

November 1, 1997

**Report to the President  
for the White House Conference On Hate Crimes**

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**Prepared by:  
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Mr. President:

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) was founded in 1968 to provide welcoming and affirming Christian churches in which members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities could develop positive faith and spirituality.

In the intervening three decades, the ministers, members and property of the UFMCC congregations have been the targets of hate crimes at a level virtually unparalleled in American society.

The member churches of the UFMCC offer a spiritual message of joy and faith, but this message has been met with a wave of hate crimes which seek to intimidate our members and silence our message. We will not be silenced.

Mr. President, on behalf of the 42,000 members of the UFMCC and the more than 225,000 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons whose lives are touched by UFMCC ministries each year, we implore you to exercise your leadership and moral authority to protect the rights of our country's gay and lesbian citizens.

Three points are especially worthy of note:

First, an astounding 7% of UFMCC congregations have been targets of arson or fire-bombing over the last three decades. Based upon our internal research, we believe this to be a higher figure than for any other institution – religious, political or civic – in American society.

Second, the overwhelming majority of these hate crimes directed at the UFMCC have "flown beneath the radar" of public perception, failing to come to the attention of the American public. We believe the fact that this ongoing wave of hate crimes against our churches and people has been virtually ignored by the printed press, the electronic and broadcast media and the civil authorities reflects a systemic, societal view which devalues America's gay and lesbian citizens.

Third, and finally, UFMCC is unique within American society for attacks based on twin hate crimes motivations: hate crimes motivated against our spiritual beliefs and hate crimes motivated against our members' predominant sexual orientation.

The stain of hate crimes motivated against sexual orientation has left a blot upon the fabric of America's commitment to "liberty and justice for all."

In 1977, I attended the first-ever White House meeting with representatives of the gay and lesbian communities. In meetings with members of the White House staff and in conversations with President Jimmy Carter, I pleaded for the use of presidential leadership to protect and affirm the equality of America's gay and lesbian citizens.

I am saddened that today, twenty years later, our members still lose their jobs solely because of their sexual orientation... our worship services are still threatened... our churches are still victimized by the hate crimes of vandalism, intimidation and desecration. Our nation is better than this. Our people deserve better than this.

Discrimination, bigotry and hatred against any of our citizens is discrimination against our nation's highest and most noble ideals.

Mr. President, do not let your legacy in this area be the status quo. It is my studied opinion that the gay and lesbian communities have been patient – remarkably patient – in awaiting the same protections afforded to other citizens. As with every oppressed group, history teaches that if these injustices are not adequately addressed and remedied, we will face reaction and backlash.

It was President Theodore Roosevelt who said, "The American people are slow to wrath. But once their anger is kindled, it burns like a consuming fire." Mr. President, let us join hands to effect adequate remedies to quench the fires of injustice while working to fan the flames of liberty for all citizens.

Mr. President, you are now presented with a remarkable opportunity to improve and protect the lives of gay and lesbian citizens, an opportunity afforded by your own leadership in convening the White House Conference on Hate Crimes. It is our fervent prayer that this opportunity may be translated into a reality for all American citizens.

Submitted by:

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and

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November, 1997  
A Partial Catalog of Hate Crimes Committed  
Against the Ministers, Members and Property of the  
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles, 1973

Los Angeles, California

An "intentional fire of suspicious origin" was the official conclusion for the fire which destroyed the UFMCC "Mother Church" located at 22nd and Union. Though the fire proved to be arson, no charges were ever filed. The worship facility sustained \$90,000 in damages.

Metropolitan Community Church of Nashville, 1973

Nashville, Tennessee

Police evidenced little concern over this fire which totally destroyed the worship facility of this new congregation, even though other establishments serving the gay community had been destroyed in recent months. The church lost all of its possessions, including altar vessels, vestments and organ.

Metropolitan Community Church of New Orleans, 1973

New Orleans, Louisiana

This deliberate fire caused the deaths of the church pastor, associate pastor and ten members of the congregation. The fire started on a Sunday evening, claiming the lives of one-third of the church's membership. No one was ever charged with this crime.

Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco, 1973

San Francisco, California

This worship facility was totally destroyed by arson. The arson followed death threats against the church's pastor, the Rev. James Sandmire. The threats had been scrawled on the church doors. The loss was valued at over \$100,000.

West Bay Metropolitan Community Church, 1974

Santa Monica, California

This chapel was gutted by fire, only four days before a scheduled same-sex wedding was to take place. Telephone threats to the church were received prior to the fire. The building sustained \$20,000 in damages.

Trinity Metropolitan Community Church, 1974

Riverside, California

Only three weeks after being burglarized and vandalized, the church was destroyed by an early Sunday fire which caused \$32,000 in damages.

King of Peace Metropolitan Community Church, 1976

St. Petersburg, Florida

An early morning fire totally destroyed the church and all of its contents. The church was insured for \$34,000.

Casa de Cristo MCC, 1977

Phoenix, Arizona

Forty-five minutes before the evening worship service, the worship facility was fire-bombed. Damages were estimated at more than \$30,000. In the months preceding the arson, the church was subject to a wave of hate crimes, including threatening letters and phone calls, theft, damage to cars during worship services – culminating in the October arson.

Metropolitan Community Church of Tampa, 1977

Tampa, Florida

This church was victimized by hate crimes, including vandalism and desecration which resulted in \$8000 in damages and loss. The Rev. John Hose arrived at the church to find the cross had been torn from the cupola, stained glass windows had been shattered, walls were splattered with eggs, the air conditioning unit has been destroyed, and the church sign torn down.

MCC of the Twin Cities, 1977

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Worship services led by Pastor Joan Johnson were interrupted by vandals who spray-painted obscenities on the church walls.

MCC of the Resurrection, 1978

Houston, Texas

The Ku Klux Klan initiated a campaign of harassment against this congregation which included threats (including death threats) by phone and letter against the pastor, the Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey, and the church. A Ku Klux Klan cross was burned on the church property.

Christ Chapel Metropolitan Community Church, 1979

Santa Ana, California

This church facility was totally destroyed by a fire which was ruled to be arson. The fire occurred at 1 AM, just two hours after a threat on Pastor Roger Harrison's life was recorded on the church's answering machine. The building was an historic site: the home of the first Jewish synagogue ever constructed in Orange County.

"Our House" Ministry of MCC Baltimore, 1980

Baltimore, Maryland

This facility which housed Cuban refugees, the majority of whom were gay or lesbian, was burned to the ground. This facility was a ministry of MCC Baltimore.

Metropolitan Community Church of Baltimore, 1982

Baltimore, Maryland

This fire resulted in \$1.25 million in damages to this worship facility, and the loss of all property and supplies owned by this MCC congregation. This congregation had experienced on-going harassment from local juveniles, including threats on the day of the fire.

MCC of the New Reformation, 1982

Columbia, Missouri

This church was victimized by an on-going campaign of community hostility, threats and hate

crimes. On two occasions, people entered the church facility during worship services and desecrated the building by pouring coffee through the building and breaking raw eggs. Raw eggs were also thrown at the cars of worshipers. The pastor's son was subject to taunts and verbal abuse by local adults. Threatening phone calls were made to the church office. And a church board member's home was broken into and vandalized.

Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta, 1982  
Atlanta, Georgia

The church's worship facility was set ablaze by an arsonist. In the month's preceding this arson, the facility had repeatedly been vandalized and desecrated. Firefighters brought the blaze under control, and the fire did not affect any of the adjacent buildings.

St. Luke's Metropolitan Community Church, 1982 and 1983  
Jacksonville, Florida

This congregation holds the dubious distinction of being the only UFMCC congregation to twice be fire-bombed, once in 1982 and again in 1983. The 1982 fire nearly destroyed the building and its contents, including the pews, pulpit, heating and air conditioning system, and altar. The 1983 attack was more confined, resulting in smoke damage and the destruction of the church's carpeting as well as vandalized windows.

Metropolitan Community Church of Joplin, 1983  
Joplin, Missouri

The worship facility of this congregation was destroyed by fire – part of a campaign of community harassment against the church's worshipers. Gay-owned or gay-friendly facilities were picketed by locals who hurled anti-gay slogans and threats in public. The escalating level of harassment resulted in the resignation of the church pastor, who feared for his life.

Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, 1985  
Dallas, Texas

Damage was done to this church facility by vandals who desecrated the worship facility.

The Rev. Virgil Scott, 1986  
Pastor, MCC of Stockton, California

After more than a year of threats against the Rev. Virgil Scott and his predominantly gay and lesbian congregation, Pastor Scott was brutally murdered. Evidence indicates that Rev. Scott was interrupted while engaged in church-related work. His body was severely beaten and he was stabbed seven to ten times. Prior to his death, shots had been fired at his car, and death threats left on his answering machine.

Metropolitan Community Church of Silverlake, 1991  
Los Angeles, California

The church was broken into and vandalized and desecrated. Paint was splashed in the sanctuary, the social hall and the pastor's office.

Ke Anuenue O Ke Aloha Metropolitan Community Church, 1993  
Honolulu, Hawaii

After publicly announcing the church's support for legalized gay marriage, both the church's pastor, the Rev. Justin Tanis, and the congregation, received telephone death threats. Threats against the pastor and congregation were also posted on the church doors.

Metropolitan Community Church of Richmond, 1994  
Richmond, VA

Stained glass windows in the church's sanctuary were destroyed by vandals. On the same evening, two Jewish synagogues in the vicinity were similarly desecrated.

Good Samaritan Metropolitan Community Church, 1994  
Whittier, California

The church was vandalized and windows were broken shortly after this congregation moved into their new worship facility. During this time, telephone threats were received and workers entering and departing from worship services were picketed and heckled.

MCC Shepherd of the Plains, 1996  
Great Falls, Montana

Following Pastor Gina L. Hartung's appearance in the local media, this church was vandalized and desecrated. An inverted cross was spray painted on the church's front door, and other graffiti included spray-painted swastikas, the number "666," and Satanic symbols.

Church of the Trinity MCC, 1996-97  
Bradenton, Florida

In February of 1996, two worshipers were assaulted by a youth gang as they left a church function. Between March and May of 1996, the church was subjected to ten incidents of petty vandalism, including destruction of porch enclosures, breaking of church benches, and the uprooting of shrubbery. In May of 1996, youths yelled anti-gay slogans at people entering for worship service. In September of 1997, the church was vandalized, the offices burglarized, and a fire was set in the church office. The incident resulted in \$6000 in damages to the facility. In February of 1997, the church's public sign was defaced with anti-gay slogans.