

## **The Centre for Christian Studies - An Affirming and Proud Institution**

The Centre for Christian Studies has a long history of examining injustices and oppressions in church and society. Since the 1980's the program curriculum has included open discussion about sexism, sexuality, sexual violence and sexual orientation. Since 1985, CCS has had policies that have challenged exclusion on the basis of class, race, sex, physical ability, age, or sexual orientation. The Centre for Christian Studies has consistently sought to affirm the gifts of all persons regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation or physical ability.

In 2006, the Centre for Christian Studies officially embarked on a journey and educational process to ensure its institutional climate and culture was welcoming and inclusive of all, including people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender.

On Sunday, March 26, 2006 CCS was recognized as an Affirming Ministry of The United Church of Canada through Affirm United. As well, through Integrity, the organization related to the Anglican Church of Canada, CCS was also accepted as a Proud Anglican Institution. This act of recognition formally acknowledged CCS as a community where there is ongoing commitment to diversity and advocacy for sexual and gender justice for all.

The commitments made that day were as follows:

- ▶ With God's help we are willing to seek and work toward just and right relationships in the Centre for Christian Studies community and beyond.
- ▶ With God's help, we are willing to support and welcome the full participation of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender in this community, the church and society at large.
- ▶ With God's help we are willing to challenge, and be open to challenge, concerning homophobia and heterosexism.
- ▶ With God's help we are willing to continuously work at individual and communal self-examination and action that will create climates of inclusion, equality, compassion and right relationship.

The commitments made that day are those we seek to embody in daily life and all that we do at CCS.

Homophobia can be really blatant and hurtful; it can also be subtle and unintentional. Heterosexism is insidious - it is woven deeply into the fabric of society's culture - and it can be difficult for those from the majority culture to recognize.

Staffing and hiring policies, learning circle norms, curriculum documents, admission procedures, student guidelines, committee and Council volunteer orientation are some of the areas where the commitment to be inclusive and open is intentionally and consistently engaged, reflected upon and embodied.

Heterosexism and homophobia have not been eliminated in the organization but we work continuously toward sexual justice within the CCS network, the churches, and society at large.

All who join our work - student, volunteer, staff or supporter are invited into this process of awareness-raising, personal transformation and justice-living.

