

125 Bells Point Road  
Port Mouton, NS, B0T 1T0  
November 22, 2016



David Hewitt  
Executive Secretary, Maritime Conference  
21 Wright Street,  
Sackville, NB, E4L 4P8

It would seem the first order in such situations would be pastoral care and dialogue. But no. How callous the church is. After 43 years, over half my life, I'm now without a home, without a second glance.

Not being acknowledged, being treated as insignificant, as if I didn't matter, that what I wrote, my concerns, had no validity, that neither were worthy of consideration -- all these are dignity violations. Church officials seem to have no idea, nor care, how difficult this decision was; how deeply hurtful it is to leave behind somewhere I had once felt welcome, accepted and appreciated, nor how VERY deeply heart-wrenchingly painful it was to experience such a swift, complete and total rejection from 'my' church, as one without value, not worthy of any attention or concern. Not only was my heart ripped out, it was shredded, stomped on and the ragged pieces then kicked into the garbage can.

As I read the official form through, it seems you already have all the information to complete sections A & B, including my signature, with my three page letter. If an official form and signature are required for legality, then someone should bring it to me.

Furthermore, it seems apparent that this procedure should start with presbytery. And since South Shore Presbytery already has a copy of my letter/request, then it would seem incumbent upon them to form a committee to review and discuss it, possibly with me. At the very least, they should be making a pastoral call, with or without the form for signing.

THEN it gets passed to Conference, where presumably a similar discussion should take place before sending anything on to General Council. I have heard nothing re the Conference Executive meeting the end of October. And not a peep from anyone at General Council.

My original letter was sent first to General Council because that is where the regrettable and unprecedented situation regarding gretta now currently lies. It is MORE than a mere 'request'. There is serious content involved. But that also seems of no consequence, not worthy of discussion. The United Church has become a legalized system within a legalized structure.

My years of service count for nothing then; the certificate of thanks upon my retirement contains merely hollow cliches. So likewise, what I have to say, have experienced and feel, also have no value. Strange, and terribly sad, how that is so radically opposite the words in the letter I received upon being accepted as suitable for ordination.

And the coup de grace was your signature of "Peace".

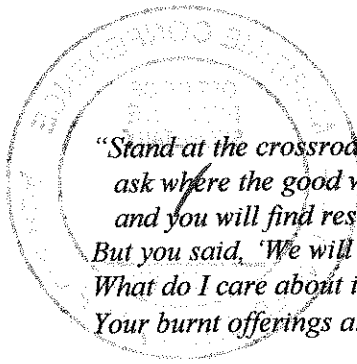
PEACE?! Where there is no peace? And not even any attempt to even open a process towards peace?

*They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious.*

*'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.*

*Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct?*

*No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush.*



*"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths,  
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
and you will find rest for your souls.*

*But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'*

*What do I care about incense from Sheba or sweet calamus from a distant land?*

*Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please me." Jeremiah 6: 14-16, 20*

I realize now that at ordination it wasn't a 'covenant' I was entering with the church, but a sugar-coated version of a patronizing obedient 'marriage' contract. And it wasn't I who had my fingers crossed behind my back, but the church. Because very quickly they broke many of their 'promises' to me. And unless I was an obedient servant, the 'good little woman' who did what she was told to do, say and think, then I was in for trouble. I discovered there was more than one way to drive people from the profession. Though that selection process was indeed very selective. Certain people could be 'forgiven' much greater far more serious sins, be moved and promoted, while others with far lesser sins, though which were much higher in priority on the Sin List, hadn't a prayer.

I've changed my mind. I no longer want my name put on the Discontinued Service List. I want my name removed from every single United Church list of clergy anywhere, including the online list of clergy in Maritime Conference. The DCL list for gretta is not 'discipline', it's excommunication. Since few even know the ins and outs of that list, my name there would still generally indicate some church/denominational affiliation to most, and I desire none. I shake the dust from my sandals as I restore my integrity. (Holy cow, that has 4 references! Matthew 10:14, Mark 6:11 and Luke 9:5 & 10:10-11)

Attached is

- \* my original October 11 letter (copy)
- \* my second November 15 letter (copy)
- \* my ordination certificate (original)
- \* my 'appreciation' certificate at my retirement (original)
- \* my warm letter welcoming me for ordination (copy)
- \* a copy of the official document you seem to demand, for you to fill out.

Kindly advise me when the deed is done.

Beverley Burlock

125 Bells Point Road  
Port Mouton, NS, B0T 1T0  
October 11, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I submit the following as an official request to have my name removed from every official list of United Church of Canada clergy, and to have my name placed on the Discontinued Service list.

This is partly because of what the church is currently doing to gretta vosper and her congregation, but even more broadly because that is a clear indication of an even larger problem. The United Church has lost its way. I am no longer proud to be associated with it, and have been more and more reluctant to identify myself as one of its ministers.

This is not the ambiance which attracted me in the first place and it certainly isn't what I was ordained into. Never EVER was I subjected, in any of my pre-ordination interviews over the several years, to such an intensive and excessive interrogation as gretta faced before the subcommittee, which basically amounted to a heresy trial. (Since when was 'right beliefs', an ancient persecuted offense, a UCC priority?) I did not become a minister who had to swear I believed in a list of set vows that were unalterable and infallible, and sign to that.

Without growth there is stagnation. It seems the United Church itself is settling into that state. And any ministers who have not grown in their learning and thinking since their seminary days and ordination have not kept up with continuing education as most other professionals are required to, and have failed to be good leaders. *"...by this time you ought to be teachers, (but) you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness"* - doing what is right, justice, vs doing the opposite, wickedness) (Hebrews 5: 12-13)

There have been threats of splits in the church before - when we chose to ordain women, to support anti-apartheid in South Africa, to accept, ordain and marry gays. The church never gave in to those, some of which were more dire in their seriousness and severity. We were able to 'accept' the Renewal Fellowship and Community of Concern. Moderator Bill Phipps said Jesus wasn't divine, causing a media uproar and frenzy (they do love the scent of a scandal), but he wasn't subjected to an inquisition or defrocking.

Being of a legal bent, both the originator of the document, that resulted in this investigation of gretta, and the current General Secretary are thus focussing on the legal letter of the law, which is so NOT Jesus. In fact, gretta is being treated the same as the 'religious authorities' of his day treated Jesus, who called them out on putting law over compassion. In fact Jesus called them a brood of vipers, snakes and hypocrites for doing exactly that. Maybe it's time to re-read Matthew chapter 23. And don't forget, Jesus was right there in the midst of all those the rest of the world had rejected, abused, despised, exiled to the margins, embracing, respecting and including them. In his parables, Jesus even used some as good examples to follow.

Jesus didn't insist on people 'believing' anything - in fact he told the rich young ruler who had kept ALL the laws to a T, that what he lacked was how he cared about and for others around him - go and sell all that you have and give it away to those in need. With the story of the sheep and the goats, it was also all about how vulnerable people were treated. The Hebrew scriptures repeatedly say the same thing - a nation (one could say denomination) will be judged on how it treats the *"least of these"*. Furthermore, Jeremiah talks about a time when teaching about God will no longer be required, because all God's desires (& characteristics we claim God

has) will be written on/in people's hearts. The Bible is all about doing and living, not about 'believing'. Even the understanding of that word's meaning has become compromised and corrupted.

Ever since the later union with Evangelical United Brethren, it seems the United Church has been gradually slipping into a more conservative perspective. We are no longer the open and exploring, the inclusive and progressive denomination we once were, emphasizing social justice issues, which drew so many people, including me, to it. How many of the EUB clergy or those seeking admission from other denominations were extensively questioned as to their openness to what was then United Church policy? It was my experience that those I encountered still had their old theology. And now the United Church is willing to accept a request from anyone, even with no prior involvement with church, Christianity, let alone the United Church. No longer do they even need to be associated for a few years with a congregation, where they would have been exposed to United Church thinking, and be known by United Church members. Where is the accountability there? Where is the theological grilling and set requirements of 'beliefs'?

Words are a serious concern in any communication. And communicating anything religious and spiritual in words is even more complicated. For one thing, the meaning of words changes - over time, with translation, from culture to culture. Definitions can even become corrupted, distorted. ANY word connected with "God" is both limited and limiting. Therefore, demanding there be only one single acceptable understanding is slipping into idolatry. The church has not taught well the concept of metaphor over literal.

As I have experienced within my own congregations and with others, many, if not most or even all, of our religious words come with so much baggage and both mis-information and misunderstanding, along with bad translations and interpretations, that they are obstacles, driving people away. Some people, like Spong and Borg, believe the words can be redeemed. But for many that has not worked at all. So now others are working at replacing new less-loaded words in an attempt to meet those many who are desperately seeking something with spiritual substance and meaning. If that meets their needs, resulting in them then living the kind of compassionate, caring, open, inclusive lives Jesus taught, is that not a good thing? Something to be applauded and encouraged, rather than attacked and deplored - exiled from our very midst? Are we not to be "*known by our fruits*"?

The United Church has supposedly grown, so we proclaim anyway, from union in 1925 along a continuum to a current concept of Holy Mystery. Surely gretta is within that Holy Mystery. Or should be included. She is not trying to convert anyone, nor insisting all follow or even agree with her. She is 'breathing out goodness' -- even to, I might add, her accusers.

The UCC has missed out on an incredibly important and crucial teachable moment here. Instead of going against our own principles and attacking and excluding, the church should have taken the amazing opportunity to teach the general population and media, as well as its own members (many of whom apparently badly need it too), educating them that it is not just a choice only between God or no-God. That the word God is but a mere feeble attempt to 'explain' something beyond description. That God is broader than any word we can come up with and far broader than any concept we can conceive, thus there are many, many, many ways to think about God, some of which might even include not using the word God at all! That the word atheist also has other, broader and deeper understandings than merely no-God. What a tragic loss and waste of such an incredibly wide open opportunity.

While gretta might feel betrayed by her Church (as do I), she's not the only one being hurt. You are insulting her whole congregation. As well as all those other clergy and congregations who have been quietly teaching and living the same things. You are also grossly insulting and turning away all those others with no current religious affiliation who are searching for a place where they can feel at home spiritually. No more is the United Church of Canada the

place to go and be accepted. We used to talk about 'living with the questions', but now, no more questions, no more seeking, we too now act as if we have The Answer. This smacks of hubris and a serious lack of humility. The process itself, which was both exclusive and secretive, was a disgrace. No Biblical justice here, just law enforcement & punishment. No "ever-flowing stream" either (Amos 5:21-24).

I would remind you of what Gamaliel, a well respected religious authority of his time, said to the people out to get 'the apostles'. (Acts 5: 34-35, 38-39) "*Consider carefully what you propose to do to these people....I tell you, keep away from them and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail (as he had mentioned others had). But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them – in that case you may even be found fighting against God.*" No matter what definition of God or whether that word is even used.

In Judaism (& Jesus was a Jew), teaching and learning thrived on controversy and debate (or dialogue as gretta keeps requesting). The sages taught that "*every argument deserved a hearing, for one could never know whether future generations might not discover truth in the minority view, as well as the majority*".

When I was first at seminary, I remember thinking "I'm not the first person to be taught this stuff. Why have I NEVER heard even a vague hint of any of it from any of the ministers I have encountered, met or known?" Why indeed. I am beginning to think it was at least partly because of fear. Very sad, since by far the most common Biblical 'commandment' is "*Fear not*". Well, I am sick at heart and tired of being in a denomination that is ruled at least in part by fear, and being part of a clergy that keeps silent because of fear. Some years ago I decided I would never again read any scripture, say any creed or prayer, perform any ritual, preach or teach anything I could not do with integrity. I made no public announcement, and my congregations likely never realized the 'radical' changes. However, I received positive feed back and comments that they appreciated the honesty and openness, and at least some found it liberating, refreshing and soul-nourishing.

This then is my further act of integrity. I can no longer be silent and secretive. Especially when doing so leaves my colleague and classmate abandoned and hanging out to dry like some sacrificial lamb. When my denomination has betrayed its principles, thus also betraying me and negating my 'calling'. Again the cry goes up "*Let my people go*".

With deep regret I am telling you I am leaving. Remove my name from your rolls.



Beverley C Day Burlock (Rev)  
125 Bells Point Road  
Port Mouton, NS, B0T 1T0

Ordained Bay of Quinte Conference May 27, 1990  
Graduated Queens Theological College May 11, 1988  
902 683 2677      bburlock@eastlink.ca



124 Bells Point Road  
Port Mouton NS B0T1T0  
November 15, 2016

The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell Moderator  
Nora Sanders General Secretary General Council  
and others

I understand the Saskatchewan Wascana Presbytery's proposal to stop all procedures regarding gretta vosper until there has been wider discussion and consultation with the whole of the United Church of Canada was adopted by Saskatchewan Conference and transmitted to the General Council Executive, where it is likely to be considered as new business by the Executive when it meets in Toronto Nov. 18 and 19.

I would presume that my submission of October 11 to the General Council and many others, which is being called a 'request' but is so much more, will also be considered at that meeting. The following comment in the media that "*United Church officials did not immediately say what they planned to do with Burlock's request*" was rather amusing. My submission was quite clear. What's the problem? What are you waiting for? I look forward to your response. Any response.

Among the other comments which I found, not amusing, but rather astounding, were two by Rev. Alan Hall, Executive Officer Ministry & Personnel, the first one echoed by Church publicity spokeswoman Mary-Frances Denis.

***"The parties [in this case Ms. Vosper and Toronto Conference] are entitled to have the panel consider only the information and arguments that they put forward for the hearing not the opinions of others seeking to influence the outcome. Therefore correspondence that relates to a particular matter before the Judicial Committee may only be forwarded to them if it is from a party to the matter."***

In the first place, isn't withholding evidence illegal? In secular court cases all evidence must be provided to both sides. In the second place, isn't withholding information ALREADY influencing the outcome? There have been veiled comments about pro and con comments but never has any percentage been revealed. Would a higher pro-count influence the outcome? Likely. However, character witnesses and victim impact statements are now considered accepted and crucial elements of court proceedings and outcomes. And protesting injustice is a long-standing deep-seated religious component - Biblically based.

Furthermore, why was this immediately a legal matter. Surely beliefs, vows, ordination, theological words and education, etc. are theological points for discussion. But rather than pass this situation along to the committee(s) whose sole role it was, an arbitrary legal perspective was brought to bear through a legal ruling. Since when do national officials arbitrarily make such broad-ranging elementary decisions?

Moreover, these actions should not be allowed or excused because they're happening under the guise of the recent Effective Leadership Project, which General Council voted for in 2012. This project transfers powers from congregations and presbyteries, local front line people, to conference and general council officials at a fair remove. In addition "requiring the freedom to act outside of the standard methods of practice", the project allows them to ignore, override, be exempted from the polity and bylaws of the United Church Manual AND upon request the

General Secretary is authorized to grant further exemptions from polity and by-laws related to Conference or Presbytery responsibilities for pastoral relationships needs assessments and the oversight and discipline of ministry personnel.

This is a major and massive restructuring of the church, of which I rather doubt many congregations, let alone clergy, are even aware. Never mind the wide-ranging ramifications. So too with regards to the precedent-setting implications of any rulings that would summarily dismiss gretta. This is so much broader than just gretta:

- \* any ordained clergy could now be called to account regarding their vows AFTER ordination.
- \* those vows would now be static, infallible and must be signed to.
- \* no longer would the United Church of Canada be a welcoming place for seekers, because now we too have The Answer.
- \* whereas before every candidacy started with several years membership in a congregation, now anyone, even with no prior church or religious attachment, can apply to conference where they will be deemed suitable, likely by people trained in the use of the usual corporate psychological testing etc. Gone is accountability. Gone the church's overall responsibility. Gone is the personal relationship.
- \* now too anyone, even with no knowledge of the clergy or their congregation, can lay a complaint. So if someone disagrees with something any clergy says, that clergy can find themselves up against a heresy trial.

The second astounding comment is

*"the judicial committee will name the three- to five-person panel which will include ministers as well as lay people who "will likely have a background as lawyers or judges in the secular legal system" says General Council staff person Rev. Alan Hall."*

Again **WHERE IS THE SURELY PRIMARY THEOLOGICAL COMPONENT?** Sorry, but neither lay members or clergy are automatically experts in theology, perhaps even less so than their legal experience. Where are the theological scholars? Since the participants could very well hold religious perspectives rather firmly on the traditional side, where is the balance? It seems possible that being so heavily weighted, the outcome could be preordained.

And I take grave issue with "may only be forwarded to them if it is from a party to the matter." **WE ARE ALL PARTIES TO THIS MATTER!** This involves every single member and every congregation of the United Church, every single person in any order of ministry, as well as every single person considering entering the ministry. This changes the very nature and structure of the Church, one which affects every single one of us, and our proud history of inclusiveness and justice.

The church is at a pivotal point. A serious crucial pivotal point. And if this procedure goes ahead without further wide discussion throughout the whole church, our name will become mud, our reputation as an open, inquiring and welcoming denomination shot to blazes.

So you can see why I want no part of, want my name in no way associated with, this downfall, nor the totally unfair and unjust treatment of a colleague who has done great things with her congregation and around the world.



Beverley Burlock



The United Church of Canada  
Knows all persons by these presents

That **Beverley Day Burlock, B.A., B.F., M.Div.**

HAVING BEEN FOUND WELL QUALIFIED, HAS THIS DAY BEEN ORDAINED AND SET APART TO THE OFFICE AND WORK OF A **Minister** OF WORD, SACRAMENT, AND PASTORAL CARE, OF **The United Church of Canada**, WITHIN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY THE **Bay of Quinte** CONFERENCE,

AND IS ADMITTED TO THE ORDER OF MINISTRY BY THE LAYING ON OF HANDS WITH PRAYER UNDER THE AUTHORITY, DISCIPLINE AND REGULATIONS OF **The United Church of Canada**. SHE IS HEREBY COMMENDED TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN AS A PERSON AUTHORIZED TO FULFILL THIS MINISTRY SO LONG AS HER SPIRIT AND PRACTICE ARE SUCH AS BECOME THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

In Testimony Whereof, WE HAVE SET OUR HANDS AND THE SEAL OF **The United Church of Canada**; AT **Oshawa** THIS **twenty-seventh** DAY OF **May**.....

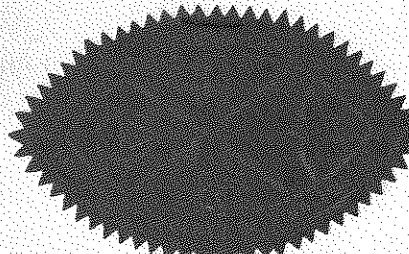
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND **ninety**.....

*Honorair Payne*  
PRESIDENT OF CONFERENCE

*Kathy J.*  
MODERATOR OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

*Peter McKellar*  
SECRETARY OF CONFERENCE

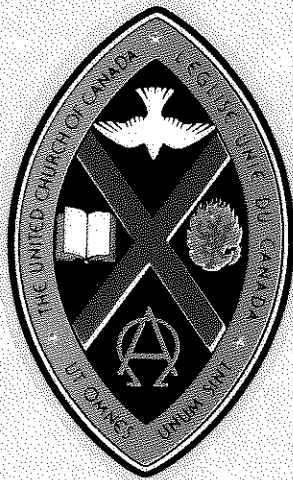
*[Signature]*  
SECRETARY OF GENERAL COUNCIL



*presented to*

**Rev. Beverly C. Burlock,  
B.A., B.I., M.Div.**

*by the Maritime Conference  
The United Church of Canada  
on the occasion of her retirement  
and in grateful recognition of her contribution  
to this church during her years of active ministry*



*Given under our hands in Sackville, in  
the Province of New Brunswick, on  
this twenty-seventh day of May, in the  
year of our Lord, two thousand and  
six.*

*Rev. Dr. J. R. Barthol*

*President*

*Rev. Catherine Gaud*

*Executive Secretary*

The Interview Board  
Bay of Quinte Conference  
Box 96, Picton, Ont.,  
K0K 2T0

March 6, 1987

Ms. Beverley Burlock  
31 Grosvenor Court  
KINGSTON, Ont.  
K7M 3C2

Dear Beverley:


It was a joy to meet you at the meeting of the Bay of Quinte Conference Interview Board at Providence Centre on Saturday, February 21, 1987. As you will remember, we passed a motion recommending your continuance as a candidate. The motion read as follows:

Moved by Alex Bryans and seconded by Glen Larmer that the Interview Board of the Bay of Quinte Conference, having examined the Personal Information Form submitted by the candidate, having considered reports submitted to it, and having conferred with Beverley Burlock, recommends to the Kingston Presbytery the continuance of Beverley's candidacy for ministry in the United Church of Canada. Carried.

In speaking to the motion, Doris Etherington told how the members of the board were impressed with your writing abilities, your sincerity and your conscientiousness. You are indeed a whole person, and because you have suffered, you can relate well to people in trouble. You have a sensitivity to others, and you take your responsibilities well.

We wish you God's richest blessings in the months and years to come.

Sincerely yours,

  
(Mrs.) Elizabeth Murray  
Secretary, Interview Board  
Bay of Quinte Conference



I understand that my re-admission to ordained or commissioned status is at the discretion of the denomination within its bylaws, policies, and practices at the time of such re-admission.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/day/year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

**Part C: Action of presbytery/district**

The request by \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of ministry personnel

to be placed on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) has been reviewed by the presbytery/district, which has made the following recommendation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/day/year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: Authorized presbytery/district officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name: Authorized presbytery/district officer

**Part D: Conference action**

\_\_\_\_\_ Conference has received a request to list  
Name of Conference

\_\_\_\_\_ on the  
Name of ministry personnel

Discontinued Service List (Voluntary). Attached is the following documentation indicating the consent of the person listed:

\_\_\_\_\_

*Copies of this record have been circulated to the Ministry and Employment Unit, presbytery/district, and the person in accordance with the policies and practices of The United Church of Canada.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/day/year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: Conference executive secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name: Conference executive secretary