

Religion

Moral standards divide Presbyterian church

by DAVID BRIGGS
The Associated Press

Goodbye, Hester Prynne. Hello, justice-love.

A committee of the church of John Calvin — the same church that once pilloried sexual transgressors in New England town squares, the same tradition that was the focus of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* — now says sex outside of marriage is OK, as long as it is linked to "justice-love."

Premarital sex, homosexuality, bisexuality — a whole range of activities long considered sinful by most Christian churches — should be encouraged if the partners are genuinely consenting adults, according to the report, which goes before the 203rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) this month.

"Heterosexism" is the new sin, and "what matters most is not narrowly whether sexually active adults are married or not, but rather whether they embody justice-love in their relating," according to the report.

This has not been received with Christian equanimity. There has been a firestorm of opposition within the church, including hostile overtures urging rejection of the report from more than 80 of the church's 171 presbyteries.

"Well, I have been cheerfully wished to the nether regions by many people," laughed Rev. Elizabeth Johnson, a member of the General Assembly Special Committee on Human Sexuality. "The church is in flames over this."

The report comes more than two decades after North American culture has undergone a revolution in sexual mores. But it comes at a time when other mainline churches are struggling bitterly over the moral acceptability of homosexuality, and there is ebbing support in society at large for greater sexual freedom.

"Though it may be rejected, I think this will be viewed eventually as a place where the church confronted a problem and wrestled with it," said John Mulder, president of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary.

But Mulder and others fear that the confrontational nature of the report has so angered church members that sexual issues will be pushed back into a Puritan closet.

"This is just a strategic blunder of the first order. . . . It's just too much," said Hartford Seminary Dean William McKinney.

Like most Christian churches, the Presbyterian Church has long held sexual relations should be reserved for marriage.

Until the Presbyterian report, the push for changing sexual attitudes within the church had largely been limited to homosexuality. It is argued that the church does not allow gays any forum for sexual expression since it only blesses heterosexual marriages.

One major Protestant body, the United Church of Christ, allows ordination of active homosexuals.

In the Episcopal Church, the Standing Commission on Human Affairs is recommending that local

dioceses be allowed to ordain homosexuals. In a straw vote in February, a United Methodist study committee indicated its opposition to the church's stand that homosexual practice is incompatible with Christian teaching.

But the Presbyterian report stands out because it is the first to take on such a wide range of moral standards, including the importance of the institution of marriage.

"It may be said simply: Where there is justice-love, sexual expression has ethical integrity. That moral principle applies to single, as well as to married persons, to gay, lesbian and bisexual persons, as well as to heterosexual persons. The moral norm for Christians ought not be marriage, but rather justice-love," the report said. Justice-love is defined in the report as "right-relatedness with self and others."

The report is a best-seller. The typical committee report generates a request for 50 copies; some 27,000 copies of the sexuality report already have been ordered, church officials said.

But the initial reviews have not been favorable.

"It's pure anger, almost every-

where. I've never seen the church so incensed," said Marj Carpenter, church communications director.

Rev. Michael Bullard, a committee member who endorsed a minority report supporting the church's current stands, said the church allows a wide range of biblical interpretation. But the majority report "gives the appearance to people that they just threw the Bible out."

Supporters of the sexuality statement say it is the fear of sex, and homophobia in particular, that is

motivating many of their critics.

For many critics, the report is not suspect for the issues it raises, but the way it raises them. They fear a backlash against homosexuals and other sexual minorities, and a growing alienation of the membership from the church bureaucracy in the 2.9 million-member denomination.

"It was written with a few people's idea of what's right and truth, and not with a real idea of communication to whom it is addressed," Bullard said.

Whatever action is taken on the report, it is sure to dominate the discussion at the June General Assembly, said Stated Clerk James Andrews.

"I have a feeling by the time we get finished with sex, we'll be too tired for anything else."



Westwood Church
2658 Ospika Blvd.
562-3711
Pastor: Rev. Mel Fehr
Rev. Steve McPherson
Be Part of the Family

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
(Staffed Child Care Available)

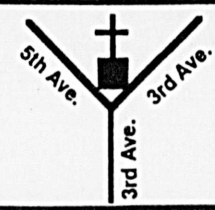
"Celebrating Our Commitment"
Rev. Herb Neufeld

2:30 p.m. - Official Opening
7:00 p.m. - Musical "Jubilate"

SINGLE? DIVORCED? SINGLE PARENT? OR FOR SOME OTHER REASON FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE IN CHURCH?

Come Join Us At New Hope Fellowship
Sunday - 11:00 a.m.
409 Cassiar St.
(Corner of 3rd & 5th Ave.)

NEW HOPE FELLOWSHIP
PRINCE GEORGE SQUARE GOSPEL CHURCH
561-0007
"We promise to love you just the way you are"



Church Services

Evangelical Free Church
5th & Killoren Crescent
564-5889
Pastor Bill Meier
Asst. Pastor: Phil Pudlas
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
11 a.m. Worship Service
7 p.m. Evening Inspiration
Mid-week Youth Activities
"Let God Be Glorified"

Fort George Baptist Church
1600 Johnson St.
Phone 564-6287
Rev. Gordon Freiter, Pastor

Sunday School 9:30
Worship Service 10:45 a.m.
Message: "A Workman Approved by God"
Evening Service 7 p.m.
Guest Speaker Rev. E. Hoffman
Film: *The Church - God's Instrument for Changing the World*
Everyone Welcome
Staffed Nursery Available

First Baptist Church
Fifth and Gillett St.
Phone: 564-4522
Pastor: Dr. Lance Morgan
Assistant Pastors Rev. Wally Krahn, Dietrich Desmarais
9:45 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL
11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship
7 p.m. - Evening Service
"Wednesday Bible Study 8 p.m."
Phone 564-4522
between 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Everyone Welcome

St. Michael & All Angels Anglican Church OF CANADA
1505-5th Avenue
564-4511
Archdeacon David Ellis
Reverend Catherine Hall

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Book of Common Prayer

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
BAS Contemporary with Baptism

Nursery

Weekday Services:
9:30 a.m. Wednesday and
12:10 p.m. Thursday

College Heights Baptist Church
Corner Domano & Moriarty Cres.
964-4181

9:30 Sunday School for all ages

11:00 a.m. Morning Worhip
"Graduation Sunday"
Pastor Richards Speaking
7:00 p.m. Evening Worship
The Brazil Report
Nursery available at all services.
Everyone Welcome

Lakes Community Church
(Nukko Lake)

Church Service 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Nursery Provided
Pastor: Dan Estabrook
967-4220

KING'S IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
278 Hart Highway at Houghtaling Rd.
SUNDAYS
Worship 10:00 a.m.
M. Misch Pastor
963-7053 or 563-8836

Church of Christ
933 Patricia Blvd. 562-0502
Sunday 10:00 a.m. Bible Study
11:00 a.m. Morning Worship
Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Class
Ministers: Tom Harrelson - 562-0987

Hartland Baptist Church
6599 Driftwood Rd.
962-8641
Senior Pastor Cliff Pedersen
Assistant Pastor: Dean Crandall
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Morning Worship
7:00 p.m. Evening Service
Babysitting Provided

Knox United Church
1448-5th Ave. (Downtown)
Rev. Nelson Rajotte

Worship 10:00 a.m.
Sermon "Who is Out of Synch?"
Inquiries 564-7822 or 563-3772

St. Andrew's United Church
3555 - 5th Ave.
563-9167

10:00 a.m. Worship
Picnic in Rainbow Park
Rev. David Wood
Nursery Provided

Mount Tabor United Church
BONNETT HILL
Old Giscome Hwy. at Sommerville Rd.
Morning Service 11:30 a.m.
Interim Pastor Cliff Dietrich
963-7083
Everyone Welcome

Emmanuel United Church
HART HIGHLANDS
4020 Balsum (Across from Joe Martin Ball Field)
Morning Service 9:30 a.m.
963-7083 - 962-6607
Interim Pastor Cliff Dietrich

Bethel Baptist Church
459 Cassiar
562-2242

Pastor: Arthur Schlak
562-7498
Sundays: 9:40 a.m.

Deutscher Gottesdienst
Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
Bible Study

Grace Church
Anglican Church of Canada

We Welcome You to Our Log Church
2640 Goheen St. (at Forest Ave. 1 Blk. West of Flashing Light Off Ospika)
Rev. Roger Cooper
562-5611

June 9 - Parish Picnic at West Lake
8 a.m. Service at the Church
10:30 Eucharist at West Lake

Christian Reformed Church

20th and Willow
962-6287
Pastor Andrew Vander Leek
564-7197

Worship Services 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Listen to the Back to God Hour
Sunday 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. on BCFM

Visitors Welcome

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
LC-C
180 Tabor Blvd.
562-2777

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
8:00 - The Lutheran Hour
94.3 FM Radio
9:45 - Sunday School and Adult Bible Class
11:00 - Worship Service

We Warmly Welcome You To Worship With Us
MIDWEEK BROADCASTS

Community Volunteer Coordinator for: **"FOCUS ON THE FAMILY"**
Monday - Friday 7:30 p.m. Weeknights - 620 AM Radio

Kelly Road Gospel Chapel
7046 S. Kelly Rd.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus The Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5)

Sunday 11 a.m.
Family Bible Hour & Sunday School 7p.m.
The Lord's Supper (Breaking of Bread) Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
Come and bring a friend!
563-8983 or 563-4876
CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

Our Saviour's Lutheran

Corner of Ospika & Dufferin
Pastor A. Ronald Sedo
Vacation Bible School Aug. 19 - 23, 1991
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Everyone welcome!
"A Friendly Church serving Christ and the community"
Church Office - 564-4336

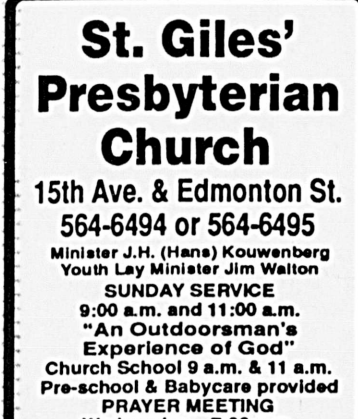
The Salvation Army
777 Ospika Blvd.
Sunday Services
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Holiness Meeting
7:00 p.m. Salvation Meeting
Corps Officers Captains Paul & Jo Anne Gilbert
561-0414

St. Giles' Presbyterian Church

15th Ave. & Edmonton St.
564-6494 or 564-6495

Minister J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg
Youth Lay Minister Jim Walton

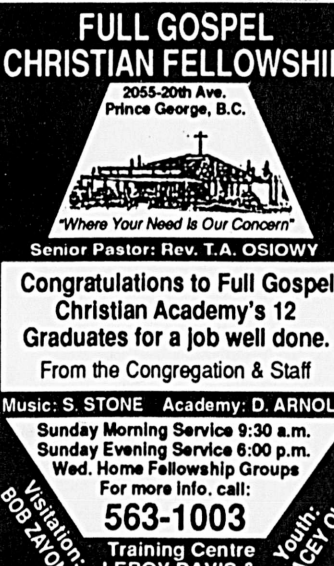
SUNDAY SERVICE
9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
"An Outdoorsman's Experience of God"
Church School 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.
Pre-school & Babycare provided
PRAYER MEETING
Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.



Lakewood Alliance Church
4001 - 5th Avenue
Prince George, B.C.

Pastors: Ed Drewlo & Don Dyck
9:45 a.m. Sunday Bible School
A Class for Every Age
11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Message: "LIFE OF HONOUR"
6:30 p.m. Church Family Gathering
"How Satan Works On You"
Call 564-8737



FULL GOSPEL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
2055-20th Ave.
Prince George, B.C.

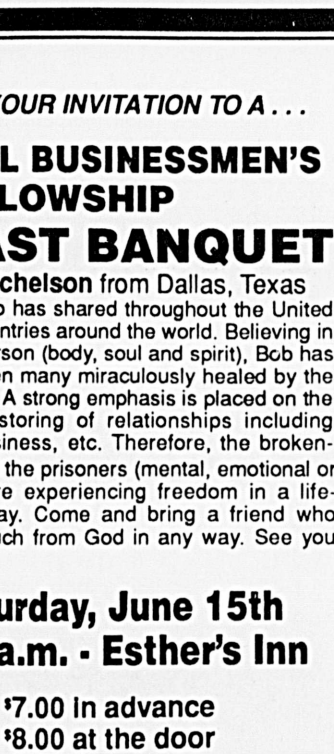
"Where Your Need Is Our Concern"
Senior Pastor: Rev. T.A. OSIOWY

Congratulations to Full Gospel Christian Academy's 12 Graduates for a job well done.
From the Congregation & Staff

Music: S. STONE Academy: D. ARNOLD

Sunday Morning Service 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 8:00 p.m.
Wed. Home Fellowship Groups
For more info. call:
563-1003

Visitation: BOB ZAVONC
Youth: STACEY OIG



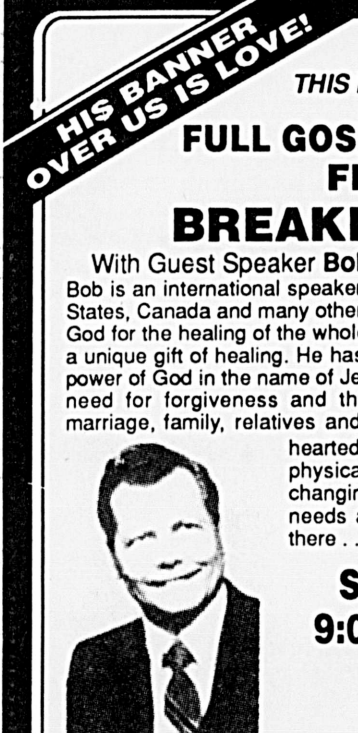
THIS IS YOUR INVITATION TO A . . .

FULL GOSPEL BUSINESSMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST BANQUET

With Guest Speaker **Bob Nicholson** from Dallas, Texas
Bob is an international speaker who has shared throughout the United States, Canada and many other countries around the world. Believing in God for the healing of the whole person (body, soul and spirit), Bob has a unique gift of healing. He has seen many miraculously healed by the power of God in the name of Jesus. A strong emphasis is placed on the need for forgiveness and the restoring of relationships including marriage, family, relatives and business, etc. Therefore, the broken-hearted and the prisoners (mental, emotional or physical) are experiencing freedom in a life-changing way. Come and bring a friend who needs a touch from God in any way. See you there . . .

Saturday, June 15th
9:00 a.m. - Esther's Inn

*7.00 in advance
*8.00 at the door



ATTEND THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE

Prince George Native Pentecostal Church
150 Quebec Street
Prince George, B.C.
V2L 1W2 - Ph. 561-1220

SUNDAY
Sunday School - 10 a.m.
Morning Worship - 11 a.m.
Evening Service - 6 p.m.
Pre-service Prayer - 5:30 p.m.
Monday - Womens Ministries 7 - 9 p.m.
Tuesday - Evening Prayer 7 p.m.
Wednesday - Family Night 7-9 p.m.
Thursday - Morning Prayer 10-11 a.m.