a minister within the United Church was Lydia Gruchy in 1936. By contrast the Anglican Church of Canada only moved on female ordination in the mid 1970s and some denominations such as the Roman Catholics have no intention of discussing the matter at all. Such openness seems to be the destiny of the United Church of Canada as it continues to embrace the concept of inclusiveness.

f. Openness to Modernity

The question might be asked, "How does cultural and structural pluralism make negative value judgements by the church harder to impose on its followers?" The answer is relatively simple. Look at Sunday shopping and casino gambling as just two examples. In both cases, the United Church of Canada avoided making strong statements.

Given that religion (according to structural pluralism) has become a privatized matter the church had to either say

nothing or be vague. The public sphere had already endorsed both these items. Therefore, the church had no choice but to leave the decision of endorsing these issues or not to church members' consciences. Similarly the church exists in a pluralistic society. As a result, it has become tolerant of things it may have considered as morally wrong in the past. Because of cultural pluralism it makes accommodation in an attempt to not offend rights of individuals.

The United Church has always wanted to be perceived as both a united and uniting church. In fact, at union a provision was established that "no terms of admission to full membership shall be described other than those laid down in the New Testament."¹⁹

Today, the denomination finds itself within a society where cultural and structural pluralism makes it extremely difficult for the church to impose its judgements upon the membership at large. Special interest groups, operating with impunity, remind each another that no one has a monopoly on the understanding of church doctrine.

S. N. Eisenstadt has written that "the major problem facing societies is the necessity to develop an institutional structure which is capable of continuously 'absorbing' the various social changes which are inherent in the process of modernization"²⁰ The United Church of Canada, on the surface, appears to be such an institution.

In fact, it was born within the twentieth century as a modern church having no ecclesiastical hierarchy to deal with nor any longstanding traditions to follow. It has accepted the impact of modernity with relative ease. This concept of inclusiveness is also a key component of modernity. The United Church of Canada has always perceived its openness as part of its foundation. Such openness led the church to bring forward a resolution to its 1988 General Council that sexual orientation should not be a barrier to ministry. Following this 1988 decision, openness into the arena of sexuality has moved beyond ordination of homosexual persons to requests to bless same-sex relationships. While at this stage it is not clear if the words 'holy union' will be used, the exact language chosen will no doubt be contentious. General Council has endorsed this new openness toward sexuality. Are the members willing to follow the lead of the General Council? If not, then there is potential to divide the United Church of Canada, so that instead of being united, it may become 'disunited'.

Chapter Two

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA AND THE ISSUE OF HOMOSEXUALITY

a. The United Church of Canada response before 1988

It is difficult to find the United Church's stand prior to 1988. If one is a fundamentalist accepting scripture as the word of God, then Leviticus 18:22 of the Old Testament solves your dilemma since it states: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination." For those who rely on the New Testament for direction there, too, one finds scripture on the matter of homosexuality: Romans 1:24-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and 1 Timothy 1:8-10 all deal with what they refer to as improper conduct. The writings of St. Paul seem clear enough. Homosexuality would be a 'sin'. However, the church isn't of one mind on interpretation of scripture. It is argued, by some, that norms have changed since the writing of the Bible, and we are further reminded the United Church of Canada has never adopted a literalist stance on biblical matters.

At one time, though, Canadian society as a whole had definite feelings on matters such as homosexuality. In fact

the Criminal Code of Canada under Chapter 36 Part V (Offences against religion, morals and public convenience) stated under 'offences against morality' section 202 that "everyone is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for life who commits buggery either with a human being or with any other living creature." Section 203 went on to say "everyone is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to ten years imprisonment who attempts to commit the offence mentioned in the last preceding section." It wasn't until 1969 that the Criminal Code of Canada was amended to allow for acts in private between consenting adults. Amendment 149A, according to Prime Minister Trudeau, took the state out of the bedrooms of Canadians and stated that the Criminal Code no longer applied to acts committed in private between any two persons over the age of twenty-one years who consented to the commission of the act.

In 1973, another milestone occurred when the American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality from its mental disease lists. The vote was not without great debate within the profession. However, in "removing homosexuality from the diagnostic and statistical manual, the psychiatric association symbolically deprived American society of its most important justification for refusing to grant legitimation to homosexuality."²¹

Following this decision, both American and Canadian governments moved legislation to protect the rights of homosexuals to prevent discrimination. The churches, likewise, had no choice but to confront the issue given the fact the state had so moved. The United Church had the issue dropped squarely on its lap when a candidate for ordination in 1978 declared to the committee that she was gay. This created a situation wherein the church was forced to deal with the matter.

In 1980, the 28th General Council received "In God's Image ... Male and Female", being a study document released stating that it was still an unfinished document with further work to be done on it. In 1984, the 30th General Council of the The United Church of Canada produced a statement entitled "Gift, Dilemma, & Promise" which called for further study of homosexuality in the context of human sexuality. This 30th General Council gave direction that a comprehensive statement be developed which eventually led to the presentation of a report entitled "Toward a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientation, Lifestyles, and Ministry" in the summer of 1988 to the 32nd General Council. Council endorsed a statement declaring:

1. That all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, are welcome to be or become members of the church.
- 2A. All members of the church are eligible to be considered for ordained ministry.²²

In 1990, the 33rd General Council re-affirmed the statement of the 32nd General Council. The vote was 302 to 74. In August 1992, General Council met again to deal with a motion recognizing same-sex covenants, including the adoption of appropriate liturgy. This matter, however, remains unresolved as Council could give no clear guidance on the subject.

While it was in the summer of 1988 that the United Church endorsed the ordination of homosexuals, it was not until May 1992 that the first openly non-celibate homosexual was ordained. That minister (Reverend Tim Stevenson), however, ended up waiting over a year to find a congregation willing to accept him as its clergyperson. During that waiting period Stevenson became frustrated. "It's disheartening", said Stevenson, "My fear is when all is said and done, gay people are not wanted in the church."²³

After this embarrassing long time, Rev. Tim Stevenson was finally accepted by a forty family congregation in Burnaby, British Columbia. He begins duties July 4, 1993 ending a personal ordeal of twelve years from the time he declared his homosexuality and requested consideration to ordination within the United Church of Canada.

General Council may have made its decision but most pastoral charges seem unwilling to go along with the change. In letters to The United Church Observer magazine members

write: "Stevenson was sponsored by First United in Vancouver, approved by Burrard Presbytery, ordained in B.C. Conference. Presumably they know him well enough to decide whether he is wholly committed to God and the church. If so, why not settle him in that area? From the information before me, I am wondering whether his prime concern is to proclaim Christ, or to be a highly visible exponent of the gay movement."²⁴

Other letters are of a similar text: "The majority of congregations were opposed to the ordination of homosexuals. But those in power prevailed, and now we see this very sad case. Should such important decisions be made by the majority, or should they be made by an elected elite mainly on the basis that they believe it is the 'right thing to do'?"²⁵

Some letters were of a more compassionate type: "I am disappointed by the lack of Christian love displayed by the Manitoba congregations that rejected Stevenson. They have more need of our prayers and Christ's forgiveness than Tim."²⁶

"With the shortage of clergy to fill pulpits, it is ludicrous that Rev. Tim Stevenson is unable to find a place. It should be a policy of the church that if a pastoral

charge refuses an ordinand, it should no longer be allowed to place its name on the list of charges seeking settlement."²⁷

"I just can't believe what is happening in our church. Only two-thirds of requests for clergy are able to be filled, and yet a dedicated young ordained man is rejected.

. what a shame."²⁸

Within the church there are several organizations promoting causes regarding the issue of what they consider as appropriate sexuality. The 'United Church Renewal Fellowship' is very much literalist in interpretation of scripture; the 'Community of Concern' came together on the ordination issue to promote family values e.g. chastity in singleness and fidelity in marriage; and, on the opposite side of the fence, the 'Friends of Affirm' promotes ordination of homosexuals. It would seem "the struggle over homosexual ordination symbolizes a contest between two fundamentally different and opposed models or paradigms of the United Church and it may be no exaggeration to describe it as a battle for the soul of this organization."²⁹

This research does not delve into the issues of what causes homosexuality. Some would argue 'nature'; some would argue 'nurture'; and some would argue you cannot separate them as both play a role. It is not my purpose to deal with

anything other than the implications of homosexuality and the church. I will leave the reasons why homosexuality occurs to others. There is a great deal of literature written on the subject, however, I would in particular cite an article by Christie Davies entitled "Religious Boundaries and Sexual Morality" wherein it is said "in societies which are content to live with weak or ambiguous socioreligious boundaries or where the boundaries are seen as safe, unthreatened, and perhaps unassailable, then the prohibitions against homosexuality . . . will be much weaker or even absent."³⁰

b. Events that involved a local United Church Congregation

All members of the United Church of Canada congregations in Thunder Bay were invited to an April 10, 1988 meeting. Two church spokespeople (Audrey McLennan, President of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference, and Malcolm Spencer, one of the report's authors) addressed a packed audience bringing them up to date on a report released March 4, 1988 going to General Council in the Summer of 1988. The report was produced by the National Coordinating Group (chaired by B. J. Klassen), and entitled "Toward a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientations, Lifestyle and Ministry".

The audience was informed of events leading up to the publication of the report. In particular, reference was made to the 1984 General Council that had determined homosexuality was not a sin; nor could the committee assigned by that General Council to bring in a report determine strong moral, health, or theological arguments for denying consideration of ordination simply on the basis of sexual orientation. The 1988 'Lifestyle' report had 13 members on the task force: 6 lay members and 7 ordained ministers. Within the group was to be found one homosexual, one lesbian, and one ex-homosexual. This group produced a report but dissenters within the group also produced two other reports of their own. The main report acknowledged that there is a diversity of viewpoints within the denomination. Biblical references were made to accepting strangers into the church, being apostles to gentiles, and even that God often pushed the church. Further, in 1978 when the issue first surfaced (a female candidate for ordination declared she was gay) the main issue was not homosexuality per se, but was the authority of scripture.

Committee members felt that once upon a time scripture was used to condone slavery and now it was being used incorrectly in the matter of sexuality. The United Church is not a literalist church, and while it accepts that the Bible contains truths, it is not to be accepted from a

literal perspective, according to the church spokespeople leading the meeting. These two people went on to state one must look at scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. In other words, one looks at both the world and the word. However, it was re-stated that the committee itself was not of one voice and that the report would go to General Council for consideration.

Those present were informed that there was a process pastoral charges could follow if concerned -- namely, the 'petition' process. Official congregational meetings must first be held and at that time they could send forward to presbytery petitions expressing their points of view. Presbytery cannot change such petitions, but can vote on whether to send them on with their concurrence or not. In any event, they are obligated to send them on. Conference then operates in the same fashion. The petitions finally find their way to General Council where they are referred to a special committee and then back to General Council for a vote.

Key timing must be noted. This local meeting was April 10, 1988, yet petitions had to be at presbytery before April 30, 1988. Presbytery must, in turn, send on any petitions to Conference before the Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference annual meeting of May 26-27, 1988. These were pointed out as tight time frames, but the audience was

advised that these dates must be met. Further, the audience was advised that there were several avenues open to General Council. They could reject the report altogether; they could accept the report as is; they could accept only parts of the report; or they could refer the report back for more study. The audience was also advised if they thought more time was needed in this matter they simply needed to petition General Council to slow down.

The local congregation in question met April 17th, 1988 and put forward a petition that read: "... be it resolved that the congregation ... petition the 32nd General Council through Cambrian Presbytery and Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference, to reject the recommendations of the report."

Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference requested General Council give more study time, but delegates did vote to accept that "sexual orientation in itself should not be a barrier to full participation in the church, including ordination. The statement did not specifically include or exclude the practise of homosexuality or lesbianism."³¹

In August 1988, the 32nd General Council produced its document entitled "Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality". (One does not know if it would have made any difference if the 388 delegates had voted by secret ballot.)

On September 19, 1988 the local United Church congregation met, having approximately 75 in attendance to review the General Council document. They were led by executives of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference (Reverend Paul Campbell, President and Dianne Cooper, Executive Secretary). The part of the report that became widely reported in the media posited: "1. That all persons regardless of their sexual orientation who profess Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, are welcome to be or become full members of the church. 2A. All members of the church are eligible to be considered for ordered ministry."^{3 2}

Once again the issue of authority of scripture was discussed. The congregation was informed that approximately 1,800 petitions were sent to General Council expressing concern about the report. The spokespersons reminded the audience that one must not lose sight of the long process to ordination. (In 1986, for example, there were only 81 ordinations.) The pastoral charge first puts the name forward. A conference interview board is then set up which looks at the candidate's skills, energy, faith, personal gifts and credibility. Less than fifty percent of candidates pass this interview stage. If accepted, the candidate still has to attend an educational facility, go in front of intern boards, etc. The church, however, is adamant that human rights legislation be adhered to in such

matters. Not only the letter, but the spirit of the legislation is to be followed.

On Friday October 21, 1988 the United Church of Canada issued a communique stating to the media that the General Council statement "does not prohibit nor approve the ordination/commissioning of homosexual persons. It simply says that "all members, regardless of their sexual orientation are eligible to be considered for ordered ministry". The General Council statement does not define the meaning of 'sexual orientation'..."³³

There remained a significant amount of confusion about exactly what the General Council had said or endorsed. A formal congregational vote took place on November 20, 1988 as a secret ballot vote on the matter of endorsing the General Council decision. The congregational vote result:

for rejection of endorsement	81 members/adherents
for acceptance of endorsement	17 members/adherents
abstaining	1 member/adherent
total number of votes cast	99 members/adherents

On February 11, 1990, another secret ballot by the congregation was held prompted by the 'Community of Concern' Thunder Bay Chapter. This time the question was of endorsement or not of the position that "the only acceptable standard for Christians should be fidelity in heterosexual marriage and chastity in singleness". The result:

for endorsement	51 members/adherents
against endorsement	65 members/adherents
invalid	6 members/adherents
abstaining	3 members/adherents
total number of votes cast	- 125 members/adherents

One should recognize that the total vote both times was but a small number of the actual congregation which comprised close to 1,100 members/adherents at the time.

The 33rd General Council, by vote 302 to 74, affirmed the statement "Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality" as adopted by the 32nd General Council. Likewise, the 1992 General Council, by vote 290 to 77, reconfirmed the decisions made by the General Council two years earlier. General Council felt the matter was one of justice and a recognition of the times. However, the 1992 General Council did not know how to deal with the additional suggestion that the church recognize the validity of same sex covenants. While the term "marriage" was not used, it was not clear if this did not mean the same thing. That issue remains unresolved today, and is likely to come before the next General Council in 1994 for resolution.

Chapter Three

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERNITY, DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS, AND HOMOSEXUAL ORDINATION

a. Modernity

There is a distinction between modernity and modernization that needs to be explained. Modernization is caused by a shift away from agriculture and low education to the use of technology, urbanization and higher education levels. Some have used the word 'industrialization' with reference to modernization and certainly industrialization is part of modernization. Industrialization brought with it not only higher education, but specifically advanced technology and (most important) science. In turn, science in relation to human development fostered the theory of evolution which meant a conflict with the then accepted theory of creation as written in the Bible. One can refer back to the 'Age of Reason', or 'Enlightenment' as some called it, as a turning point. Several fathers of sociology recognized that change would come with the advancement of science and reason. Durkheim determined that there would be a decline of traditional religion with scientific progress.

Weber, likewise, saw a demise of traditional religion in the modern gessellschaft. Of the two, Durkheim felt this change would be positive, but Weber seemed to feel there would be a loss of the sacred in the process.

This 'worship of reason' affects religious belief. In fact, critical theory regularly opposes blind acceptance of authority, the Bible included. For almost two thousand years the Christian Church relied on tradition as an absolute until finally challenged in the twentieth century. This change in attitude by church members came as a result of the impact of modernity, since modernity began to challenge the authority of scripture in light of the times the Bible was written in as compared to today.

Modernity is an attitude, not a process. Yet at the same time, modernization must occur for modernity to develop. Several researchers have observed the impact of modernity on religion. One is James Davison Hunter. He feels there are three key aspects of modernity with reference to religion:

1. Functional rationalism, Hunter says, deals with religion at the level of subjective consciousness. Under this heading, Hunter asks the question: "What is the effect on the belief system of the ordinary religious person?"³⁴ Today we want understandings that are readily explained. For example, given that myth, magic, tradition

and authority are key elements of religion, then a reasoned (rational) approach to religion may well cast doubt as to its legitimacy.

2. Cultural pluralism, Hunter says, is brought about by urbanization and the impact of the mass media on society. According to Hunter:

The subjective dimension of this objective process is that modern people are constantly exposed to variant world views. Cultural pluralism at this level implies the collision between discrepant if not antagonistic perspectives on reality. ... The most fundamental and enduring experience a person is likely to encounter, then, is cognitive dissonance, an experience of confusion and anxiety about the certainty of his own understanding of reality. At the least, this leads to the questioning of the veracity of his beliefs and the consideration of the possibility of the truth of the beliefs of another.³⁵

In such cases, personal belief systems are likely compromised when alternatives are given serious consideration. Thus, cultural plurality plays a significant role in exposing one to different ideas and alternative religious viewpoints.

3. According to Hunter, "the principal constraint structural pluralism imposes on religion is privatisation."³⁶ In the public sphere are institutions, along with their bureaucracies, which, for the most part, are impersonal and at times alienating.

Countering the public is the private sphere where, for example, we find our family and other primary relationships.

We also see religion forced out of the public into the private sphere. It has lost status in this shift, no longer holding the prominence in society it once enjoyed. Hunter claims the private sphere now includes sexuality and personal identity.

Modernity creates an environment where constant choice has to be made each and every day, and that includes the world of religious life as well as the secular. Hunter feels that religion becomes vulnerable as traditional religious doctrine becomes less plausible due to the influence of modernity so that in the end "truth or falseness of religion becomes a matter of individual choice."³⁷

While the Crysdale research uses the word 'urbanism' instead of the word modernity, Crysdale's interpretation is identical. Crysdale says: "Urbanism as a style of life means openness to new ideas and readiness to question old norms. It means the growth of rationality in everyday life."³⁸

Reginald Bibby makes reference to what he calls an 'industrial world view' paralleling Hunter's approach to modernity. He says: "Such an influence [of modernity] can be seen heuristically in the examination of religiosity and select correlates of Canadian industrialization such as time, community size, education, work force participation,

and media exposure."³⁹ Bibby feels that the impact of modernity will show as a trend. That trend he feels will have a negative impact upon the religious experience as secularization takes further root in Canadian society.

Lynn Davidman's study, "Accommodation and Resistance to Modernity: A Comparison of Two Contemporary Orthodox Jewish Groups", expands on this theme. According to Davidman, features of modernity force religious groups to either accommodate or resist. The Davidman study of two religious groups (a modern Orthodox and a Lubavitch Chassidic Jewish community) demonstrates different approaches to the impact of modernity. Davidman concludes that:

Those religious groups attempting to exist in the dominant secular culture must find ways to negotiate the tensions between this culture and religious values and ways of life. This article addressed the general question of strategies of religious existence in modernity through a case study of the responses of two very different Orthodox Jewish groups to several features of modern society highlighted by secularization theory: pluralism and individualism, rationalization, and changing women's roles.

This article has shown that the impact of modern society on religion is not monolithic; religious groups exhibit a variety of responses to the pressures of contemporary life. The two groups represented here represent very distinct strategies for creating "traditional" religious communities in the modern context. It is obvious from the data presented in this paper that the modern Orthodox community negotiates a means of existence by accommodating its teachings to incorporate modern conceptions of pluralism, rationalism, and feminism. The Lubavitch teachings, in contrast, represent an attempt to resist the dominant culture and offer a radical alternative to it.⁴⁰

The data show that those favouring the modern Orthodox are the more highly educated compared to the less educated favouring the Lubavich. Davidman's study of modernity's challenge to religion supports Hunter's perspective on the elements of modernity that impact on religion.

While my research leans towards Hunter's, Crysdale's and Bibby's approach to modernity and urbanism, one must be cognizant of the fact that finding a unanimous definition of modernity is impossible. Therefore, one is advised to read other research as well on the topic of modernity. Modernity is a complex issue and the subject of constant debate.⁴¹

b. Research by others on modernity and the church

1. Stewart Crysdale

The United Church of Canada in the early 1960s was concerned enough about "the question of agreement or consensus in beliefs under the pressure of basic changes in society" to conduct a sociological survey of its membership.⁴² One must remember we are talking about the 1960s. At that time, under attitudes towards controversial social questions, Crysdale asked about things such as:

- dancing in church halls;
- white, negro and Indian young people mixing at school parties;
- gambling and lotteries.

Under attitudes towards civil liberties, Crysdale explored:

- admittance of Jews to vacation resorts;
- teenage delinquency;
- freedom of speech for Communists, French-Canadian separatists, and atheists.

Such were the 'pressing' issues of the 1960s!

Still, Stewart Crysdale's book, The Changing Church In Canada, does contain tables correlating liberal theology of lay people with urbanism, age, sex, occupation, and church attendance. Before looking at the tables, one must have an understanding of what Crysdale means by liberal theology.

He writes:

The distinction between liberal and traditional theology is a matter of definition. Variations in the interpretation of faith really lie along a continuum. At one extreme, to the right of tradition, is inflexible fundamentalism, with an uncritical and literal grip upon inherited forms of belief. At the other extreme, to the far left of liberalism as we know it commonly in the United Church, is unbelief in the existence of God or in the authority or power of Jesus Christ. For the purposes of analysis, we have drawn an arbitrary line down the centre, and called all respondents to the left liberal and those to the right traditional. Each of these two large groups includes persons with wide variations in belief. It is not important for our present purposes that they be more precisely defined.⁴³

Crysdale's data showed that within the United Church laypeople are more liberal in the large cities as compared to the rural area and towns. He found only 39% of persons

with liberal theology in the rural areas, 47% in towns, 49% in city cores, and 51% in city suburbs.⁴⁴

Looking at age, Crysdale discovered 45% of persons with liberal theology among the older group (50 years old and over), 48% with liberal theology among the middle-aged (24-49 years old), and 46% with liberal theology in the younger category being under 23 years old.⁴⁵ Perhaps surprisingly, there was no clear pattern of younger age being associated with liberal theology.

He also found that the professional and managerial occupations had a more liberal theology than others -- 52%. White collar workers dropped to 44% liberal theology. Blue collar workers were 42% liberal theology. Farmers had the least liberal theology at 37%.⁴⁶

Under church attendance, Crysdale showed that those who attended church nearly every week (regular) had a lower level of liberal theology at 40%, compared to those attending on an occasional basis (at least quarterly) at 57% and those rarely or never attending at 72% liberal theology.⁴⁷

The Crysdale data support the theory that urbanism affects theology as do education, church attendance, and occupation.

2. James Davison Hunter

Hunter found that certain variables constrain modernity's impact. Hunter's data show that, when looking at membership in liberal denominations as compared to evangelical denominations, those with education of less than 8 years are 9% evangelical compared to 4% liberal; with education of 8-11 years 29% are evangelical compared to 22% liberal; with high school education 38% are evangelical compared with 42% liberal; with some university education 15% are evangelical compared with 17% liberal, and with university education 9% are evangelical compared with 14% liberal.⁴⁸

When Hunter compared ages of evangelicals and liberals he found in the age category 18-35 that 27% were evangelical compared to 38% liberal; in the age category 36-50 that 27% were evangelical compared to 22% liberal; in the age category 51-65 that 25% were evangelical compared to 22% liberal; and finally in the age category 66 and over that 22% were evangelical compared to 18% liberal.⁴⁹

Hunter's comparison of urbanism shows that in the rural category he discovered 44% evangelical compared to 34% liberal; in cities sized 2,500-49,999 he showed 19% evangelical compared to 18% liberal; in cities sized 50,000-999,999 he discovered 28% evangelical compared to 33%

liberal, and in the final category of cities 1,000,000 and over he found 9% evangelical and 15% liberal.⁵⁰

Hunter also found a strong positive association between conservative theology (Evangelicalism) and the South. Evangelicalism was weakest in New England, the West central, and Rocky Mountain/Pacific regions. Liberal protestants were more balanced in their distribution across the country. The Secularists were the group most associated with regions of the country tied to the centres of modernity (Mid-Atlantic, Rocky Mountain/Pacific).

When he asked if homosexuality was immoral behaviour, Hunter discovered that 89% of evangelicals said yes, but only 70% of liberals agreed.⁵¹

3. Nancy T. Ammerman

Nancy T. Ammerman's study of Southern Baptists in the United States of America shows certain interesting tables. She found that when comparing theological moderates to fundamentalists the fundamentalists had less education. Eleven percent of fundamentalists had an education of 12 years or less compared to 4% of moderates in this category. Six percent of fundamentalists had some college education compared to 7% for moderates in this category. Six percent of fundamentalists had a bachelor degree compared to 13% of the moderates. Four percent of fundamentalists had a master degree compared to 17% of the moderates. While the numbers

were too small to percentage in the category of those holding a doctoral degree, the moderates likewise were more prominent in this category than the fundamentalists.⁵²

When reviewing childhood community she discovered that:

people who grew up in suburbs and small cities were the most likely to adopt a moderate theology, while those who grew up on farms were the least likely to locate left of center. There was, in fact, a direct negative relationship between the size of a person's community of origin and the conservatism of his or her beliefs. People who grew up in cities were simply less conservative than people who grew up in the country.⁵³

It is recognized the data produced by both Hunter and Ammerman were collected in the United States of America, but the variables used remain consistent with modernity both sides of the border. The United Church of Canada is considered a modern mainstream liberal denomination. Hunter compares evangelicals to liberal (non-evangelical) protestants. This liberal group may be considered as the American version of the United Church of Canada. Ammerman has gone so far as to indicate compatible theological identifications making comparisons relatively easy with the United Church of Canada. The Crysedale study is older than the Hunter and Ammerman data, but since it is directly about the United Church of Canada, its content must not be overlooked by anyone interested in this denomination.

All three studies show a pattern that socio-demographic variables, such as size of community and level of education, reflect the impact of modernity on religion. For example, the more educated and exposed to urbanization, the less traditionalist one is likely to be. Conversely, the less educated and less exposed to urbanization, the more traditionalist one is likely to be. Therefore, using predictable variables, one can see correlations to theological styles.

c. Hypothesis

The response to homosexual ordination in one United Church congregation will reflect social differences which are related to modernity. Liberals will tend to favour homosexual ordination and traditionalists will not.

If fundamentalism is considered a response to modernity then the traditionalists of today, no doubt, will follow biblical authority more closely than will liberals. One can then assume that theological leanings are related to social differences which in turn are related to the impact of modernity. A survey of a typical, large town congregation will test this hypothesis.

Chapter Four

PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

a. Mailed-out questionnaires

I chose to use mailed-out questionnaires as they are less intrusive than a telephone survey. Also, this allowed those who did not want to participate to simply throw away the questionnaire. This low key concept likely reduced the rate of return, but was something I was prepared to accept. One must remember that this survey dealt with several issues that have the potential to make respondents uneasy - religion and sexuality. Crysdale had used mailed-out questionnaires for the gathering of his data. His 47% response rate was acceptable given the fact that Don A. Dillman et al. suggests mailed-out questionnaire "response rates are typically low, usually not exceeding 50 percent. ...however, the appeal of collecting large amounts of data at relatively low cost encourages continued use."⁵⁴ I assumed I could achieve a similar number.

Mailed-out questionnaires call for at least one form of follow-up letter or postcard to remind respondents to complete and return same, but they also have the advantage

of being anonymous. That I felt would be important in this data gathering process. The negative consideration is that if the respondent has not answered all the questions, one has no opportunity to attempt to convince him/her to do so. This is a key negative factor when using mailed-out questionnaires. Yet, Arnold S. Linsky, too, agrees that mailed-out questionnaires have a place in data collection. He says "it avoids interviewer or respondent bias for topics that are potentially embarrassing in a person interview situation."⁵⁵

Likewise, Michael R. Welch, in an article entitled "Surveying Denominations and Congregations: An Introduction", repeats that earlier research into religion often "used survey questionnaires as the principal or sole data collection method."⁵⁶

A mailed-out questionnaire, then, is appropriate for this research as a method of gathering data.

b. Previous researchers' socio-demographic questions

According to Henry Macleod, there has "been a concern among sociologists of religion with the emphasis on the sociographic approach, which favours the discovery of correlations between the social dimensions of religious

behaviour (attendance, membership, etc.) and other variables, such as sex, rural-urban differences and income."⁵⁷

Crysdale looked at urbanism, community size, age, occupation and church attendance. These are basic variables that need to be examined when conducting socio-demographic research regarding religion. Hunter, too, looked at education, age, and city size. Ammerman's study of Southern Baptists reviewed such socio-demographics as education and childhood community. All three researchers attempted to discover correlations with theology. They attempted to label respondents as liberal or traditionalist for the sake of their studies. However, liberal or traditionalist must be defined by each researcher given the fact that liberalism is an ordinal level variable and as such is only meaningful when compared to something else. Crysdale resolved this matter by the way he structured the answers given to questions. He wrote: "The composite indicator for liberalism in beliefs has sixteen items, including level of concurrence in the creedal definition of God, view of the divinity of Christ, interpretation of Biblical miracles, acceptance or rejection of traditional indications of a state of salvation, such as belief in the saviourhood of Jesus Christ, and so forth."⁵⁸

Ammerman had less difficulty since she asked the respondents to rank themselves from moderate to fundamentalist. Hunter, on the other hand, looked at the denomination the respondent was identified with and made certain assumptions, such as the fact that the Evangelical churches are more fundamentalist than so-called liberal churches in the United States of America.

In all three surveys a pattern develops. By looking at variables the data show that one is less a fundamentalist the more one is exposed to higher levels of education or large city life. We can conclude that modernity relates negatively with the most traditional and pre-modern sectors of religious thought.

3. Procedures and Methodology of this survey

These data were collected five years after the United Church of Canada report entitled "Toward a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientations, Lifestyle and Ministry" was published. A survey method was adopted.

I began with a membership list of one congregation for the year 1987, being the year before the issue of homosexual ordination was put onto the floor of the General Council for debate and vote. I used that year so that I could determine if there were members/adherents that had left the church over this issue.

Using a more current membership roll would not have shown names of those who had left the church if they had formally asked for their names to be withdrawn from the roll subsequent to the report being presented to General Council. Therefore, I felt it imperative that a list dated 1987 be used.

I followed Earl R. Babbie's Survey Research Methods as it applied to a mailed-out survey. Comprehensive questionnaires (random and anonymous) were mailed out February 26, 1993. Follow-up letters were mailed out March 8, 1993. Replies began arriving March 13, 1993 and continued until April 22, 1993. Most of the questionnaires were returned within a month of the initial mailing. Likely the reason some were returned later was the fact that some members/adherents are 'snowbirds' who went away for the winter months. They probably waited until their return to the community to complete and send back the questionnaire. However, I did receive several which were sent back from the United States.

There were 1,147 members/adherents on the nominal roll of the congregation in 1987. Each member/adherent was assigned a number from 0 to 9 in numerical sequence with this practice repeated until all those on the list were assigned a number. (Those known to have moved out of Thunder Bay or deceased were ignored in the assignment

process.) Using the table of random numbers found in the textbook which accompanies SPSS/PC Studentware Plus, 382 numbers were used to randomly draw up sufficient names to conduct the survey. The reason for 382 was to represent one-third of the names. One-third of the roll was surveyed rather than all on the roll due to time and expenses involved.

Of the initial 382 questionnaires sent out, 70 were returned by the post office as "moved: address unknown". Of these, corrected addresses were located for 9 and these simply re-mailed. For the remaining 61, additional randomly selected names replaced them and questionnaires mailed out to these people as substitutes. Besides these 70 referred to above, two others came back as respondent "deceased". Two also came back with notes that the respondents were in institutions and not physically able to complete the questionnaire. In these four cases, additional randomly selected substitutes were sent questionnaires to complete.

In the end, of the 382 questionnaires, 151 came back for a response rate of 40% which compares favourably with Crysedale's 47% when one appreciates that the issue of homosexual ordination within the United Church of Canada remains a delicate one. One might have obtained a higher rate of return had the project received the endorsement of the congregation's executive council, but as spelled out in

the letter that accompanied the questionnaire permission was not sought to proceed with research.

Income was left out of this survey. This was done because income can be misleading when dealing with an aging population. Retired members/adherents may have less income due simply to retirement. I chose, therefore, to look at current occupation or former occupation as an alternative to income. I see it as a more meaningful indicator.

The survey (Appendix A) compares attitudes to the United Church position by age, sex, marital status, education, length of church membership, degree of church involvement and urbanization. Such antecedents, as mentioned before, were considered significant by others conducting religious research. Cross comparisons by openness to homosexual ordination can be analyzed.

Chapter Five

FINDINGS OF THIS SURVEY

a. Analysis

It became clear that some were grateful for an opportunity to be able to speak their minds on issues that were troublesome to them. Examples:

"Thank you for all the work you have put into this."

"You are doing a survey that is long overdue and excellent."

"The questions made me think/feel my responses."

"You should get a good % return on this survey."

"This is the first time anyone asked my opinion."

"If you ask theological questions, prepare to receive a thesis or two."

"An excellent compilation of analytical thinking."

"On this type of issue ... those that oppose it are silent for fear of ridicule and eventually leave."

"Thank you! This survey must have cost you much time and money."

A significant number of individuals felt at ease with the approach adopted for research collection.

These data from the survey were entered into a PC using the sociological research software called SPSS/PC+ Studentware Plus. Due to the number of responses (151) and the large number of questions on the survey form, data entry took a significant amount of time. Because the software programme turned out to be limited to fifty variables, I was forced to ignore the response to certain questions. I reduced the variables to fifty including space to determine respondents' openness to the matter of homosexual ordination and the perception of oligarchy within the denomination. I did not enter replies to questions 11, 14, 15, 16, 21, 25 other than parts d, h, l, m and o, 32, and 45. On question 27, I combined all subsections except for d which I kept separate.

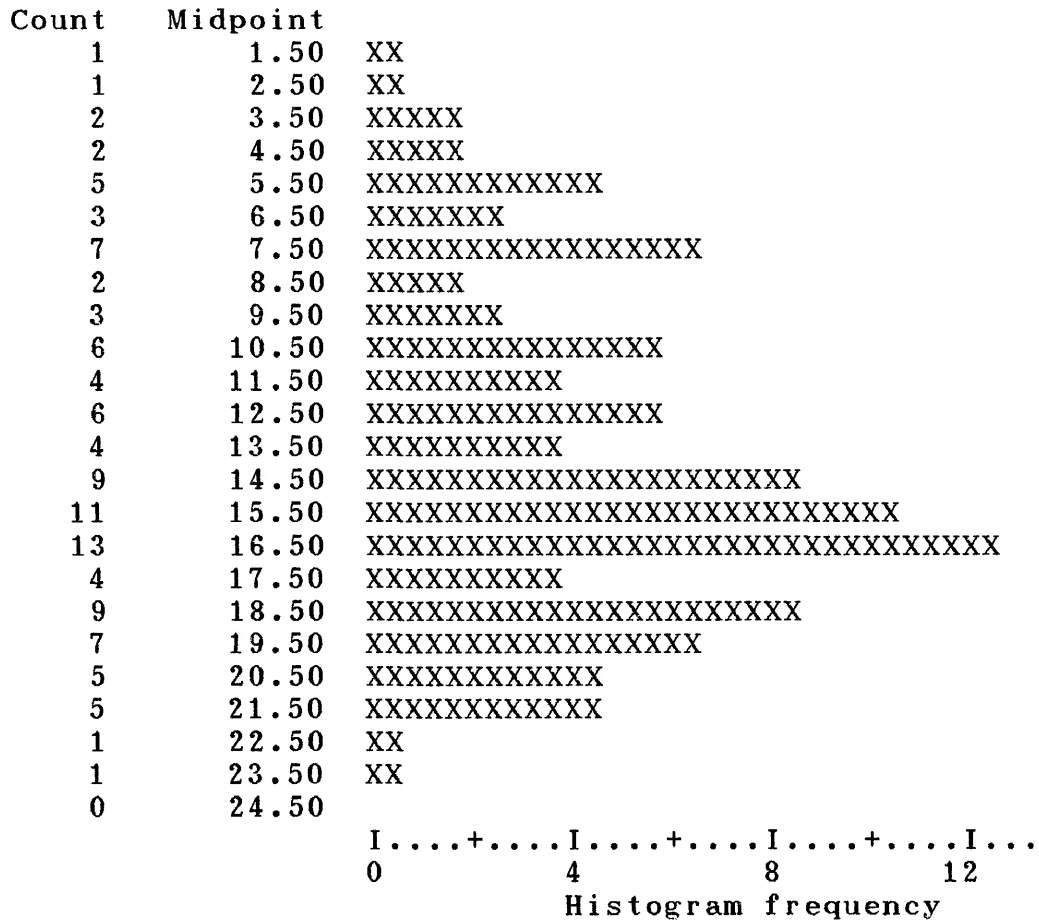
Just as Crysdale used composite indicators for liberalism, I constructed a composite indicator for openness to homosexual ordination. I used the replies to questions 19, 22, 26, 27, 30, 33, 34, 35, 38, 41, and 43 to determine if respondents were high or low on openness. Replies to these specific questions were coded as 1 if the respondent agreed, 2 if the respondent was unsure and 3 if the respondent disagreed. Agreeing or disagreeing provided an indication that the respondent was more open or less open to homosexual ordination. A computer programme was designed as follows:

Question 19 (socissu) agree = more open
 Question 22 (standard) disagree = more open
 Question 26 (liturgy) agree = more open
 Question 27d (callsex) disagree = more open
 Question 27 (calloth) disagree = more open
 Question 30 (levit) disagree = more open
 Question 33 (orient) agree = more open
 Question 34 (celibacy) disagree = more open
 Question 35 (hypocrit) agree = more open
 Question 38 (fundamen) agree = more open
 Question 41 (papal) agree = more open
 Question 43 (morstand) disagree = more open
 Compute openness=socissu-standard+liturgy-callsex
 -calloth-levit+orient-celibacy+hypocit+fundamen+papal
 -morstand+11.

This gave a measure of attitudes on homosexual ordination. I was able to obtain adequate numbers to proceed with analysis even though the computer ignored cases where questions were not answered fully.

From the responses, openness to homosexual ordination graphically looked like:

OPENNESS



Valid cases 111 Missing cases 40

A total score of between 13.50 and 24.50 inclusive was coded as less open to homosexual ordination and 1.50 to 12.50 inclusive was coded as more open to homosexual ordination. In statistics one can refer to this as a theory base line concept since the midpoint is 12.50. Therefore, this was used as a dividing line to establish more or less openness to homosexual ordination by the respondents.

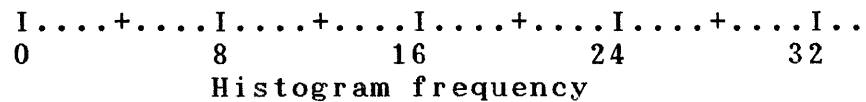
To arrive at a composite indicator for oligarchy, replies to questions 20, 28 and 42 were used. In question

20 (view) "yes" was coded 1 and "no" coded 2. Questions 28 (repres) and 42 (elreps) were coded as 1 if the respondent agreed, 2 if unsure and 3 if the respondent disagreed. The computer programme designed to determine satisfaction was: oligarchy=11-view-repres-elreps.

As for an index of satisfaction with oligarchy, graphically it looked like:

OLIGARCHY

Count	Midpoint	
21	3.50	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
26	4.50	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
32	5.50	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
18	6.50	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
18	7.50	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
6	8.50	XXXXXXX



Valid cases 121 Missing cases 30

Three-point-fifty to 5.50 were coded as more satisfied than 6.50 to 8.50 which were coded as less satisfied. Again, a theory base line was used in that the midpoint is between 5.50 and 6.50. Therefore, this was used as a dividing line to establish more or less satisfaction towards oligarchy by the respondents.

Cross tabulations were done by age, sex, education, region of upbringing, town size of upbringing, length of church membership, occupation, church attendance, Bible reading, and participation on church council.

Since several of the survey questions dealt with the perception of oligarchy within the denomination, I also include a table on this concept using satisfaction as a variable.

Table 1. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Age

	Age	
	50 or less	51 or more
more open	56	23
less open	44	77
	100%	100%
n =	50	61

Chi-square = 12.76 df = 1 Significance = .000

This table shows that 77% of the older respondents are less open to homosexual ordination and only 23% are more open to homosexual ordination. Of the younger respondents, 44% are less open while 56% are more open to homosexual ordination.

This table accords with Hunter's findings that the Evangelicals had the highest proportion of persons 51 or over among five faith groups and with his comment that "religious conservatism increases with age."⁵⁹ Somewhat surprisingly, Crysdale found an uneven pattern on this point.

Table 2. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Sex

	Sex	
	female	male
more open	45	28
less open	55	72
	100%	100%
n =	64	47

Chi-square = 3.59 df = 1 Significance = .058

This table shows that 72% of male respondents are less open to homosexual ordination and only 28% are more open to homosexual ordination. Among the female respondents, 55% are less open while 45% are more open to homosexual ordination.

To some extent, this is an unexpected finding, as Hunter found that being female was more common among Evangelicals than Liberal Christians (or any other religious or secular category).⁶⁰ This, he feels, is consistent with his theory that Evangelicalism is a religion that is further from the core factors of modernity than other faith traditions. Traditionally men have been more involved with "the highly rational public sphere" associated with modernity. Likewise Crysdale found a strong direct

association between maleness and propensity to adopt a liberal theology and a direct association between being female and adopting a more conservative theology.⁶¹

Table 3. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Education

	Education	
	High School Graduation or less	Beyond High School Graduation
more open	26	48
less open	74	53
	100%	101% (due to rounding)
n =	50	61

Chi-square = 5.42 df = 1 Significance = .020

This table shows that 53% of those with more than high school education are less open to homosexual ordination and 48% are more open to homosexual ordination. Of those with high school graduation or less, 74% are less open while 26% are more open to homosexual ordination.

This table accords with Hunter's finding that Evangelicals are the most likely among five faith groups to possess a high school or less education and are least likely to have completed university. Hunter suggests that formal public schooling is "the veritable classroom for the inculcation of the world view of modernity".⁶²

Crysdale found comparable data linking liberal theology with higher levels of education.⁶³

Table 4. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Region Of Upbringing

	Region		
	Prairies	Northern Ontario	Southern Ontario
more open	29	37	58
less open	71	63	42
	-----	-----	-----
	100%	100%	100%
n =	14	75	12

Chi-square = 2.67 df = 2 Significance = .125

This table shows that 42% of those respondents who grew up in Southern Ontario are less open to homosexual ordination and 58% are more open to homosexual ordination. Sixty-three percent of those respondents who grew up in Northern Ontario are less open to homosexual ordination and 37% are more open to homosexual ordination. Seventy-one percent of those respondents who grew up in the Prairies are less open to homosexual ordination and 29% are more open to homosexual ordination.

Although the numbers from Southern Ontario are small, this finding accords with Hunter's view that regions removed from the core of modernity (such as the South) will adopt a more conservative form of religion.⁶⁴ Northern Ontario lacks a "primate city" of over one million people along with

the economic and scientific developments associated with
same.

Table 5. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Size Of Town Of Upbringing

	Town size			
	less than 30,001	30,001 to 100,000	100,001 to 500,000	over 500,000
more open	29	36	50	20
less open	71	64	50	80
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	34	36	34	5

Chi-square = 3.89 df = 3 Significance = .273

This table shows that 71% of respondents who grew up in towns of less than 30,001 are less open to homosexual ordination and 29% are more open to homosexual ordination. Sixty-four percent of respondents who grew up in towns 30,001 to 100,000 are less open to homosexual ordination and only 36% are more open to homosexual ordination. Fifty percent of respondents who grew up in towns of 100,001 to 500,000 are less open to homosexual ordination and 50% are more open to homosexual ordination. Eighty percent of respondents who grew up in towns over 500,000 are less open to homosexual ordination and 20% are more open to homosexual ordination. But in this last category the sample size is too small to be reliable.

This finding agrees with Hunter that liberal theology accords with larger communities and conservative theology

with smaller centres (with the unreliable exception noted). Hunter's comment here is that conservative theology is "sociologically and geographically distant from the institutional structures and processes of modernity".⁶⁵ This point was an important one for Crysedale who found a strong association between liberal theology and urbanism.⁶⁶

Table 6. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Length Of Church Membership

	Length of Church Membership			
	under 10 years	10 to 25 years	26 to 50 years	51 years or over
more open	57	58	37	12
less open	43	42	63	88
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	7	19	67	17

Chi-square = 9.24 df = 3 Significance = .026

This table shows that 88% of the respondents with church membership of 51 years or over are less open to homosexual ordination and only 12% are more open to homosexual ordination. Sixty-three percent of the respondents with church membership 26 to 50 years are less open to homosexual ordination and only 37% are more open to homosexual ordination. Forty-two percent of the respondents with church membership 10 to 25 years are less open to homosexual ordination and 58% are more open to homosexual ordination. Forty-three percent of the respondents with church membership under 10 years are less open to homosexual ordination and 57% are more open to homosexual ordination.

Of course to some extent this association between

length of church membership and openness to homosexual ordination is to be expected as it would be closely correlated with age.

Table 7. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Occupation

	Occupation	
	professional, semi-professional, or high-level management	low-level management, skills, trades, tech- nical, semi-skilled, unskilled, housewife
more open	44	34
less open	56	66
	-----	-----
	100%	100%
n =	45	62

Chi-square = 1.233 df = 1 Significance = .267

This table shows that 66% of the respondents in lower occupations are less open to homosexual ordination and only 34% are more open to homosexual ordination. Among those in higher occupations, 56% are less open while 44% are more open to homosexual ordination.

This finding is in harmony with Hunter who particularly stresses that Evangelicals are under-represented among professionals and generally remain "based within the middle and lower socioeconomic echelons of American life-lower overall than the other major bodies"⁶⁷ Hunter, in particular, suggests a negative correlation between Evangelicals (and conservative theology by extension) and "the new class". The new class he defines as "those college and professionally trained people who are occupationally

associated with the knowledge industry".⁶⁸ The chances are strong that if the present study's data were better able to disentangle managers from lower echelon semi-professionals this finding would be even deeper. Crysdale found a strong association between higher occupation and liberal theology.⁶⁹

Table 8. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Church Attendance

	Church Attendance	
	at least several times per year	seldom/never
more open	27	58
less open	73	43
	----- 100%	----- 101% (due to rounding)
n =	71	40

Chi-square = 10.28 df = 1 Significance = .001

This table shows that 43% of respondents who seldom/never attend church are less open to homosexual ordination and 58% are more open to homosexual ordination. Of respondents that attend church at least several times per year 73% are less open while 27% are more open to homosexual ordination.

This finding accords with Crysedale who found that regular attenders were much less likely to adopt a liberal theology than those who rarely or never do (40% compared to 72%) with those attending at least quarterly in the middle at 57%.⁷⁰ There seems a certain paradox here that the United Church leadership seems most identified in style of theology with those who are least committed.

Table 9. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Bible Reading

	Bible Reading	
	at least several times per month	seldom/never
	-----	-----
more open	15	43
less open	85	57
	-----	-----
	100%	100%
n =	20	91

Chi-square = 5.41 df = 1 Significance = .020

This table shows that 57% of respondents who seldom/never read the Bible are less open to homosexual ordination and 43% are more open to homosexual ordination. Among respondents who read the Bible at least several times per month, 85% are less open to homosexual ordination while 15% are more open to homosexual ordination.

Table 10. Openness To Homosexual Ordination By Participation On Church Council

	participation	
	past/present council members	non-council members
more open	22	41
less open	78	59
	-----	-----
	100%	100%
n =	18	93

Chi-square = 2.23 df = 1 Significance = .136

This table shows that 59% of respondents who have not served on church council are less open to homosexual ordination and only 41% are more open to homosexual ordination. Among respondents who are serving or have served on church council, 78% are less open to homosexual ordination while 22% are more open to homosexual ordination.

The data here recall Crysdale's finding that "core members" were the least likely of three categories (core, modal and inactive members) to adopt a liberal theology.⁷¹

Table 11. Perception Of Oligarchy By Participation

	participation	
	past/present members	non-council members
satisfied	62	66
unsatisfied	38	34
	-----	-----
	100%	100%
n =	21	100

Chi-square = .128 df = 1 Significance = .720

This table shows that 34% of members/adherents who have never served on church council are not satisfied with the organization at higher levels of the denomination and 66% are satisfied. Thirty-eight percent of members/adherents who have served on church council are not satisfied with the organization at higher levels of the denomination and 62% are satisfied.

This table indicates there is a non-significant relationship between the perception of oligarchy and service on the church council. The majority of respondents, whether participating or not on church council, are in the category of being satisfied.

The survey also revealed additional data about the respondents as shown below:.

AGE	Frequency	Percent
under 18	0	0
18 -- 35	9	6
36 - 50	49	33
51 - 65	53	35
66 or older	40	27
n =	151	101% (due to rounding)

SEX	Frequency	Percent
male	94	62
female	57	38
n	151	100%

MARITAL STATUS	Frequency	Percent
single	2	1
married or committed relationship	129	85
separated or divorced	1	1
widowed	15	10
n =	151	99% (due to rounding)

EDUCATION	Frequency	Percent
under 8 years	4	2
8 years		
high school but not graduation	34	23
high school graduate	37	25
some university/ college but not graduation	20	13
university/ college graduate	42	28
post graduate	13	9
	n = 151	102% (due to rounding)

The fact that 50 percent of the respondents have an education beyond high school supports Tim Heaton's data that United Church members/adherents have a level of education exceeding the averages in the population as a whole.

Likewise my survey found that 36 percent of respondents had occupations in the higher occupational levels which according to Heaton's findings would be above the national average.

Respondents who had left the church since 1987 were asked to state the reason. Of the twenty-two, only seven said it was over the issue of ordination of self-declared homosexuals. Four others said they were seeking more than

the United Church of Canada could offer them, and four more said they simply did not like the church's direction but were not more specific. The balance left for a variety of reasons besides the ones already cited.

One question directed to existing members/adherents asked what if anything might cause them to leave the United Church of Canada. Ninety-nine replies were received and the results are:

calling a homosexual minister	22 respondents
gay marriages being performed	1 respondent
further church dissension	12 respondents
poor preaching	2 respondents
other than above	27 respondents
nothing	35 respondents

When asked if they felt membership in the United Church of Canada was declining, 124 said yes, 16 said no, and 11 did not answer. Of the 124 that said yes, 107 gave a reason for thinking so:

ordination of homosexuals	23 respondents
lack of interest in church by society	21 respondents
secularization	30 respondents
lack of church leadership	4 respondents
disillusionment with church	29 respondents

When asked if the United Church should take positions on social issues, 145 replied. Of these replies, 89 agreed, 35 disagreed and 21 were unsure.

On the matter of Bible reading 150 replied. Of these replies, 6 said daily, 32 said several times a month, 72 said hardly ever and 40 said never. (One is hard pressed to see a United Church member carrying a Bible to church on Sunday.)

When asked if the United Church takes your point of view into account when establishing a policy, 126 replied. Of these replies, 33 said yes, and 93 said no.

When asked if there should be images of God other than Father, 130 replied. Of these replies, 51 said yes, and 79 said no. When asked to explain what other images, only 28 replied. Of these 10 were a female image, 14 a non-gender image, and 4 in categories other than the foregoing.

When asked to confirm beliefs in certain matters:

Heaven - 132 replied of which 93 said yes, 15 said no and 24 were unsure;

Second coming of Christ - 129 replied of which 59 said yes, 29 said no and 41 were unsure;

Jesus rose from the dead - 136 replied of which 103 said yes, 7 said no and 26 were unsure;

Jesus is the Son of God - 132 replied of which 104 said yes, 7 said no and 21 were unsure;

The Authority of Scripture as found in the Bible is the Divine Word of God - 135 replied of which 58 said yes, 28 said no and 49 were unsure.

When asked to indicate feelings about the church recognizing and affirming the validity of committed same-sex relationships and develop liturgies for use in the celebration of same gender covenants, 148 replies were received. Twenty-four said they agreed, 24 were unsure and 100 disagreed.

The United Church handbook for pastoral relations committees states that a minister being called to a congregation cannot be asked about any of the questions listed under 27 of Appendix A. Yet of 142 replies to the matter of sexual orientation, 76 said yes, 49 said no and 17 were unsure. Regarding the balance of the questions listed under 27, 144 replies were given of which 120 said yes to all or some, 20 to no and 4 were unsure.

When asked if members/adherents felt the present ratio of ministers to lay representatives was satisfactory, 140 replied. Of these, 30 said yes, 71 were unsure and 39 said no.

When asked what ratio would be more acceptable, 29 replied. Of these, 4 felt one to one, 22 felt there should be more lay representatives but did not indicate a number, 1

person felt that there should be more clergy representatives and 2 were in other categories not cited above.

When asked about Leviticus 18:22, 141 replies were received. Eighty respondents said it should be accepted as written, 20 said it should not be accepted as written, and 41 were unsure.

When asked to explain their answers, 117 replied. Of these, 28 said homosexuality was a sin, 26 said the Bible should not be taken literally, 10 said these were simply private matters, 27 said homosexuality was an unnatural act. 1 said accept Leviticus because it will avoid AIDS. 3 felt they did not have enough Biblical knowledge to answer, 8 simply do not accept homosexuality, 7 did not want to discriminate and 7 other replies were in categories not cited above.

When asked if all members should be considered for ordination regardless of sexual orientation, there were 147 replies. Of these, 55 agreed, 9 were unsure and 83 disagreed.

When asked if there would have been less church tension if celibacy would have been required of homosexuals being considered for ordination, there were 144 replies. Of these, 54 agreed, 38 were unsure and 52 disagreed.

When it was suggested it was unjust and hypocritical to demand celibacy from homosexual ministers when it is not

demanding of heterosexuals, 143 replied. Of these, 62 agreed, 30 were unsure and 51 disagreed.

When asked if homosexuals are born that way, 139 replied. Of these, 44 agreed, 36 disagreed and 59 were unsure.

When asked to indicate why they agreed, of the 44 potential replies, 37 were received. Of these, 9 said medical evidence supports the theory, 20 believed it to be biological, 3 felt if it wasn't so why would anyone want such a lifestyle, 1 said there was no evidence to the contrary and 4 replies were in categories other than above.

When asked to estimate the percentage of the population made up of practising homosexuals, 114 replied. None said 0, 30 said from 1-4%, 40 said 5-8%, 18 said 9-12%, while 26 said over 12%.

When it was suggested that moral standards should have been established before the question of ordination of homosexuals was passed, 143 replied. Of these, 104 agreed, 25 were unsure, and 14 disagreed.

Members/adherents were asked about financial offerings. When asked if they had reduced their givings to the church, 126 replied. Forty-six said yes and 80 said no.

When asked why they had reduced their givings, of 46 possible respondents, 44 answered. Of these, 1 said over the ordination issue, 21 said they had less income these

days, 12 said they had reduced their church attendance, 5 said to put pressure on the church and 5 replies were in categories other than above.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

a. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to test the hypothesis that the response to homosexual ordination in one United Church congregation will reflect social differences which are related to modernity. The findings in the previous chapter show correlations of members/adherents openness to demographics. The hypothesis was supported by the results of this survey.

Openness by age produced a very significant difference as Table 1 shows. In this study, of those 51 years of age or older, the ratio was three to one being less open to homosexual ordination. This compares to the age category of 50 or less where more openness was expressed. In the older category, this could well have been the result of individuals not being exposed to the impact of urbanization or other agents of modernity when they were younger. Urbanization in Canada has only occurred in a significant way since World War Two. Likewise, the impact of the mass media has only been an influence since the 1950s.

Openness by education (Table 3), was very significant. In this study, those with less education were three to one less open to homosexual ordination. Those with more education were evenly split on the matter. No doubt modernity has an influence on individuals who advance in education. Contemporary society requires constantly increasing levels of higher education. This is also the result of cultural pluralism, to which Hunter made reference. Eric Woodrum's article, "Determinants of Moral Attitudes", in the Journal for the Scientific Study Of Religion also supports the findings of Tables 1 and 3. He says:

It is understandable that age and education are the critical determinants of religious self-identification and moral attitudes. Older persons, as contrasted with today's young adults, were socialized to adopt their self-identities and fundamental commitments when traditional religious convictions and moral attitudes were more uniformly held in the population and more consistently affirmed by major social institutions. Furthermore, history effects make age negatively related to education, a strong contributor to moral relativism.... Higher education legitimates the authority of science and rationality over tradition, including religious and moral tradition.⁷²

Crysdale's data suggest that those 50 years old and over are somewhat less liberal than those younger.

Table 7 indicates that those in lower levels of occupations are less open on this issue. Crysdale found that those with higher level occupations tended to hold to liberal theology. This probably correlates with education.

Table 4 indicates a strong correlation between region of upbringing and openness to ordination of homosexuals. This research shows that those growing up in Northern Ontario and the Prairies (regions removed from centres of modernity) were less open on the issue of homosexual ordination. This suggests that regions further from modernity tend to be more conservative.

Town size of upbringing, too, has an impact on openness (Table 5). Persons raised in larger communities tend to be more liberal with regard to the ordination of homosexuals. The data in this study confirm Hunter's findings that there is a relationship between city size and theology. His data show that in smaller communities having populations below 50,000 traditionalist thinking outweighs liberal thinking. Ammerman also found a correlation between traditionalism and small communities. Crysdale, as well, found that traditional theology tends to be held in rural areas and towns, compared to city downtown areas and city suburbs. This study showed that openness to homosexual ordination increases with town size which reflects the impact of modernity.

Table 6, on openness by length of church membership, suggests that people in older groups having been in the church at least 26 years are significantly less open on the

issue than those who haven't been involved in church membership as long. However, length of church membership and age are probably correlated.

Table 8 shows that attending church on a regular basis makes one less open on the issue. A possible explanation could be that the regular attenders are also the older members/adherents since this study showed that age correlates negatively with openness to homosexual ordination.

Table 9 shows that those who read the Bible regularly are less open on the issue than those who do not. At the same time the data showed that many people within this denomination do not read the Bible regularly.

The finding in Table 2, showing openness by sex was unexpected in light of previous research by Hunter and Crysdale. No direct association between being female and adopting a more conservative theology was found in this research. This study did, however, show that males are less open to homosexual ordination than are females.

Participation in church office is associated with negative views on the issue (Table 10). Again, if older members/adherents are participants on church councils, older age could possibly correlate with negative views.

The German sociologist, Robert Michels, writing in 1911, described what he called an 'iron law of oligarchy'.

He says "it is organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization says oligarchy."⁷³

I, therefore, expected to find some discontent within the church, given its method of electing delegates to General Council. Table 11 shows that the majority of respondents are relatively satisfied.

Answers on beliefs led to some surprises.

62% believe in Heaven;

39% believe in the Second Coming of Christ;

68% believe Jesus rose from the dead; and

69% believe Jesus to be the Son of God.

I had expected a higher number than this, given the fact that to be a Christian, one must at least accept that Jesus rose from the dead. The United Church "Creed" acknowledges this fact. However, this survey showed that almost one in three respondents do not accept this fact as being "gospel". They either disagree or are unsure.

b. Summary

In conclusion, age, education, density of population in regions of origin, town size, and occupation are important predictors of openness on the issue of ordination of

homosexuals.

Hunter's research corroborates this study's finding.

He says:

In the most general sense, one may locate Evangelicalism and other religious bodies in terms of their relative proximity to modernity. In virtually all ways, Evangelicalism is located furthest from the institutional structures and processes of modernity. In this regard, the secularists provide a helpful contrast at the other extreme, as a group perhaps closest to these processes.⁷⁴

Crysdale used the concept of urbanism rather than modernity but the two concepts were defined in a similar fashion, reflecting rationality, heterogeneity, pluralism, specialization and mobility as associated with urbanism and modernity.

He found that "distinctions in theology were persistently related to the extent to which the style of life was urbanized".⁷⁵

This thesis has attempted to make a number of contributions. First, it was to be a type of replication of Hunter's and Crysdale's work. Second, it was intended to provide a sociological perspective on the topic of homosexual ordination in the United Church. Third, this study is firmly rooted in a local congregation, whereas most studies by sociologists on the United Church of Canada have been generated from national samples (Crysdale, Macleod, Bibby).

Most generally, after a generation of unprecedented

religious and social change, style of theology is still related to demographic factors and to proximity to or distance from modernity.

In that the United Church is open to the process of modernity, there is likely to be a continuation of the trend toward liberal theology. As the present older members and adherents pass on, younger and more educated church affiliates will probably become more liberal in beliefs and attitudes.

Compromise has been customary in the United Church between traditionalists and liberals, in a quest for inclusiveness. The liberal element must be careful not to alienate traditionalists who help fill the pews and collection plates each Sunday. Tolerance for varying positions is essential to avoid a schism.

Notes:

- Henry Macleod, "The Transformation of the United Church of Canada, 1946-1977: A Study in the Sociology of the Denomination" (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, Canadian Theses on Microfiche, 1980), p. 44.
Ibid, p. 45.
The United Church Observer (Toronto: Observer Publications Inc., July 1988), p.3.
Henry Macleod, "The Transformation of the United Church of Canada, 1946-1977: A Study in the Sociology of the Denomination" (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, Canadian Theses on Microfiche, 1980), p. 48.
The United Church Observer (Toronto: Observer Publications Inc., August 1992), p. 31.
Ibid, p. 34.
Ralph Milton, This United Church of Ours (Winfield: Wood Lake Press, 1981), p. 14.
Ibid, p. 8.
Henry Macleod, "The Cultural Transformation of the United Church of Canada, 1946-1977" (Association for the Sociology of Religion, paper delivered at Toronto, 1980), p. 8.
10 Ibid, p. 9.
11 Reginald W. Bibby, Fragmented Gods (Toronto: Irwin Publishing Inc., 1987), p. 21.
12 Tim B. Heaton, "Sociodemographic Characteristics of Religious Groups in Canada", SA Sociological Analysis, Volume 47, No. 1, Spring 1986, p. 60-63.
3 Henry Macleod, "The Transformation of the United Church of Canada, 1946-1977: A study in the Sociology of the Denomination" (Ottawa: National Library of Canada Canadian Theses on Microfiche, 1980), p. 49.
14 Ibid, p. 51.
15 Tim B. Heaton, "Sociodemographic Characteristics of Religious Groups in Canada", SA Sociological Analysis, Volume 47, No. 1, Spring 1986, p. 60-61.
6 Reginald W. Bibby, Fragmented Gods (Toronto: Irwin Publishing Inc., 1987), p. 103-107.
7 Henry Macleod, "The Transformation of the United Church of Canada, 1946-1977: A Study in the Sociology of the Denomination" (Ottawa: National Library of Canada Canadian Thesis on Microfiche, 1980), p. 66.
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19 Claris E. Silcox, Church Union In Canada (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933), p. 449.
0 S. N. Eisenstadt, Modernization: Protest and Change (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), Preface.

- 1 Ronald Bayer, Homosexuality and American Psychiatry (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981), p. 195.
- 2 "Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality", A New Statement of the United Church of Canada by the 32nd General Council, issued by the General Council Office, August 1988 (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House).
- 3 The United Church Observer (Toronto: Observer Publications Inc., September 1992), p. 11.
- 4 The United Church Observer (Toronto: Observer Publications Inc., March 1993), p. 4.
- 5 Ibid, p. 4.
- 6 Ibid, p. 4.
- 7 The United Church Observer (Toronto: Observer Publications Inc., December 1992), p. 3.
- 8 Ibid, p. 3.
- 9 Roger O'Toole et al, "The United Church in Crisis", Studies in Religion, Volume 20, Spring 1991, p. 154.
- 0 Christie Davies, "Religious Boundaries and Sexual Morality", The Annual Review of the Social Sciences of Religion, Volume 6, 1982, p. 47.
- 1 The United Church Observer (Toronto: Observer Publications Inc., July 1988), "Cross-Currents". insert of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, p. 1.
- 2 "Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality" (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, August 1980), Brochure, p.3.
- 3 "Communique" (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, October 21, 1988), p. 1.
- 4 James Davison Hunter, American Evangelicalism (New Brunswick: Rutgers, The State University Of New Jersey, 1983), p. 12.
- 5 Ibid, p. 13.
- 6 Ibid, p. 14.
- 7 Ibid, p. 14.
- 8 Stewart Crysdale, The Changing Church In Canada (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1965), p. 10.
- 9 Reginald W. Bibby, "Religion and Modernity: The Canadian Case", Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion, 18(1), 1979, p. 15.
- 0 Lynn Davidman, "Accommodation and Resistance to Modernity: A Comparison of Two Contemporary Orthodox Jewish Groups", SA Sociological Analysis, Volume 51, No. 1, Spring 1990, p. 49.

- 1 In particular, one is directed to Jurgen Habermas' 1980 Adorno prize address "Modernity Versus Post Modernity". New German Critique, 22, Winter 1981; Habermas And Modernity Ed. Richard J. Bernstein, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1985); Theories Of Modernity And Post Modernity Ed. Bryan S. Turner, (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1992).
- 2 Stewart Crysdale, The Changing Church In Canada (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1965), p. X1.
- 43 Ibid, p. 27.
- 44 Ibid, p. 29.
- 45 Ibid, p. 99.
- 46 Ibid, p. 101.
- 47 Ibid, p. 103.
- 48 James Davison Hunter, American Evangelicalism (New Brunswick: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1983), p. 54.
- 49 Ibid, p. 50.
- 50 Ibid, p. 52.
- 51 Ibid, p. 85.
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INSTRUCTIONS

Printed on the following pages are statements which tell your feelings about the United Church of Canada.

Please mark an "X" in the box where shown.

In order to obtain a true sampling, I need you to complete the personal data on this page and then answer the questions following.

- 1. Age: under 18 years old []
 - 18 - 35 []
 - 36 - 50 []
 - 51 - 65 []
 - 66 or older []

- Sex: Female []
 - Male []

- Marital Status:
 - single []
 - married (or committed relationship) []
 - separated or divorced []
 - widowed []

- Education:
 - less than 8 years []
 - 8 years []
 - some high school but not graduation []
 - high school graduate []
 - some university/college but not graduation []
 - university/college degree []
 - post graduate degree []

- 5. In which province did you grow up? _____
- 6. If your answer to 5. is Ontario, which part of Ontario? Northern [] or Southern []

- 7. What size town/city did you grow up in?
 - less than 30,001 people []
 - 30,001 to 100,000 people []
 - 100,001 to 500,000 people []
 - over 500,000 people []

- 8. How long have you been a member or adherent of the United Church of Canada?
 - under 10 years []
 - 10 - 25 years []
 - 26 - 50 years []
 - 51 years or over []

9. What is your main occupation? (or former main occupation if retired) _____

10. What was/is the main occupation of your father?

11. What was/is the main occupation of your mother?

12. Are you at this time a member or adherent of the United Church of Canada?

Yes [] if yes, go to question 17

No []

13. If not a member or adherent of the United Church of Canada now, why did you stop being a member or adherent?

14. If not a member or adherent of the United Church of Canada now, in what year did you stop being a member or adherent?

15. If not a member or adherent of the United Church of Canada now, are you a member or adherent of another denomination?

Yes []

No []

16. If yes to question 15, which denomination?

17. On average, about how many times did you attend Sunday church worship during the past year?

once a month or more []

several times a year []

seldom []

never []

18. How often do you read the Bible?

daily []

several times a month []

hardly ever []

never []

19. The United Church of Canada should take positions on social issues.

I agree []

I disagree []

I am unsure []

20. When the United Church establishes a policy, is your point of view taken into account?

Yes []
No []

21. Do you ever read the Bible for:

yes sometimes no

a. explicit answers to personal problems	[]	[]	[]
b. spiritual inspiration	[]	[]	[]
c. guidelines on how to improve society	[]	[]	[]
d. to understand the example of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour	[]	[]	[]

22. The only acceptable standard for Christians is fidelity in heterosexual marriage and chastity in singleness.

I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []

23. There should be images of God other than Father.

Yes []
No []

24. If yes to question 23, what other images?

25. I believe in:

	yes	no	unsure
a - God	[]	[]	[]
b - Jesus as Lord and Saviour	[]	[]	[]
c - The Holy Spirit	[]	[]	[]
d - Heaven	[]	[]	[]
e - Hell	[]	[]	[]
f - Angels	[]	[]	[]
g - The devil	[]	[]	[]
h - The second coming of Christ	[]	[]	[]
i - The Pope can make mistakes	[]	[]	[]
j - Jesus was born to a virgin	[]	[]	[]
k - Jesus died for our sins	[]	[]	[]
l - Jesus rose from the dead	[]	[]	[]
m - Jesus is the Son of God	[]	[]	[]
n - Life after death	[]	[]	[]
o - The authority of scripture as found in the Bible is the Divine Word of God	[]	[]	[]

26. In 1992, the 34th General Council was petitioned to recognize and affirm the validity of committed same-sex relationships and develop liturgies for use in the celebration of same gender covenants. How do you feel about this proposal?

I agree []
 I disagree []
 I am unsure []

27. When calling a minister to a congregation, the United Church should ask a candidate about:

	yes	no	unsure
a - marital status	[]	[]	[]
b - age	[]	[]	[]
c - list of clubs or organizations	[]	[]	[]
d - sexual orientation	[]	[]	[]
e - homeownership	[]	[]	[]
f - credit rating	[]	[]	[]
g - political issues	[]	[]	[]
h - minor children or dependents	[]	[]	[]
i - physical features	[]	[]	[]
j - physical or mental handicap	[]	[]	[]

28. At the General Council in 1990, each 200 ministers had a representative and each 4,000 members had a representative.

Do you feel this ratio is satisfactory?

I agree []
 I disagree []
 I am unsure []

29. If you disagree, what ratio is more acceptable to you? _____

30. Leviticus 18: 22 says: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."

Leviticus 18: 22 should be accepted as written []
 Leviticus 18: 22 should not be accepted as written []
 I am unsure how to interpret Leviticus 18: 22 []

31. Why did you answer the way you did to question 30?

32. A theological conference recently sponsored by four groups working for what they call reform within the United Church of Canada - Church Alive, Community of Concern, National Alliance of Covenanting Congregations and the United Church Renewal Fellowship only drew 350 delegates as compared to 700 two years earlier. What does this lesser attendance suggest to you?

33. The United Church of Canada General Council has determined that all members can be considered for ordination regardless of sexual orientation. How do you feel about this decision?

I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []

34. There would have been less tension within the United Church of Canada if celibacy would have been required of homosexuals before being considered for ordination such as is the case in the Anglican Church of Canada?

I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []

35. "... to demand celibacy from the clergy and members of every Protestant denomination who cannot help being gay, while heterosexuals are under no such constraint, seems unjust and hypocritical." How do you feel about this statement?

I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []

36. It has been said that homosexuals are born that way. What do you think?

I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []

37. If you agree, why do you think so?

38. "A major function of fundamentalist religion is to bolster deep insecure and fearful people."
How do you feel about this statement?
- I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []
39. What percent of the population do you believe is made up of practising homosexuals?
- zero []
1% to 4% []
5% to 8% []
9% to 12% []
over 12% []
40. It has been said that homosexual orientation cannot be changed. What do you think?
- I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []
41. The New Testament was selectively put together for political reasons to "exercise exclusive leadership over the churches as the successors of the apostle Peter ... the basis of papal authority to this day."
- I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []
42. Cambrian Presbytery elects one minister and one lay member to General Council to represent the United Church of Canada from Marathon to the Manitoba border. These two people fairly represent the interests of your congregation.
- I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []
43. The matter of moral standards should have been resolved before the question of ordination of homosexuals was passed by the General Council in 1990.
- I agree []
I disagree []
I am unsure []
44. Have you ever been a member of the Executive Council of your church?
- Yes []
No []

45. Do you regard the Bible as: yes no unsure
- a. divinely inspired without error [] [] []
- b. written by different human authors
with the inevitable marks of their
particular social backgrounds
affecting their writings. [] [] []
- c. as a collection of myths and legends
from ancient peoples without much
relevance to us today [] [] []

46. Have you ever been a delegate to Cambrian Presbytery,
Manitoba-Northwestern Conference, or General Council of
the United Church of Canada?
- Yes []
- No []

47. Do you think membership in the United Church of Canada
is declining?
- Yes []
- no []

48. If yes, what do you think is causing it to decline?

49. Have you reduced your financial offerings to the United
Church of Canada?
- Yes []
- No []

50. If you answered yes to question
49, why?

51. If presently a member or adherent of the United Church
of Canada, what (if anything) would cause you to leave
the United Church of Canada?

Please share any additional comments you wish to make
about this survey. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Please return completed survey to:
Fred Johnson c/o Box 1028, Thunder Bay, Ont. P7C 4X8