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Tapestry

Proclaiming and celebrating the work of the CCS community
through the stories of those who are involved in the ministry of diakonia.

Fall 2006

Family Ministry in Congregations by Christina Paradela CCS00

For many people, the words *family ministry* probably still bring to mind images of happy children playing with happy parents. I have to admit that it is still an image that crosses my mind, though my intellect quickly dismisses it. Searching through the files of my brain in an attempt to do the translating I arrive to a new, yet more comfortable image. And that is when the slide show begins!

In a recent conversation with Jackie Harper, United Church program co-ordinator for Family Ministries and former CCS staff, she addressed the need for this translating process if we are to move forward in our ministering with families. Our definition of "Family" cannot be limited to the structure of the family. It is important that we discern the purpose of a family and the health and well being of a family, rather than considering the structure. Historically families have always come in different shapes and sizes. Take a look at the *average family* in biblical times: single mother with a son, eventually married a man to whom the son was not related (Mary, son Jesus and Joseph) or household of adult siblings (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus) or

single man living with mother and grandmother (Timothy with Eunice and Lois).



Ross White (R), listens carefully

Our stereotypical image of family with one man, one woman with two and a half kids, (not to mention the dog and van) was probably fabricated in some marketing office, yet we continue to buy into it. A family can be one or more persons in a particular configuration – and there are many possibilities! According to Jackie, what is important is that the configuration be one that is nurturing, loving, caring, respectful and mutually life-giving.

Education, advocacy and pastoral care are three components of family ministry that Jackie upholds. Some educational foci would include nurturing spirituality, creating an active prayer life and even parenting. Advocacy focuses on the issues that affect the lives of families such as affordable housing, affordable, safe and reliable child care, and church programming that is inclusive of all ages. Pastoral care means making connections within and beyond the community of faith and making references to reputable counselling services.

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From the Editor

Accepting the notion that even one person is a family unit (See *Family Ministry in Congregations*), all ministry is, in a sense, family ministry. And when we minister with families, we do so from our own experience in families – past and present. In this issue we explore the theme of *family* from the perspective of students, families of students, family connections among grads, and the shape of ministry with families.

...With this issue I conclude five years plus as editor of *TAPESTRY*. I leave this position with a profound sense of gratitude, and welcome Gail Golding to a volunteer position that is both satisfying and challenging.



Celebrating our Songs

It seems every time CCS holds a learning circle something unusual happens. Everyone who participates – student or staff, resource person or chaplain, – comes away singing. And this is not just limited to the learning circles. Music weaves its way through staff worship, council meetings, committee gatherings, special events, the annual service of celebration... all are made richer by the sound of song.

Music and CCS go hand in hand. There is a history of singing and music that extends right back to the days of AWTC and UCTS. Former CCS Principal Gwyn Griffith, in researching the upcoming CCS history book, discovered how certain hymns defined different eras, be it evangelical fervour, the quest for social justice, or faith in the coming of God’s reign in beauty. Satirical ditties written to the tune of a popular song can even be found in official minutes.

We continue to celebrate CCS’ connection to music and song through **CCS Sings**. These regional events, organized by grads and friends of CCS, have been gathering community folks throughout Canada who love to sing. They have been raising money and awareness for CCS, too. The format is variable and up to you; the common thread is the celebration of CCS through music. Would you like to hold a CCS Sings event in your area? Please contact Margaret at CCS mclarke@ccsonline.ca or 204-783-4490. We can offer all kinds of support.

Generous donations in the past helped us acquire copies of *Common Praise* and *Voices United* for use in the program. We are expanding our music resources this fall as we purchase *More Voices*, a supplement to the United Church’s *Voices United*.

If you would like to support CCS’ love of song, we invite you to make a special donation to purchase one or more copies of *More Voices*. Each book is \$16.00. A name plate can be placed in the hymn book in your name, or in memory of a loved one (please provide us with details). Send your donation to CCS, Woodsworth House, 60 Maryland St., Winnipeg, MB, R3G 1K7, marked More Voices.

Let’s all continue to sing songs of faith and justice as we celebrate God’s presence among us.

Celebrate the Ministry

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Therapy as Family Ministry

by Edith Shore A58

It isn't a stretch for Patricia Deans CCS93 to find that therapy and ministry occupy much of the same territory. Both are about being in relationship, about the search for the Other and about becoming more and more ourselves.

Patricia's descriptions of her work with children, adults and families and her dedication to it moves strongly toward pastoral care. She works with individuals experiencing depression, anxiety, grief, guilt and the other difficulties that the human condition provides in abundance. "It is so difficult for people to come into therapy," she says. "It requires so much strength and courage to begin to confront ourselves and admit our failings to another, but it is the way to healing."

Before Patricia enrolled at CCS, she worked for some years in pastoral ministry. During that time, she worked as a volunteer chaplain, which she found to be very fulfilling. In a men's group, in a prison, she instituted an hour-long meditation which caused consternation among the guards. Not knowing what was happening, they made enough noise during the hour to disturb the meditation and distract the men. After the program began to take on energy and the men understood that meditation was helping them, the atmosphere among the guards changed too. Eventually the guards were admonishing others to be quiet. In a place which has no silence or even pleasant noises, the prisoners found the program to be deeply meaningful. They learned about themselves and their own wisdom and were able to share with each other.

After her CCS training, Patricia found ways to express her experiential learning, the story-telling, the valuing of persons and the justice insights that are integral to the Centre for Christian Studies. Her own growth into greater maturity began there too as she shared with her learning partner and the other students. Her theological and biblical background continues to be useful, not only personally but for clients who may be struggling with a view of the Bible and religion that oppresses rather than frees.

Now, as a trained psychotherapist, Patricia sets her imagination to work to express her care for clients. Her work with a difficult young boy, mistreated by his father, led to the following creative moment of searching for a metaphor to help him understand his situation. "Look at this bug," said Patricia. "See how interesting it

is!" The young boy watches the large slow-moving insect in her hand and even touches the wonderfully-made shield-shaped back. "It's called a stink bug," says Patricia. "Smell it." When they agree that there is no smell, Patricia explains, "It only stinks when you step on it."

Patricia feels a kinship with the passage in Romans 7:19 – *For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.* It is such a common experience for everyone that we are amazed by its insight even after two thousand years. Clients coming into therapy may be so burdened with the feeling that they cannot do the good work they want to do, that they lapse into serious depression. Patricia says, "I like to talk to clients about becoming 'full of

themselves' so that they are free to be. When I think of women who have been abused and carry shame, I know they must be looked at in a compassionate way. Then the shame rolls off them and the depression can be lifted. When people are depressed, medication is a quick fix. Medication is useful but not enough. So much depression can be dealt with when the client feels really seen."

Clients may come from dysfunctional families. Drugs and alcohol may destroy their judgment but Patricia is not without hope. She knows that the cycle can be broken. A client with a heroin addiction gave it up and went back to school. He knows he is not simply a "bad person" despite his complicated journey to a more successful life.

Patricia sees her work as diaconal ministry. "It is pastoral," says Patricia. "It has an element of teaching and it is

open to the Other. Time and patience are required to do it effectively and the therapist listens with the 'third ear', searching for a pattern that will help the client understand. The therapist sees with a 'soft eye', seeking to help the client see further."

Of her student days, Patricia says, "CCS gave me a lot of courage to trust myself and to move out in a different direction. I hadn't done all my own work, but trusting myself meant that I didn't need to comply to others. Somebody else couldn't know who or what I should be. And that was a valuable learning. I love doing psychotherapy because it helps people find their own unique answers."

(Patricia works in private practice in Orangeville and in Toronto. Edith is a member of TAPESTRY's Editorial Committee and lives in Sutton, Ontario.)



Patricia in her office



Community Update

Tammy Allan CCS00 is enjoying her new position as Faith Development Minister at Parkdale United Church in Calgary, where her responsibilities include educational ministries for all ages, as well as outreach and justice ministries. Her son is in Grade 12 in Calgary while her daughter is entering college in Edmonton... **Lynda (Cunningham) Appleby CCS89** writes to say that after two occurrences of breast cancer, she has had an all clear on recent tests... Staff member **Catherine Barnsley** married Rick McCorrister on August 6 in Fort Qu'Appelle, SK... Integrating Student, **Pam Byers**, delights in her new grandparenting role with the birth of her grandson, Oliver, in Seattle, Washington... **Marion Current U58** brings us news of **Willa Kernen U53**. Willa now lives in Oliver Lodge, a United Church nursing home in Saskatoon. She celebrated her 80th birthday on August 7, and is doing well enough following a severe stroke in March to write an update piece for a book on human rights activities in Korea with which she, Marion and others were involved in the 1970's and 80's... **Ross White CCS 78** shares news of the death on July 16 of **Ethel Elizabeth (Lincoln) Day** at age 95. Ethel took deaconess training at Manitoba College and served five years in Port Simpson under the WMS. She was the grandmother of **Mark Green CCS86** and his partner, **Jacquelin Green CCS94**... Volunteer **Andrew Fennell** and partner Linda celebrated the birth of Kate Lauren on August 27, weighing in at 8lb. 14 oz... **Nancy Hardy U68** has moved from London, ON to Toronto and writes, "I am

happily settled in and loving the place and the neighbourhood of Roncesvalles Village."... Gerry Krucik, spouse of **Donna (Griffiths) Krucik U65**, died suddenly on May 18. Donna and Gerry have been retired and living in Edmonton... Former student **Rondy Kyle** joyfully informs us they have a new addition to the family. David Arnold Kyle Florian was born on May 18, a baby brother for proud big sister, Denise... Former student **Jody Maltby** and Soo Chung Lem were married August 19, in Orillia, ON... **Martha Martin CCS98** was covenanted in July to a joint ministry with St. Andrews and St. Johns congregations in Halifax. Her responsibilities include both faith formation and pastoral care... **Carolyn Nicholson CCS98** has accepted a call to Ebenezer United Church in Edmonton... Central Council volunteer **Nancy Steeves** married Dawn Waring on July 29 in Edmonton... **Eric Tusz-King CCS78** is continuing his former Maritime Conference work, related to climate change and renewable energy, by taking on management of a cooperative which is building solar homes and retrofitting present buildings. He has asked Chignecto Presbytery to designate it as a 'presbytery recognized ministry'...

This year's retiring graduates of CCS and the Western Field Based Program include: **Aldeen McKay CCS71** and **May Sanders CCS72**, Alberta North West Conference; **Joan Brown WFBP** and **Sylvia Thompson CCS89**, Saskatchewan Conference; and **Charlotte Caron CCS72**, Conference of Northwestern Ontario.

Passages

The death of **Dorothy May (Shipstone) Nelson A58** occurred on July 19. Dorothy grew up in Hamilton. After graduating from AWTC she served for several years at Little Trinity Anglican Church in downtown Toronto and later with the Women's Inter-Church Council. Dorothy was widely read in the literature of the women's movement and recent theological innovators. In her last months she struggled courageously with the return of breast cancer, which had metastasized, and with the certainty that death was near. She leaves Don and two adult children, Bradley and Jill.

Jessie Oliver passed away peacefully on July 9 in Sechelt, BC. She was born in 1918 in Bright, Ontario. Jessie served the United Church in Western Canada for 33 years, and was

instrumental in helping it to recognize, and begin to respond to the ill effects that residential schools had for aboriginal children. A memorial service was held on July 26 at St. John's United Church in Sechelt.

Marjorie Robson U45 died May 2 in Leamington, Ontario at the age of 94. Marjorie was a nurse and served in India for 37 years, first as a United Church missionary. Then, when the Indian government disallowed foreign missionaries while Marjorie was in Canada on furlough and earning a BSC in Nursing, she returned with CUSO to teach Nursing at the same hospital she had left. She retired in 1978. **Elinor Leard U45**, who also served in India wrote to let us know of Marjorie's passing.



Holy Families

by Martha Martin CCS98

As I began to write this article, I wondered which theological themes and perspectives I should choose. Themes of unconditional love, creation, hope, joy, incarnation – the “Happy Families” representations on Christmas ads and Hallmark cards? Perhaps I should focus on the darker themes that run beneath the surface, the themes that rise to the top after too much wine at family gatherings – themes of brokenness, power, suffering, pain, death, temptation ... or, the Easter themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, renewal, community, faith, and wisdom. Is there any family around that doesn’t engage in an intricate dance between all these themes on a regular basis? My colleague in ministry, Rev. Linda Yates, said in one of her sermons, “If you remember nothing else that I say today, remember this. NORMAL is a setting on your dryer: It doesn’t apply to families.”



Holy Families by Jerzy Kinar

Jerzy Kenar is a Chicago artist

I first encountered when Seasons of the Spirit’s **Behold** magazine featured his *Resurrection Sculpture* several years ago. I was so moved by the picture of the sculpture that I sought out his website, <http://www.religiouskenar.com/biography.htm>, which turned out to be amazing. My favourite piece is one in the “Holy Families” Figurative Art collection. It is a round, granite picnic table, with bronze statues of the boy Jesus, Mary and Joseph sitting on the bench. The description says that up to 60 children can be seated around the table to eat lunch with “The Holy Family.”

I wonder what conversations around that table might be? What would you ask the Holy Family if you could sit down at a picnic table and share lunch with them? Younger children would probably have a bit of fun talking to a young Jesus. It might be quite empowering to meet Jesus as a younger person. I think I’d like to have a conversation with Mary... What was it like to be the mother of Jesus?... How did she cope with such a precocious child?... How did she manage, with all the sibling rivalry there must have been?

At a women’s gathering I attended once, a few women dramatized what it might have been like to be Jesus’ siblings ... talk about a recipe for a dysfunctional family! Take one Son of

God who can do no wrong, mix with several younger brothers and sisters with all the jealousies, favouritism, mischievousness, and temper tantrums that occur in every family. As parents of Jesus, no doubt Mary and Joseph could have written a book on family dynamics and roller coaster emotions.

There was the time he missed the caravan and stayed behind to teach in the temple... the arrogance of his words, “Did you not know I would be in my Father’s house?” What stinging words for a mother to hear after a day of heartsick worry. How did it feel to be so publicly rebuked? Or, the time he denied them any special place in his heart... “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” What anger and hurt she must have felt.

But there were the good times too... like the time he did take her advice and kept the

wedding party going; the times that she heard, through neighbours and friends, of all the miracles, all the healings. “That’s my boy,” she probably thought proudly. Then that last day, the heartbreak, the pain, the unbelievable anguish of watching him die. And his last thoughts were for her to be protected and cared for, “Woman, here is your son”, and to his beloved disciple, “Here is your mother.”

Joy and sadness, hope and despair, pain and pleasure, life and death. Even the Holy Family itself could not escape the reality of human family life, nor the range of theological themes that we, as people of faith, can see in their experiences. To look at a family, whatever its configuration, using a theological framework is to acknowledge that “we are not alone, we live in God’s world.” With that acknowledgment we accept a complex and diverse collection of theological perspectives at any given moment. Thanks be to God!

(Martha is in full-time ministry with St. Andrews and St. Johns pastoral charges in Halifax, where her responsibilities include faith formation and pastoral care.)



Ministry or Marriage – Part 2

by Marion (Woods) Kirkwood U57

I had mixed feelings when I was invited to attend a service of apology for “disjoining of deaconesses” at the April meeting of the United Church General Council Executive. It had happened so long ago! I remembered that week in 1957 when I had to make a life-changing decision. I was offered a position as Christian Education staff at a church in Hamilton, and Jim Kirkwood proposed to me. I chose Jim, a decision I’ve never regretted, a choice that took me to Saskatchewan, to Zambia, and finally to Toronto. I’ve had a fulfilling career as teacher. I raised four wonderful children. So why do I need an apology? How could I be “disjoined” when I was never “joined” in the first place?

Disjoining is a very awkward word. It reminded me of the old song “Dry Bones” - “de head bone disconnected from de neck bone...”! I guess it’s true that those of us who were not allowed to remain deaconesses when we married were disconnected from the paid ministry of the church. So were we a bunch of disconnected bones, with no connection to each other, or to the church at large?

That may have been how it was for some women. I can only speak for myself. My choice to marry didn’t cut me off from the church; as a volunteer I put the skills learned at UCTS to good use. But it did cut me off from salaried employment, benefits and pension. I was also disconnected from my classmates and other women in diaconal ministry. That I do regret.

When, in the mid-70’s, I was ready to pursue a career, the idea of paid accountable ministry in the church didn’t even occur to me. My calling was different then: to teach music to students who were mentally and physically challenged. Interesting, though, how many of the teaching and pastoral skills I had learned at UCTS were applicable in my new career!

So what about this apology? It was good to be there, to represent hundreds of sisters who were denied the opportunity to exercise their ministry in the church in a formal way. The apology itself was part of a liturgical act of prayer, in which we all participated. It was good to hear the powerful sermon preached by Elizabeth Eberhart-Moffatt, and to hear words from the General Secretary Jim Sinclair, and the Moderator Peter Short.

A highlight for me was meeting three other “disjoined” women: Wilma (Unwin) Cade U60, Ruth (Sandilands) Lang U50, and Joan (Cheeseman) Willis U56. After lunch we had the opportunity to reflect with Caryn Douglas about our experiences and those of others that we knew. Some, like myself, married immediately after graduation, and thus never joined the deaconess order. Others joined, worked, and then married and had to resign. Ruth spoke of her marriage to an ordinand after she had been four years in ministry. She had more pastoral experience than her husband, yet she was the one who had to resign! Other women were disjoined and returned to ministry (diaconal or ordained) when the rules changed. Still others pursued different careers.



Marion Kirkwood

We asked ourselves “what does this apology mean?” In her response to the apology at the service, Wilma Cade said, “When I have told friends about this Apology they have all retorted, ‘And what is the United Church going to do to repay these women?’ We all laughed. If this Apology had been made 20 years ago, there would have been many women trained for ministry who were in financial difficulty. Now many have died and

gone to their true reward. I wonder, however, if there are not still some struggling with very meagre pensions. If the Church is truly sorry, would it be so difficult to check the records, and offer even a little help?”

The apology is important as another step in affirming the ministry of women. We can note this apology, but can we really accept it completely as long as there is still so much sexism and hierarchy in the church? I wonder if the organizational changes at the national church provide as much support to women in ministry as the former structure. I wonder about Presbytery and Conference student committees that do not put forward diaconal ministry as a valid choice for potential candidates? Or ministers who advise young women to go for ordination because “you are too talented to be a diaconal minister”. I invite us to consider how affirming we are of women of visible minorities, or of women with disabilities.

(Marion lives in Toronto where she is an active member of Trinity-St. Paul’s United Church.)

