

**363 Review of the Rev. Paul Browning
Final Report, June 2, 2003**

Section 1: The Review Committee's authority to conduct the review and make the recommendations.

Why was the review ordered?

At the request of the Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee of St. Paul's United Church in Orillia, Muskoka Presbytery was asked to initiate a review of the ministry of the Reverend Paul Browning. The letter from the Chairperson of the M&P Committee is listed as Item 1 in the Appendix to this report.

When was the review ordered?

The Review was ordered at the February 19, 2003 meeting of the Executive of Muskoka Presbytery by the following motions:

"Moved by Lynne Petch seconded by George Woodward that having received information from the Ministry, Personnel Committee of Saint Paul's United Church Orillia, and having received information from the Pastoral Relations Convenor and the Pastoral Oversight Convenor, Muskoka Presbytery directs that a review of the Ministry of The Reverend Paul Browning at Saint Paul's United Church be initiated according to section 363 of the Manual. Motion was carried."

"Moved by Lynne Petch and seconded by Isaac Taylor that Susan Manning be appointed to select the Review Committee. Motion was carried."

"Lillian Perigoe or David Allen would provide training for the review committee."

At the March 4, 2003, meeting of Muskoka Presbytery the following motion was carried:

"12.2.3 Moved by Don Powell, seconded by Alan Parker that the 363 Review at Saint Paul's United Church, Orillia, proceed on the basis outlined in Section 363C 1) and 2) which refers to the effectiveness of Ministry Personnel and 2) the failure of Ministry Personnel to maintain the peace and welfare of the church."

Who were the members of the Review Committee appointed by the Presbytery?

At the March 4, 2003, meeting of Muskoka Presbytery the following motion was carried:

12.2.1 Moved by Susan Manning, seconded by Lynne Petch that Johanne Hills, Paul Dempsey, Robert Day, Jane Van der Kraan and Jean Anderson form the Committee to conduct the review of t the ministry of the Rev. Paul Browning, as outlined in the Manual, Section 363.

What were the Review Committee's terms of reference?

The Review Committee was directed under Section 363 of the United Church Manual to review:

**The effectiveness of Ministry Personnel (Rev. Paul Browning)
The failure of Ministry Personnel (Rev. Paul Browning) to maintain the peace and welfare of the church**

Were there any other Presbytery actions in relation to the review?

The Committee is not aware of any other actions by Presbytery in relation to this review.

Section 2: The process followed for the review

How did the Review Committee inform the participants about the review process?

On March 6, 2003 a letter from the Review Committee was sent to Rev. Paul Browning, Rev. Karen Hilfman-Millson, all staff members at St. Paul's, the Chairs of the Board, and the Chair of the M&P Committee informing them that a review was now under way, and the names of the members of the Review Committee. The letter also invited them to meet with the Review Committee.

Rev. George James, Chair of Muskoka Presbytery on March 2, 2003, announced the review to the congregation of St. Paul's United Church, Orillia. Rev. Browning encouraged members of the congregation to send letters about the effectiveness, or ineffectiveness, of his ministry to the Review Committee. Rev. Browning directed that letters be addressed to the Committee in care of Rev. Susan Manning, Pastoral Relations Convenor of Muskoka Presbytery.

Subsequently notices were placed in the Order of Service at St. Paul's directing the congregation to forward correspondence to Rev. Johanne Hills. The notices were placed in the Order of Service the weeks of March 16 and March 23, 2003. Also included in these notices was a date where personal delegations could meet with the Review Committee.

How did the Review Committee gather input for the review process?

As of May 19, 2003, the Review Committee received 131 pieces of correspondence. These letters were either written message, or electronic submissions received by e-mail. The Review Committee did not differentiate or discriminate based on the preferred method of correspondence. The letters addressed to Rev. Manning were given to the Review Committee, unopened. All correspondence that was pertinent to the review in questions was acknowledged, read and catalogued by the Review Committee.

The Review Committee conducted approximately 27 personal interviews. All meetings were "one-on-one," with the exception of the M&P Committee. On March 27, the committee met with 17 individuals. Following this, an additional meeting for personal presentations was scheduled for April 8, 2003, at which time the Review Committee met with four delegations, including a member of the office staff and the co-Chairs of the Board.

After the April 8 interviews the Review Committee decided to once again contact the Chair of the M&P Committee requesting a meeting.

Separate meetings between the Review Committee and Rev. Karen Hilfman-Millson and the M&P Committee were held the evening of April 14, 2003.

A telephone conference call with another staff member was conducted on April 22, 2003 and a third member of St. Paul's staff met with the Review Committee on April 23, 2003.

The Review Committee also requested that Rev. Alan Boyd meet with us because of his participation on behalf of Presbytery, in St. Paul's Joint Needs Assessment Committee, or what is otherwise known as Program Planning (PPT). The Committee met with Rev. Boyd on April 23, 2003.

The Review Committee met with Rev. Susan Manning on May 12, 2003.

In addition to the personal interviews and correspondence, the Review Committee also requested a copy of the Joint Needs Assessment Report (JNAC) prepared for Muskoka Presbytery by Alan Boyd and Anna Arnold. That report was requested on March 19, 2003. The Review Committee also has a copy of St. Paul's PPT report.

Job descriptions, and copies of various sermons preached during this time, have been given to the Committee.

All the Review Committee's meetings, including many meetings with individuals, have begun and ended with prayer. It has been our concern that Paul, St. Paul's church, and the members of the congregation be upheld in prayer through this process. All letters and communications with individuals have asked for that commitment and care from them as well. As a committee, we have worked to the best of our abilities, always asking for God's guidance in this difficult and challenging situation.

What input did the minister, in particular, have in the process?

The Review Committee held an initial meeting with Rev. Paul Browning on Thursday, March 6, 2003, and then again on March 26. On the first occasion, he presented each Committee member (with the exception of Jane Van der Kraan who was not in attendance) with a binder containing his written material and attachments. Jane subsequently received this information by mail. At the second meeting, there was more written material and enclosures. In all, there were 107 pages of material. At the March 26 meeting, Paul reviewed in detail the material he had written and answered clarifying questions from the Review Committee.

Since then there has been further correspondence from Paul, some of which questioned the review process.

The Committee met with Rev. Browning on May 5 and May 12, 2003.

At the May 5 meeting, the Review Committee presented its interim report to Paul. This report contained the summary of information gathered, but did not include any conclusions or recommendations.

On May 12, Rev. Paul Browning accompanied by Rev. Sue Browning met with the Review Committee. Paul presented the Committee two documents, one entitled "Dear Review Committee," the second "Appendix I. The first document was Paul's comments, rebuttal and observations regarding our report; the second was Paul's own summary of quotes from letters received by him or cited in the Committee's interim report.

Section 3: Summary of the information gathered

What did the Review Committee hear in the meetings and read in any written material provided to it?

The summary of comments, oral and written will be noted as it relates to the two questions the Committee was charged to review. Where comments are recurrent throughout the various submissions, the Review Committee selected representative examples. For each piece of information included in the summary, the name of the person who provided it is noted.

EFFECTIVENESS OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL:

Karen Hilfman-Millson, Alan Boyd, and others note that Paul is highly intelligent. Ken McMullen says that in his experience Paul has a brilliant mind, is a skilled musician and brings a great amount of ambition and passion to his job. Norma Homer says that in Paul we have a highly intelligent, truly creative, multi-skilled person.

John Smalley, former chair of the M&P Committee writes, “as far as I’m concerned Paul Browning, in tandem with Karen Hilfman-Millson, is exactly what St. Paul’s United Church needs at this time.”

Pastoral care – Audrey Faris appreciated Paul’s pastoral care in personal crisis, and his conduct of family funerals. Jane McNally mentioned Paul’s compassion in providing pastoral care to her husband when he was ill. John Menear expressed strong appreciation for Paul’s pastoral care in a personal crisis. There were many more expressions of appreciation for Paul’s skill in pastoral care and counseling.

Compassion for the marginalized – A. Finlayson speaks of Paul’s involvement with the program advisory board of the Soldier’s Memorial Hospital mental health centre. Paul has visited the patients to give spiritual input in the group program. A. Cando mentions the down to earth attitude of Paul in the 3:30 LIVE! worship, and his genuine love and concern for people. Merv and June James think that Paul and Karen have made St. Paul’s a place that is known to be safe, inclusive place where all are welcome. Tom Page mentioned Paul’s compassion with the marginalized. There were other similar comments.

Preaching – William Dance – meaningful sermons. Betty Stewart – Paul preaches a wonderful sermon and is a very warm person. Ken Hammond appreciates that St. Paul’s has become an invitational church, mentioning 3:30 LIVE! as part of that. Paul has remarkable preaching ability, always able to inform and challenge. Wendy Johnston says that Paul has many positive attributes. He is an outstanding preacher. He has a passion for outreach. Mary McTavish says that Paul’s most significant contributions to her life changes have been his excellent sermons that always speak to the present day and are genuinely inclusive of how each person comes to perceive God. Hilda Moffat says that Paul’s sermons are challenging

interpretations, full of insight. This is representative of the kind of comments that many people made.

Musical skills – Ruth and Reid Steedman – Paul’s awesome musical ability is heart warming – we sing along with the prayer tunes. We have come to cherish *Voices United* as a result. Sharon Powell - Paul can bring emotions into the open through a beautiful song and his talent on the keyboard. Mona Mathieson says that she attends St. Paul’s because of Paul’s sermons and the music program. Many others mentioned Paul’s musical gifts.

Innovation in alternate worship – Mac and Isabel Wilding say that the 3:30 LIVE! ministry is an example of Paul’s caring for those normally outside the church. Mary McTavish says that it was a breath of fresh air to worship in a relaxed community environment. Sandy Bisset mentions 3:30 LIVE! as a catalyst in helping her to begin a new career. Stan Tait says he was welcomed with open arms and began to perform his music at 3:30 LIVE! Kathleen Prince says that people have come back to the church because of the ministry of 3:30 LIVE! Kerry and Greg Ovens – love the fact that people who did not normally go to church were at the afternoon service, a sign that St. Paul’s was attracting new people. Many others spoke positively of Paul’s skills in alternate worship.

Gives freely of his time – Blair Bailey says that Karen and Paul are very generous with their time, putting in many extra hours.

Funerals and Weddings – Pam and Murray Goring – Paul spoke to the congregation at a funeral in such a manner that they knew that he was meant to be in ministry. Ken Hammond – Paul is great with grieving people, and open with people around baptisms and weddings. Bill Church - Paul’s marriage counseling and grief work with people of all ages has added to the depth of their Christian development.

In addition to the positive comments, the Review Committee heard negative, or mixed comments also.

Works at personal issues in preaching – Dwight Engel mentioned a sermon of March 17 when Paul preached about the “Law of Love” and how anything is possible. “That seemed to be the basis for mentioning that therefore gambling at the casino and using alcohol was alright.” Over the years, some have complained about him gambling at the Casino as being poor role modeling for a Pastor. Dwight says that in the last half of the sermon Paul said that the congregation was full of hypocrisy. Dwight says, “Such thing may be said when an open forum is happening but have no place in the pulpit.” When the Review Committee asked Paul if he felt called to live to a higher moral standard, he said “yes.”

Ruth Mary Engel notes that for a long time she listened to Paul’s sermons with trepidation that she would again be a captive audience to his tale of an unhappy childhood. Donna Jean Jeffries says that Paul just has not grown up and that he is self-destructive. Jennifer Trussler says that she noticed that in sermons Paul was working through his anger.

Betty and Philip Chevalier write, "It is possible that his [Paul's] frank disclosure of his personal history offended some people in the congregation. However, we felt it revealed his true ability to empathize with people who were experiencing personal and family difficulties."

Creates an "us" and "them" mentality – Tom Page says that Paul refers to "them" and "us." He divides people into those who are with him and those who are not. He has alienated people. Some are supportive of Paul but not of all he does. David & Cindy Howell says that the congregation needs family counseling. Jennifer Trussler says that the church is a dysfunctional family. Mark & Sandi Bisset, co-chairs of the Board, say that the energy of the congregation is drained by problems and that if Paul was to leave, the problems of the congregation would still be there. Mary Maltby says that the PPT process caused stress, pain and division in the congregation. She acknowledges that the congregation should bear some responsibility. Rev. Alan Boyd says, "there is a depth of pain in that church that I have never encountered anywhere else."

Dave Barr, co-Chair of the Property Committee writes "One of our people commented recently upon some "tension" he felt on Sunday mornings. Personally this was a great shock to me, and since then many have also indicated surprise at the statement as they experience no tension whatsoever...To summarize, Paul has demonstrated fine ministerial competence and the peace and welfare of the St. Paul's community is not at risk."

Character and Preaching do not always match – Tom Page said that character and preaching do not always match. He does not always see integrity. Ross Greenwood mentioned how Paul shared personal information that made him "sick." Ross did not keep it in confidence as was expected but shared it with his partner, Jennifer Trussler, who then shared it with M&P. In some way, that information has spread to others in the congregation. Jennifer Trussler expressed her concerns about Paul's gambling. What some call Paul's passion, Jennifer says is really power, control, and rage. Shirley Johnson says that Paul could benefit from anger management. Susan Waring, in the M&P interview, said that pastors should be role models and harness their passion. Hal Taylor says that Paul's reluctance to seek out help bothers him. Paul needs help to change his behaviour patterns. His desire is to fight rather than change. Paul needs to change his need to control. Body language, tone of voice, and "the look," are signs of "demons." He speaks before he thinks. In a letter to Paul, Pat Bedford says that there is a considerable gap between intellectual and relational maturity. She is not sure of this, but offers it in the hope that it will be helpful.

Youth Work part of Job Description – David Howell told the Review Committee that he expected that there would be a renewal of youth ministry when the new Committee of Karen and Paul came, but that has not happened. In a letter, David said it became apparent to him that Paul was not willing to share the responsibility for the promotion of children and youth ministry. Paul wanted to hire a youth minister.

FAILURE OF THE MINISTRY PERSONNEL TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE AND WELFARE OF THE CHURCH

Building an inclusive community – 3:30 LIVE! is mentioned in several letters and several interviews as a welcoming, inclusive, alternate form of worship. In her interview, Catherine Chamberlain spoke of Paul as someone who is the “same person either inside or outside the church.” K. Kilbourn writes of Paul’s “message of inclusiveness in the church, welcoming all people, rich and poor alike, and accepting them as they are.” In his interview, Ken Hammond said that Paul moved the church to being an invitational church where everyone is welcome. B. Nichols notes how the church in the last eight years has truly reached out to be inclusive, and that there is a sense of vitality, enthusiasm, energy and a sense of community. Several others mention and cite similar examples.

Donna Jean Jeffries notes, though, that when Paul came he was determined to fill the church – which he did – with many young families and/or single parents. She goes on to note that Paul ignores “us.” Susan Waring said that she thought we were hiring people to reach out into the community, but they’re forgetting the people who’ve been here a long time. John Smalley acknowledges that Paul has turned off some staunch, loyal members of St. Paul’s.

Richard Johnston, former Board Chair writes “Personal and real outreach seems to continue to be our Achilles’ Tendon. I mention this weakness in that this is one of Paul Browning’s great strengths and that he “walks the talk” regarding outreach, not only within our church but also within the broader community itself.”

Worked to implement the congregation’s “Calling Vision” – Included in the material provided to the Committee by Paul is the May 1994 St. Paul’s “Visioning Proposals” report. This report lists four Key Issues and Goals and corresponding objective and action plans for achieving these goals. Lynn Yerex, current Board secretary, says that Paul, Karen and many of the congregation have a vision for St. Paul’s and know that as good as it currently is, it could be even better. In her interview, Shirley Johnson said that Paul wants for the church (emphasis hers), not for himself. Dave MacDonald said that Paul and Karen were hired to make change. Paul says that upon their hiring there was a commitment to maintain existing programming, but that new programs would be developed to fit with the visioning proposals. Karen Hilfman-Millson confirms that Paul’s commitment has been continuously for the vision, but notes also that she was not aware of the congregation’s resistance to change until recently. Many others highlighted Paul’s work to promote the “calling” vision.

Cindy Howell, however, said that she felt that any questions about programs meant that you were against the program, which might not always be true, but that you may simply have questions or constructive criticism. She also said that Paul has the effect of dividing people by how he moderates discussions. A. Ansell writes that Paul arbitrarily cut the session for 3:30 LIVE! to two each month without advising the board. In a copy of his sermon entitled “Spy Story” Paul acknowledges cutting 3:30 LIVE!

David Howell wrote, and spoke, that Paul is not fulfilling a part of the vision with respect to youth ministry. He further said that his initial impressions were that Paul would lead the youth ministry in the church, and that he is subsequently surprised by Paul's request that the church hire a youth minister. Howell states that Paul hasn't stepped up to, or measured up to agreed and identified needs.

Alan Boyd said that he sees Paul as a visionary leader who has a well-focused vision of where the church has to go, but others do not necessarily see this as a positive attribute. Blair Bailey characterized Paul as a lone wolf – one who is a nonconformist in what some members/adherents at St. Paul's would like Paul to be. Blair believes that this nonconformity disturbs some people since male ministers previous to Paul's arrival were more "conservative." Blair did not make this comment as a criticism in this regard.

Governance and staff organization – Paul contrasts previous ministerial leadership with what has transpired since he and Karen arrived at St. Paul's. He notes that programming has increased and things are done differently. For example, through the Stephen Ministry, visitation of the congregation is shared with lay people, although the ministers still respond when asked to visit. Paul feels that some people find it difficult to let go of old models of ministerial leadership and embrace a new one.

Nyla Quinton spoke positively of organizational changes whereby Karen and Paul are designated as "Committee leaders" and that Paul is thorough and organized in staff meetings. Krista Cameron said that Paul is open and honest with staff and there has been a bumpy road sometimes, but apologizes when he realizes his actions.

Paul, Nyla Quinton, Krista Cameron and K. Hilfman-Millson all spoke of a time of extreme stress and anxiety in the time prior to Nyla's maternity leave. Each person expresses this frustration in terms of a failure of the M&P Committee, and particularly its chair Gwen Strachan. Nyla said that the M&P Committee were micro managing and were over influencing the process. Krista said that Gwen did not accept our knowledgeable way of handling changes which caused much stress in the office. K. Hilfman-Millson said the staff did not feel respected by the M&P Committee and were insulted and demeaned. Karen also said that this was the most blatant moment that M&P did not recognize staff as a Committee.

The M&P Committee has established a "buddy" system with members of the staff, relying on contact that is more informal rather than regular meetings. Karen says that since Gwen Strachan became chair of M&P there has been no review of the ministers. There was no meeting for over a year, and then two meetings in the fall of 2002 when Presbytery Pastoral Relations was involved.

In his letter of March 6, Dwight Engel describes the congregation's governance system as eroded. He says that by December 2002 the Membership committee was moribund was combined with the Worship Committee who had only 4 members out of 11 attending

meetings. He says that the Nominating Committee was unable to find a chair or first or second vice-chair.

Frequent need for apology – In an interview with the M & P committee, it was noted that Paul did apologize in a sermon for his behaviour, but also added a threat to resign if the congregation did not support a Stewardship campaign. On May 7, 2003, Paul wrote a letter to Jennifer Trussler, Paul says, “I have realized for some time that I owe you an apology for how I interacted with you at our first meeting.” He goes on to identify the cause of his behaviour and why it was wrong. He asks her for forgiveness. In a sermon of April 27, 2003, Paul mentions his apology to Jack Dahmer for his failure to listen and for getting feisty with him. Sue Wichers-Schreuer says that Paul can mess up and apologize.

Cindy Howell says that Paul has apologized to the congregation at times and is trying. Ross Greenwood says that when the PA system did not work at church one Sunday, Paul spoke to the operator in condescending tones in the middle of the service. He apologized the following week. In the material Paul provided there were also references to apologies that he has made to various people.

Displays of anger, frustration and intimidation – Shirley Johnson writes that from time to time during official board meetings Paul’s frustration and anger comes to the fore. She says that often when decisions went against Paul’s wishes it became uncomfortable. Sandra Fecht writes that Paul tends to bring a strong reaction from those who cannot handle confrontation. Tom Page said in his interview that Paul can be aggressive and intimidating to many people. Jennifer Trussler writes of experiencing Paul’s anger and intimidating behaviour. Bill Allison writes of Paul’s passion and energy their effectiveness but also that these attributes also make him appear to be too aggressive, domineering and intimidating in some eyes. Margot Crowder says that Paul is too big and intimidating and has kept her pastoral relations with Karen because of this. K. Hilfman-Millson describes Paul’s body language as intimidating – lowered voice, “puffing up” of chest. B. Bailey described Paul as getting quickly frustrated at having to spend time with committees and that Paul just wanted to get on with doing “it.” Blair Bailey said in his interview that he was on guard during staff meetings because of Paul’s volatile nature.

Wendy Johnston, former Board Chair wrote, “Having worked with Paul on the administrative level, I know that he can sometimes be challenging to work with on committees and at meetings. I suspect that is probably why there is a review of his ministry. I had hoped this problem could be worked out with open, honest communication with the people involved and I am sorry it has come to this situation. Paul is extremely intelligent, quick thinking and articulate. Fortunately, he is also very passionate about his beliefs and dreams. At times he can also be impatient and quick to respond to those who disagree with him. We at St. Paul’s are not used to a minister who sometimes seems angry with us at meetings. I feel that Paul has been trying to improve this shortcoming in the past couple of years and had made some definite progress in communicating in a more effective manner.”

Alan Boyd described Paul as dominating the process and discussion during the March 2, 2002 PPT meeting. Alan said that Paul would cut off the facilitator, would interrupt people who disagreed with his opinion, wouldn't let people speak. Alan said of the April 6, 2002 PPT meeting that he "wished he had a stop watch. For example, it was 1 minute of complaint, and 9 minutes of Paul defending himself. In Alan's opinion, there was no catharsis or healing because of the open and frank discussions on April 6.

Gwen Strachan said at the M&P committee interview that some people have expressed concerns to the committee verbally rather than in writing for fear of reprisals about Paul's reactions.

Manipulative behaviour – Norma Homer writes that she would come home from a meeting feeling used, manipulated and put down. She says that during her three years on the board she would watch Paul get his own way despite opposition. David Howell writes that Paul used his gifts to dominate discussions and win his point of view. Alice Ansell writes on March 13 that Paul amended minutes of an annual meeting. She also says in the same letter that Paul would frequently arrive at Finance Committee meetings with multi-page treatises for them to read, and then expect the committee to present the thoughts as their own. She says that it took quite a long time for some on the committee to realize that by presenting Paul's findings to the board as their own, they were simply acting as Paul's spokesperson. Alan Boyd said that he became aware of Paul's dominance of the PPT process during the first meeting on March 2, 2002. Dwight Engel, on March 27, writes about Paul's offer to resign but that the offer to resign to a congregation is improper procedure. Dwight questions Paul's choice of method and further questions Paul's subsequent withdrawal of the offer of resignation.

David Austin writes, "It often pained me when some people talked behind Paul's back complaining about one thing or another but never discussing it with him. Yes, Paul is extremely strong willed and was not shy about expressing his opinion and feelings, but he was always open to discussion and considerate of the opinions of others."

Lois Howes, chair of Christian Development, member of St. Paul's for 56 years writes "I do know, because of my committee work, that sometimes Paul can come on pretty strong. I feel that much of this is the result of his extreme passion for his ministry and his congregation. I also know that he has been accused of being manipulative. Again, I do not find him like that. I have had occasion to disagree with an idea of Paul's and have found him to be very accepting of my opinions."

Role model – Marjorie Blake, in her letter, describes Paul as the best, most sincere Christian St. Paul's as ever had for a minister. T. Crysdale describes Paul as an enthusiastic and challenging leader, more contemporary than traditional. B. Oliver writes on April 2 of Paul being his spiritual mentor. Matthew Lennox says that Paul's guidance significantly shaped his own concepts of church, faith and God.

Dwight Engel writes in his letter of March 27 of Paul's sermon "Law of Love" in which Dwight summarizes the theme as anything is possible. Dwight says that this seemed to be Paul's

basis for mentioning that gambling at the casino and using alcohol was all right. Dwight says that over the years some have complained about Paul gambling at the casino as being poor role modeling for a pastor. Susan Waring and Susan Turner both said during the M&P Committee interview that the pastor should be a role model in everything they do, and should be held to a higher moral standard. All other members of the M&P Committee agreed with these statements.

Interpretation and implementation of established United Church procedures – In the written material submitted to the Review Committee, Paul criticizes the church structure regarding the role of the Search Committee in his sermon “Spy Story.” The Review Committee notes that following the Pastoral Relations Handbook, a minister may not service on a Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC), but this handbook is in conflict with *The Manual* Section 52 (A)ii. Paul seems to have used this discrepancy between the two documents to bend the rules in a way that worked to his advantage. Another example of Paul interpreting and bending established policy was the manner in which he submitted his resignation to the Board of St. Paul’s. He submitted his resignation to the congregation and not to Presbytery, as is the procedure of The United Church. This is noted in Dwight Engel’s letter of March 27.

Concerning the Review Committee itself, Paul has publicly questioned the confidentiality of material submitted, and this has left some people apprehensive or afraid to express their opinions.

Review Committee summary of the initial information provided by Rev. Paul Browning.

Summary of what we have heard from Paul and read in the material he has provided:

The Committee met with Paul on two occasions, March 6/03 (minus Jane Van der Kraan), and March 25/03. On the first occasion, he presented each Committee member with a binder containing his written material and attachments. On the second occasion, there was more written material and attachments. In all, there were 107 pages of material. Since then there has been further correspondence from Paul.

Paul told the Committee that he is mystified as to why the review is happening. However, to the congregation he expressed the hope that “we will embrace this review, as our Lenten task, and use it as an opportunity to reflect on the amazing years of ministry we have shared together.”

Paul tells of the circumstances of his coming to St. Paul’s and his expectations, based on the exciting visioning statement that had been approved by the congregation in 1995. He felt that the goals and objectives that were laid out were in tune with what he felt led to be about.

In written and oral presentations, Paul speaks about the positive things that have been and are happening at St. Paul’s under his leadership. He notes that average attendance has

doubled, financial giving's have greatly increased, and many more volunteers are involved in ministry. He says that an effective Pastoral Committee has been established, and the music ministry has been strengthened. He points to 3:30 LIVE! as a sign of effective outreach into the community, in line with the visioning goals. He celebrates the movement of the church to being an inclusive, lay ministering church, and feels that the Spirit of God has blessed the congregation.

Paul lists and amplifies his perception of why there is tension at St. Paul's, and also details what his role in that tension may be about. The numbering that follows corresponds to Paul Browning's numbering in his submissions, and the bold face corresponds to Paul's headings.

Resistance to greater inclusion in the sharing of power. Under this heading Paul notes the role the new Constitution played in changing the way power is exercised in the congregation. Power shifted from the Finance Committee and the Board to the Committees. He sees this shift as a way of sharing power with a wider group, but notes that some feel displaced, and some are upset that new people and some unacceptable people are now in positions of power.

Resistance to greater inclusion in programming and worship. Paul says that there was a commitment to maintain existing programming, but that new programs would be developed to fit with the visioning proposals. The aim was to attract new people. While this has worked well, Paul notes that some people have resented the new initiatives and claimed that it was "unfair" to provide benefits to the new programs that are not available in the old. (For example, snacks at 3:30 LIVE! and not after morning worship, and paid childcare at the afternoon service and not during morning worship.) Paul says that in his mind "fair" does not mean equal, but rather relates to need. He feels that there is ongoing conflict because of a lack of a generous spirit.

Resistance to the changing role of the Pastors. Paul contrasts previous ministerial leadership with what has transpired since he and Karen arrived at St. Paul's. Programming has increased and things are done differently. For example, through the Stephen Ministry, visitation of the congregation is shared with lay people, although the ministers still respond when asked to visit. Paul feels that some people find it difficult to let go of old models of ministerial leadership and embrace a new one. The ministers are more involved now in the details of committee work to make sure that programs operate as they should.

Resistance to the changing culture of the congregation. Paul tells us in print that the congregation has changed from being a "cold" church, to being an open congregation where all people are intentionally welcomed, and where people are encouraged to come with all their brokenness, express emotion, share their stories and experience God's grace in a personal way. Paul models vulnerability and encourages informality in worship. He says that this can be threatening to those who are afraid of emotion. Those who have a narrow idea of what it means to be human want the pastors to fit their idea, and when they don't, conflict is generated.

The stress of inadequate financial resources. Paul says that this is the single biggest factor producing stress between Board and Committee members and himself. He says that when he and Karen were called no financial plan was put in place to meet the increased costs, and that when a church feels "broke" the stress brings out the worst in everyone. Paul's attempts to have the congregation approve a Stewardship campaign with a paid consultant have been a source of conflict from his third year until the present. He says that the lack of funding has strengthened the hand of those who are opposed to the direction of the church and who do not support hiring additional staff. He says that a few influential people are responsible for blocking efforts to raise the money the church needs and want to solve the problem by cutting and dismantling what St. Paul's has become.

Actions by two M & P chairs which undermined the effectiveness of the Pastors, one deliberately and one by her leadership style. Paul details his expectations in coming to St. Paul's and how he checked with Dwight Engel about a Discussion Paper he provided before he arrived with the aim of finding out about any conflicts or anything contrary to current policy. Dwight said it looked fine but Paul later learned that Dwight was opposed to the approach to Baptism in the paper. Paul says one of his worst moments was when he discovered that St. Paul's was a "members only" church. The attempt to open the church to all seemed to be resisted.

Paul says that Dwight thwarted a smooth entry into St. Paul's by his style of changing the agenda of meetings and not bringing the Discussion Paper to the Committee, and by writing a job description on his own that did not match the one provided by the JPRC. Other areas of conflict had to do with Dwight's handling of a review of the Marriage Policy, and the refusal to allow the M & P committee to consult with staff about how they were planning to implement their goals. With regard to an issue with the Office Manager, Pauline Rideout, Paul feels that he and Karen were not supported, and that the issue was misidentified as a personality conflict. In summary, Paul states his belief that Dwight misused his power, did not deal with him and Karen in good faith, and undermined their role as Pastors.

The period from June 1998 to June 2001 is characterized by Paul as one of relative stability and harmony. There were regular meetings, and no surprises. The ministers became Committee Leaders of the staff. In this period, the M & P committee determined that St. Paul's was one and a half positions understaffed.

At the end of this period, there was almost a complete change of members on M & P with only Gwen Strachan remaining. She assumed the role of chair. Paul differs with Gwen as to how she became chair. He had reservations about her chairing the committee because he found her "aloof and uncommunicative, preoccupied by details. I also felt intimidated by her," he says. There was conflict around Nyla's maternity leave and how her position was to be filled.

Paul was concerned that he and Karen were not invited to meet with M & P during the period September 2001 to September 2002. Paul asked Presbytery, through Don Powell, Pastoral

Relations Convenor at the time, for help. He said that in his view M & P was dysfunctional. Don met with M & P but Gwen was not able to be present. Don was not invited back. Paul says he does not understand why Don Powell did not insist that another meeting take place. He wonders where the support of Presbytery was. By September of 2002 Sue Manning, the new Pastoral Relations Convenor, was involved with M & P and in October Paul and Karen were invited to meet with M& P. At that meeting, the committee raised one specific complaint that had come from Ross Greenwood.

Ross was upset about personal information that Paul had shared with him in confidence. M & P responded by setting up a meeting between Ross, Paul and Hal Taylor of M & P. "Ross lost his temper and started yelling at me," says Paul. Hal Taylor affirmed that Paul acted professionally in the situation. However, Paul feels that Sue Manning held it against him that he had made Ross angry. There followed correspondence between Paul and Ross about the matter. Paul asked for dialogue on the issues. Ross responded by naming his concerns with Paul and suggesting there is a "demon within" and that Paul's behaviour is inappropriate and abusive. Paul's next letter suggests that they meet with a trained mediator. He also tells Ross that he was troubled to learn that Ross had disclosed confidential matters to the Chair of M & P. and asks that there be no further sharing of private conversations. Paul's next letter in preparation for a Worship Committee meeting expresses regret for how he handled a matter concerning Ross and the Outreach Committee in which Ross was hurt by an accusation that he had violated a trust. Paul says that he chose the lesser of the issues he was concerned about on that occasion. He suggested a way of handling the issue at Worship Committee that he hoped would revolve the conflict.

Paul mentions his relationship with Tom Page who chaired the Board from May to October of 2002. Conflict began with Tom's statement that he was going to stop the waste of money in the church, and continued when he told two committees that he could not believe a word Paul said. In September at a meeting, Tom questioned Paul's integrity and this led to confrontation in which Paul asked if he was being called a liar. Tom said "yes." Tom apologized in October and resigned. Paul says that Gwen criticized him for the way he handled the matter.

Paul includes a letter from Pat Bedford, a letter that was copied to the Review Committee. Paul's reply to the letter is included and in it, he defends himself on each of the points raised.

My mistakes. Paul's sense of himself is that people experience his preaching and worship skills in a positive way. He says that in terms of his pastoral care skills he is loving, attentive and gentle with people. People have returned to the church and his ministry has been effective in reaching all corners of the congregation and community.

However, Paul also notes that some people find his tone of voice and body size intimidating. When his stress level is high, he can be reactive. He contends that he does not lose his temper, but does respond too quickly and at too intense a loudness level, and in a tone that some find intimidating. He mentions steps he takes to keep his stress level down.

Then Paul goes on to say that, people have to learn to take responsibility for themselves in relation to him. In addition, some conflict may be because he is raising issues people don't want to deal with. He wishes he had asked Presbytery for help in his first year at St. Paul's, but when he did ask last year, he felt he did not receive appropriate support.

Paul admits a couple of mistakes specifically. One was confiding personal information with a congregant. The second was encouraging the Board to invite to the planning process people who had issues with the pastors. Complaints that were made about Paul there were left hanging.

The challenge of the church in society today. Paul says that he sees what is happening at St. Paul's as an example of what is happening in the United Church across the country. He contrasts the needs of those who have stayed in the church with those who are outside and will only reenter if it changes. He hoped that St. Paul's would be the kind of church that would meet the needs of more traditional people while creating programs to reach those who have left the church. He notes that there was a lack of a generous spirit among those who resented the new programs.

Further correspondence. In a letter of April 9, 2003 to the Review Committee Paul speaks of his image of a table of grace where all are welcomed and where decisions are made in a collaborative way. He says that all sectors of society do feel welcome, but that a very few members have not been willing to come to the table with their issues, or have insisted on undermining decisions already made by governing bodies. He expresses the hope that the review will achieve a clearing of the air. He says that those with issues must come and lay them on the table or else let them go. He asks that all comments be fully disclosed to him, and asks the Review Committee to call everyone to the table to resolve issues.

Paul includes copies of his replies to David Howell and Alice Ansell. In the first, he deals with the complaint that youth and children's programming is not getting the attention and time from staff that was expected by David. He outlines his reasons why that is so and asks for David's help in supporting the need for more staffing. He explains two issues that were raised by David and shows they have no basis.

The second reply expresses four concerns that Paul has with Alice's inquiry to Cynthia Gunn, legal counsel for The United Church, and with Alice's understanding of what Paul said about ministers who sue the church. He takes issue with her fear about being sued if she speaks her mind and encourages her to speak her mind to the review Committee. He notes that he has responded to the review in a fair and gracious manner.

Section 4: The Review Committee's findings and conclusions

Findings & Conclusions:

The Review Committee was directed, by Muskoka Presbytery, under Section 363 of the United Church Manual to review:

The effectiveness of Ministry Personnel (Rev. Paul Browning)

The failure of Ministry Personnel (Rev. Paul Browning) to maintain the peace and welfare of the church

Regarding the first question, it is the opinion of the Review Committee that we have found no compelling evidence that would lead us to conclude that Rev. Paul Browning is, or was, an ineffective minister.

Regarding the second question, it is the opinion of the Review Committee that the peace and welfare of the church has not been maintained at St. Paul's United Church, but that this is not solely the responsibility, fault or doing of Rev. Paul Browning. Other individuals, groups and situations within the congregation must bear some of the responsibility as well.

Paul's talents, gifts and ministry should not be lost to The United Church of Canada.

EFFECTIVENESS OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL:

The Review Committee acknowledges the concern and issues raised by those who were critical of the ministry of Rev. Browning, but found that they were a very small minority within the congregation at St. Paul's and were not representative of the general opinions held widely throughout the congregation. Of the 131 pieces of correspondence received by the Committee, one expressed no opinion, 106 were unequivocal in their support for Paul and his ministry, 9 were supportive but acknowledged some flaws, and 15 were completely negative and critical. Of the 15 negative pieces of correspondence, the same person, Dwight Engel, wrote three. This ratio of opinions is also reflected in the personal interviews.

A wide range of people in the congregation, representing all ages, and all levels of commitment, both newcomers and people with a life long affiliation to St. Paul's gave verbal and written submissions to the committee. Overwhelmingly, they attested to Paul's willingness and ability to help those in difficulties, his passion and compassion to make the church an inclusive and welcoming community. These letters spoke of his intellectual gifts in preaching, and his ability to blend emotion and intellect in a way that opens the life of faith in Christ to many people. Many of these letters were testimonies of personal crisis overcome with the help and support of a gifted minister.

Even those individuals and they were fewer in number, who had critical comments about Paul's ministry acknowledged his gifts in worship and counseling. Paul himself, in his presentation to the Committee shared with us material that indicated his efforts to remain faithful to the vision of the church expressed in the call that had originally been issued to him and Karen.

The Review Committee acknowledges that the M&P Committee at St. Paul's received verbal and written complaints regarding certain behaviours of Rev. Paul Browning that they believed were not consistent with the conduct of a minister. It is the Review Committee's belief that these concerns may have been a contributing factor to the M&P Committee's decision to ask for a 363 Review. The M&P Committee, however, did not divulge the contents of these complaints and letters to the Review Committee.

During our conversation with the M&P Committee, they expressed their belief that a minister is called to a higher standard of behaviour than other individuals within the church, and that he or she should be a moral example to the community. The Review Committee, in discussing this, recognized that we too have differing views of the responsibility of a minister to live to a higher moral standard and conduct. It is not that these matters are insignificant.

Paul appears to have dealt with at least one of these behaviours in that he reported to the Review Committee "I told him [Ross Greenwood] I HAD SUCCESSFULLY WORKED THROUGH [this issue] WITH MY WIFE IN THERAPY." We have no reason to doubt Paul's statement.

The Review Committee recognizes that Ross Greenwood broke a personal confidence shared with him by Rev. Browning and that this was a contributing factor to the request for the 363 Review. We also feel, though, that Paul showed very poor judgment sharing personal information of a sensitive nature with a parishioner.

FAILURE OF THE MINISTRY PERSONNEL TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE AND WELFARE OF THE CHURCH:

It was evident from many letters that a review of Paul Browning's ministry came as a great and unhappy surprise to many people in the church. As previously noted, the majority of letters and interviews were positive and full of praise. Indeed, people who had only experienced Paul in pastoral and worship situations were consistently surprised to hear that a review was taking place.

The Review Committee finds that Rev. Paul Browning has been faithful to the Visioning Statement of St. Paul's and has helped to build an inclusive community of faith at St. Paul's United Church. Paul has held tenaciously to the Vision and has been creative in finding ways to implement it. Many people, including Catherine Chamberlain, K. Kilbourn, Ken Hammond, B. Nichols, Mary McTavish and Kathleen Prince speak highly of Paul's message of inclusiveness and how there is a sense of vitality and enthusiasm and energy through his

ministry. People have come back to the church because of Paul's ministry and others who do not normally go to church have been attracted, especially because of Paul's skills in alternate worship.

In what we have read and heard we do not find serious resistance to the vision and programs such as 3:30 LIVE! Donna Jean Jeffries and Susan Waring mention that they feel that the traditional, core congregation has been ignored and that some of these people feel that they are not needy enough to warrant attention. The Review Committee does not feel that these complaints nullify Paul Browning's work to fulfill the vision.

David Howell, who was on the committee that called Rev. Browning to St. Paul's, said that Paul was not fulfilling the part of the vision that had to do with youth ministry. Paul acknowledges that he is not fulfilling this part of the mandate. However, we only heard this complaint from one person, and we understand that Paul does not have the time for this work.

For most of the years that Paul and Karen have worked together at St. Paul's there have been budgetary deficits. Month by month the congregation is falling farther behind. Paul says in the material he provided to the Review Committee that this is the biggest single factor producing stress between the Board, Committee members and himself. He says that when a church feels "broke" the stress brings out the worst in everyone.

The Review Committee recognizes that financial pressures are serious and that Paul Browning's continued attempts to get a professionally managed stewardship campaign approved have added to the tensions. In that regard, when the congregation finally approved a campaign by a two-thirds majority, there was dispute about whether the amount approved for the campaign would be the total cost or whether materials and other expenses would be extra. John Dahmer and Alice Ansell say that Paul altered the minutes to read that that the cost approved would only cover the consultant and that other expenses would be extra. We note that Paul did not dispute this allegation when he responded to what the Review Committee reported to him. Regardless, the matter of altered minutes has complicated feelings around this issue.

Dwight Engel takes issue with Paul for using the "Law of Love" as a basis for justifying gambling at the Casino and for suggesting that the use of alcohol is acceptable. Ruth Mary Engel does not like it when Paul tells in sermons of his unhappy childhood. Donna Jean Jeffries, perhaps in a different context, says that Paul just has not grown up and that he is self-destructive. Jennifer Trussler perceives that Paul is working through his anger in his sermons.

The Review Committee does not find that these complaints in and of themselves affect or endanger the peace and welfare of the congregation. We note that the modern style of preaching encourages or allows for more personal sharing by the preacher. We have no opinion as to whether Paul has overdone it in this regard.

We do note that Paul has used sermons to speak of hypocrisy in the congregation, and to offer to resign. His sermon, "Spy Story," is an example of the latter. The Review Committee questions Paul's judgment in using the pulpit in this manner.

Tom Page says that Paul refers to "us" and "them" and Cindy Howell says that Paul has the effect of dividing people by how he moderates discussions. The Review Committee does not believe that Paul sets out to play people off against one another, but something in the way he conducts himself does create divisions between people. He holds opinions strongly, pushes hard for his options and does not easily back down, and that forces people to take sides. Many of those who have served in governance with Paul acknowledge that he can have an aggressive and intimidating style. Some say that Paul works well in committees and listens and will back down when necessary, but N. Homer writes that after meetings she would go home feeling used, manipulated and put down. These differing views are reflective of the way it seems to be with some people reacting positively and others negatively to Paul's leadership.

Many of those who were critical of Paul spoke of their perceptions of his anger and intimidation, and even some who were generally supportive of Paul also mentioned these behaviours. Shirley Johnson says that Paul could benefit from anger management. Jennifer Trussler writes of experiencing Paul's anger and intimidating behaviour. Bill Allison speaks of Paul's passion and energy, but also notes that these attributes also make him appear to be too aggressive, domineering and intimidating in some eyes. Karen Hilfman-Millson in her interview described Paul's body language as intimidating - lowered voice, "puffing up" of chest. Tom Page said in his interview that Paul can be aggressive and intimidating to many people. Hal Taylor in the M & P Committee interview noted that Paul needs help to change his behaviour. He says that Paul's desire is to fight rather than change. He mentions body language, tone of voice and "the look."

The Review Committee is of the opinion that these charges come closest to being the heart of the complaints about Paul Browning, and probably are the reason that other issues have become more serious than they would otherwise have been. Paul does hurt people by ill-considered remarks, and by intimidating comments such as his remarks about lawyers and lawsuits – to Alice Ansell and to members of this Review Committee. People such as Alice Ansell and Krista Cameron say they have experienced being bullied by Paul.

There is a pattern here that cannot be ignored or explained away. Paul himself says that he knows people experience him as being intimidating and aggressive. He acknowledges that he does sometimes stray over the line from assertiveness to aggressiveness, and he says that when that happens he takes responsibility. Clearly, others do not recognize this and have quite a different sense of Paul's behaviour and style.

In interviews and letters, the Review Committee became aware of how many times it was mentioned that Paul apologized for various matters. Paul himself notes that he has

apologized many times to individuals and groups within the church, and mentions five in particular:

to Jennifer Trussler for giving her the impression that his ministry was more important than hers,
to the congregation for the tone of voice he used with the people on the sound board,
to the Board for saying that they had not given him any support when he meant to say the M & P Committee,
in a sermon to those who felt overlooked by him,
to the Chair of Finance for not listening to him.

The evidence of so many apologies is a sign that Paul has behaved in ways that he feels warranted apologies. The Review Committee feels that the repeated need for apologies is a sign that Paul's actions are causing him and others difficulty. He becomes the issue at times rather than the ministry of the church being the prime issue. The Committee also feels that while apologies are important, they cannot take the place of repentance, which involves a genuine commitment to make real changes in one's behaviour.

The Review Committee heard that some people felt manipulated by Paul. N. Homer and David Howell mention this pattern. Alice Ansell says that Paul would frequently arrive at meetings of the Finance Committee with multi-page treatises for them to read, and then expect the committee to present the thoughts as their own. Alan Boyd mentioned becoming aware in the PPT process of how Paul was able to dominate the process. Paul is very articulate and passionate about his ideas and is able to make his points in ways that leave others feeling powerless.

There are two views of Paul's leadership. Some see his style as a sign of strong leadership that makes things happen. Others find his style to be a sign of a domineering leader who does not build consensus. It is evident to the Committee that some people do not feel included in the decision-making process but are alienated. The happy sense of working together in ministry is compromised.

The Review Committee heard a great deal about the PPT (Program Planning Committee) at St. Paul's. The PPT was to be a five-year planning process, but according to Paul, it was also a process that would lead to the hiring of additional staff. Paul therefore asked for Presbytery representatives so that the PPT could also operate as a JNAC. Rev. Don Powell, who was the Chair of Pastoral Relations for the Presbytery at that time agreed to the request. Clearly, there was misunderstanding about the intent of the PPT.

In the matter of his "resignation" from St. Paul's in February 2003, either Paul was not aware of proper procedures or he was manipulating things by submitting his letter of "resignation" to the Board but not simultaneously submitting it to Presbytery as is required for a change in pastoral relations. This left the door open for him to withdraw his resignation.

Other contributing factors considered by the Review Committee:

Role of the M&P Committee of St. Paul's

While honouring and respecting their intentions, the Review Committee finds that the M&P Committee has contributed to the lack of peace and welfare at St. Paul's United Church. In Paul's response to the Review Committee's interim report, he suggests that there would have been no Review if the M& P committee had been functioning reasonably well. The Review Committee acknowledges that many members of this committee were new members and may not have completely understood their roles and responsibilities. To their credit, the M&P Committee tried to organize a party for staff (no one came because of the short notice). M&P tried to implement a "buddy" system between a committee member and staff, which was not successful. They tried to address complaints about Paul directly, and in one instance, Hal Taylor met with Paul and Ross Greenwood in an attempt to mediate between the two. The M&P Committee also requested the assistance of Presbytery's Pastoral Relations Convenor, Rev. Susan Manning. In these instances, the Review Committee believes that the M&P acted in good faith.

However, there were clear signs that M&P caused frustration, anger and confusion for the staff at St. Paul's. The Committee had not met with the ministers for over a year – both Paul and Karen confirm this. No review of their work and remuneration had been conducted though this is clearly mandated in the Manual. Both Paul and Karen refer to the time of the current M&P Committee's tenure as one of "stress" and "anxiety." These comments were supported in statements during interviews by the Board co-chairs Mark and Sandi Bisset and by Board member Dave MacDonald.

Gwen Strachan, the chair of the committee refused to accept the work both ministers and staff had done on finding a replacement for Krista Cameron during Nyla Quinton's maternity leave. This left the staff feeling demeaned, insulted and not respected.

When the Review committee met with M&P, we had already met with two staff members who were positive about the co-operation and relationships among the staff, and highly critical of the M &P Committee. During our discussion with M&P, the Review Committee was repeatedly told "talk to the office staff, they are unhappy." The Review committee sought out the two remaining staff. Again, we heard praise for the ministers, the connection staff had with the ministers, and criticism of the lack of responsiveness of the M &P Committee. This led us to the conclusion that the M&P committee is out of touch with the staff.

Role of Muskoka Presbytery and Toronto Conference Personnel:

The Review Committee heard complaints regarding the role of Muskoka Presbytery and its decision to order a 363 Review of Rev. Paul Browning. Mark Bisset, Co-Chair of the Board of St Paul's, says that he and Sandi Bisset were not made fully aware of the seriousness of a Review when the matter was discussed with Gwen Strachan and Sue Manning. Ross

Greenwood says it must be noted that Presbytery has created confusion in the review process by not providing sufficient information to the Board. Paul Browning, in his response to the Review Committee's summary of what had been heard, questions whether M & P Committees can request reviews. He also says he has reason to believe that Presbytery made a decision to do a Review in January, 2003, and that the trigger was a meeting of the M & P Committee of January 21.

To allay some of our own confusion regarding the timing of events, the Review Committee met with Rev. Susan Manning, Pastoral Relations Convenor on May 12, 2003. This was at the end of the process of collecting information, and of hearing Paul Browning's response to the Committee's interim report.

Rev. Manning says that she did explain to Mark Bisset on two occasions (Feb. 9 and another time, probably Feb. 10) the nature of a 363 Review. Sue acknowledges, though, that Mark may not have "heard" her.

Rev. Manning also says that a decision was not made by the Presbytery to order a Review until February. In her mind, February 15, 2003 was the time when she felt that a Review should be recommended. It was on that date that she received a call from Gwen Strachan, Chair of M&P at St. Paul's. Gwen told Sue that she had been told that Paul had altered the minutes of a Congregational Meeting, and that the Treasurer had resigned. Rev. Manning also acknowledges that she contacted the Toronto Conference Office – Lillian Perigoe – on January 21, 2003, for information regarding 363 Reviews.

The Review Committee hear another disconcerting fact that the Review Committee heard was that Mark Bisset called Sue Manning after being told by a member of St. Paul's congregation, Dwight Engel – a former United Church minister – that a review of Paul Browning's ministry was being ordered. Mark reported this to Rev. Manning on February 19, 2003.

From various threads in this complicated story, the Review Committee concludes that Dwight Engel called Lillian Perigoe in the Conference Office to complain that Presbytery, the Board and the M&P Committee were incompetent and not dealing with the issues at St. Paul's. From something that was said in that phone conversation, Dwight Engel seems to have deduced that a review was being initiated and that he shared his surmising, and it made a tense situation even more difficult.

The Review Committee finds that Muskoka Presbytery has offered various kinds of support to Paul, Karen Hilfman-Millson, Sue Browning and others through Pastoral Relations to help them deal with this crisis. The Presbytery acted in a helpful and careful way in dealing with concerns.

Rev. Don Powell responded to Paul Browning's request for Presbytery to do some training with M&P in the spring of 2002, and while the Chairperson, Gwen Strachan, missed the

meeting, we are not convinced that a second meeting with her in attendance would have done anything to resolve the problems that M & P were dealing with.

The Review Committee feels that Sue Manning, in many meetings with M&P and in numerous phone calls, made an extraordinary effort to help the M&P Committee work through the issues they were facing. We do not find that she erred in exercising the duties of her office. She may have downplayed the seriousness of a 363 Review in discussions with Mark Bisset and with Paul Browning, preferring to focus on the potential of such a review to resolve issues and produce positive results for all concerned. Her intentions were honourable.

It must be noted that Sue Manning, Alan Boyd and Anna Arnold (who attended the PPT on behalf of Presbytery), and the Presbytery Executive, heard only the negative information in the period leading up to the decision to initiate a review. They heard about issues that were of a persistent and serious nature, and consequently decided that a review was necessary. They did not have the advantage of hearing from the many people who have come forward to speak eloquently and passionately on behalf of the effectiveness of Paul Browning's ministry.

The Review Committee understands that the M&P Committee did not take their concerns about Rev. Browning and his ministry to the Board of St. Paul's as some have suggested they should have done. The Review Committee cannot answer the question as to whether that course of action would have resolved things "in house" and avoided the need for a 363 Review.

Section 5: The Review Committee's recommendations.

The Review Committee makes the following recommendations:

That Rev. Paul Browning shall be directed to take a course of study as determined by a Toronto Conference officer and that the issue to be considered is:

Confrontational style of ministry

This training shall be completed within six months. Any fees for this course of study, and Rev. Browning's time completing this course shall be paid for by St. Paul's United Church.

That with the agreement and willingness of both parties, Rev. Paul Browning and Mr. Ross Greenwood enter into mediation or other method of conflict resolution, with a trained mediator, paid for by St. Paul's United Church.

That Muskoka Presbytery recommends to the Board of St. Paul's United Church that Dwight Engel, a member of St. Paul's United Church not be permitted to participate in the governance of St. Paul's for a minimum period of two years.

That Muskoka Presbytery recommends to the Board of St. Paul's United Church that it recognize the struggle of the current Ministry and Personnel Committee at St. Paul's and dismiss them with thanks for their efforts. The Committee further recommends that Muskoka Presbytery provide training for a new Ministry and Personnel Committee, which would be appointed by the Board.

That Muskoka Presbytery recommends to the Board of St. Paul's United Church that St. Paul's proceeds with a stewardship campaign, but that Rev. Paul Browning not be an organizer or leader of such a campaign. The Committee recommends that Rev. Karen Hilfman-Millson provide the ministerial leadership for this campaign.

That Muskoka Presbytery support individuals, groups and the congregation as a whole of St. Paul's United Church in a meaningful way, by preparing and leading a service of reconciliation and healing.

Motion passed by Presbytery Executive - June 16, 2003

1. That the Rev Paul Browning is directed to take training as determined by a Toronto Conference officer. The issues to be considered are anger management, boundaries and polity, power and control, and other issues related to a confrontational style of ministry.

This training shall be completed within six months. Any fees for this training will be paid by St. Paul's United Church, Muskoka Presbytery, and Rev. Paul Browning on an equal basis. Rev. Browning's time completing the training will be paid for by St. Paul's United Church. This process shall be overseen by the Presbytery Chair of Ministry, Personnel and Education and the Conference Personnel Minister.

- 2. With the agreement and willingness of both parties Rev. Paul Browning and Mr. Ross Greenwood are encouraged to enter into mediation or another method of conflict resolution with a trained mediator, paid for by St. Paul's United Church.**
- 3. Muskoka Presbytery directs the Chair of Pastoral Relations to provide ongoing training and support to the Ministry and Personnel Committee of St. Paul's United Church.**
- 4. Muskoka Presbytery recommends to the Board of St. Paul's United Church if St. Paul's proceeds with a Stewardship Campaign, Rev. Paul Browning not be an organizer or leader of such a campaign.**
- 5. As a first step toward healing and reconciliation, Muskoka Presbytery recommends to the Board of St. Paul's United Church that it invite the Emergency Response Team of Toronto Conference to help in this process.**
- 6. Muskoka Presbytery will appoint a Pastoral Charge Supervisor for St. Paul's for the next six months.**