

KNOX COLLEGE, CANADA | SPRING 2022

# VOCATIONS

*Gaining perspective*  
THROUGH AVIATION & THEOLOGY



ALSO: RETHINKING YOUTH MINISTRY;  
& FROM CORPORATE MARKETER TO PSYCHOTHERAPIST

# Isaac is Born

A POEM BY KNOX STUDENT  
FIONA VAN WISSEN

a child's gurgling delight  
the teary laughter of an old woman  
long past hoping  
long past dreaming

Now receiving  
New Life  
from her barren body

Laughter is born  
and all creation  
laughs with her.

During her "Reading the Old Testament" course at Knox, student Fiona van Wissen wrote several pieces of poetry, including the poem above. As the global pandemic continues, the story of Isaac's birth reminds us of a deeper hope – which carries us forward even when we also feel "long past hoping." *We pray for all those who have been struggling to hold onto hope this winter; may they find new life with each hint of spring.*



## VOCATIONS

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Please send comments, changes of address, or requests for mailing list removal to us at [knox.college@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.college@utoronto.ca), 416-978-8738, or:

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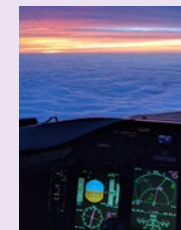
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Editor: Stephanie Hanna

Special thanks to Helen Cheung, Wan-Kit Keng, and Nam Soon Song for translating the Principal's Message.

Page 2 photo by Anastasiia from Pexels.



**ON THE COVER:** On the ground, the scene was snowy and gray, but above the clouds Claire could see the sunset. *Inset:* Claire Lemiski is a Knox College student and an airline pilot. See story on pages 6-8. Photos by Claire Lemiski.

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KNOX COLLEGE

# FROM CORPORATE MARKETER TO PSYCHOTHERAPIST God, Google, and a new path

By Olushola Oludipe

“O Canada, we stand on guard for thee; O Canada, we stand on guard for thee...” As the final notes of the Canadian national anthem coming from my laptop trailed off, I couldn’t keep from smiling.

With the conclusion of this virtual ceremony on November 6, 2021, I was now a Nigerian Canadian citizen. A citizen well on his way to becoming a registered psychotherapist. A spiritual care provider supporting patients, their families, and staff in a major hospital in the GTA. And soon to be a graduate of the Master of Pastoral Studies program at Knox College.

*What a journey it had been. Five years earlier, I was working in Dubai as a marketer for a multinational corporation, a career path I was on for 15 years. I thought about how just a few years had taken me from Dubai to Toronto, and from working in multinational corporate marketing to providing psycho-spiritual care. . . .*

It was 2:50pm, and I was about to put the finishing touches on the marketing training curriculum to be rolled out in the next business cycle. I had plenty of time to get the document to my director by the 4pm deadline.

When I heard Tatiana’s greeting, I looked up to see her standing in front of my desk with a worried expression on her face. As she began to share about her struggle, I was immediately drawn in. She told me about a difficult choice she faced – whether to remain in her promising finance career, or to call it quits and pursue her desired MBA program. “And how does Andrei feel about this?” I asked, understanding that the relationship would be at the front of her mind.



“He isn’t a fan of me leaving my job, as that means I will have to leave the country. He is afraid that might end our relationship,” she replied.

When our conversation ended more than two hours later, I suddenly realized I had missed my 4pm deadline. I had been drawn into yet another important but personal conversation – the fourth of its kind that week. “Not again!” I muttered. I remembered my director’s subtle jab about me running a private therapy practice on company time. Given how many colleagues had been approaching me recently, he wasn’t entirely wrong! Word had spread that I had just finished training to be a life coach, and people wanted to talk.

I had been a marketer for several years with four different multinational companies when I invested in career coaching for myself. I could continue working as a marketer, but I could see that it didn’t give me much satisfaction. Career coaching revealed that I’d do better working as a coach, therapist, or trainer, something more people-facing and interactive. With this

knowledge and seeing how many conversations I had assisting colleagues, I decided to pursue something in those areas, something that I knew deep down would make me happy. But what exactly would that be?

I found Knox College thanks to Google! After working in the secular world for most of my life, I knew I now wanted to go to a seminary or another religion-connected school. I wanted to pursue something I was suited to, and where I’d also be helping people. Googling led me to Knox.

Initially I was just looking for a Christian program that I would find interesting; I didn’t really know what to look for. Then on Knox’s website, I came across the Master of Pastoral Studies degree and read about the psychotherapy focus. That was something I had been looking for; I just hadn’t thought I could get this training in a Christian school. It piqued my interest, I went to the Master of Pastoral Studies open house, and I decided to apply to Knox.

I learned a great deal about myself as I’ve gone through this program. One of the valuable elements has been Clinical Pastoral Education, which is a combination of supervised hands-on and professional training for spiritual care workers. It’s a requirement for students pursuing the Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy Certificate in the Master of Pastoral Studies degree. The process includes sharing struggles, reactions, and insights in a small group setting – and it was really helpful. Understanding and accepting my own issues can equip me to better provide spiritual care. We can use learning about ourselves as a platform to help, treat, and support patients.

In my time at Knox, I also felt very well cared-for as a student by my director and course advisor. Professor Angela Schmidt, director of the MPS, makes sure the program is successful –and she also goes out of her way in guidance and interaction with us as students.

As I look to the future, I have a few ideas in mind. One is to explore how I can utilize computer animation to assist with psychotherapy. I was accepted at the Toronto Film School for an animation program

at about the same time as I received the offer of acceptance from Knox. I decided I’d pursue the Knox program first to get trained in psychotherapy before moving to animation. That foundation would make it easier for me to then work with animation in psychotherapy. I needed the skills as a therapist first to know what I was doing. Now I’m able to see even more clearly how those elements can work together.

Long-term, I’d like to use artificial intelligence to make therapy easier for people. For example, in one of the required course texts for our Psycho-Spiritual Assessment and Therapy course at Knox in 2020, I read about an organization that uses virtual reality in what is called “avatar therapy” to help people dealing with schizophrenia. Patients described the kind of negative voice they heard and any mental images of it, so that the organization could create an avatar representation. Then in a simulation room in virtual reality, the patient saw and interacted with the animated image. The patient was put in a position of strength to resist the negative interaction with the avatar – and the results were successful for some patients. I believe that with further research, this technology could assist in other areas of mental health as well – for instance, using animation to help kids overcome known fears.

What brought me to Knox was unusual, but I’m grateful that God used Google to point me here. Knox as a community is a beautiful place to be; I formed a lot of friendships there. As an immigrant, forming relationships in Canada wasn’t always easy – but Knox helped me to do so, and to begin to get a sense of the Canadian culture as well. The Knox environment made life quite enjoyable for me, and now I’ve found this career path that merges my skills with what’s meaningful. I’m excited about the future. ■

*Olushola (Shola) Oludipe is a student in Knox College’s Master of Pastoral Studies and Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy Certificate program. He has achieved qualifying status with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario.*

*“Understanding and accepting my own issues can equip me to better provide spiritual care. We can use learning about ourselves as a platform to help, treat, and support patients.”*

Far left: Dave Lee and Olushola Oludipe at Knox College community lunch on Orientation Day, 2019.

Below: Olushola Oludipe in class at Knox, 2019. Photos by Stephanie Hanna.



*“The heavens declare the glory of God,” begins Psalm 19, “and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”* As an airline pilot, I never cease to marvel at the beauty of creation as seen from the air – whether it is the promise of a new day at sunrise, or the sense of peace that comes with millions of stars dotting the night sky.

## Gaining perspective

### MY PASSION FOR AVIATION & THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

By Claire Lemiski

ONE DAY IN FEBRUARY, we were waiting to take off and it was snowing; the world was grey. And yet, within a minute after departure we were above the clouds, and everything was golden as the sun began to set. Flying gives me a sense of perspective that I sometimes lose on the ground.

Not unlike flying, theological studies have also given me a new way of seeing things. My journey to Knox College started almost 10 years before I became a student here. As a student away at a flight school in British Columbia, I received a care package from my home congregation, Trafalgar Presbyterian Church in Oakville, Ontario. The package included a note of encouragement from a church member named Monica, whom I had never met. When I returned to Ontario, Monica became both my elder and my friend. We sang together in the choir, and I continued to benefit from her encouragement as we talked about life and faith. I was heart-broken when she passed away a few years later, after a battle with cancer.

Throughout our conversations, Monica had often wondered if I had ever considered theological education. I value lifelong learning and saw it as a potential means to dig deeper into my faith, but I didn't know how I could do that while also pursuing my vocation as a pilot.

Then I started attending Knox's Tuesday afternoon community chapel services in 2016. As a pilot doing shift work, I was often away on weekends – but I was available for services on Tuesdays. As I met students, faculty, and staff, I discovered that there were options to study part-time and online. I enrolled the following academic year. One of my first assignments was to write a funeral homily. I wrote mine for Monica, as a way of honouring her deep and abiding faith, and her influence on me and this new journey on which I was embarking.

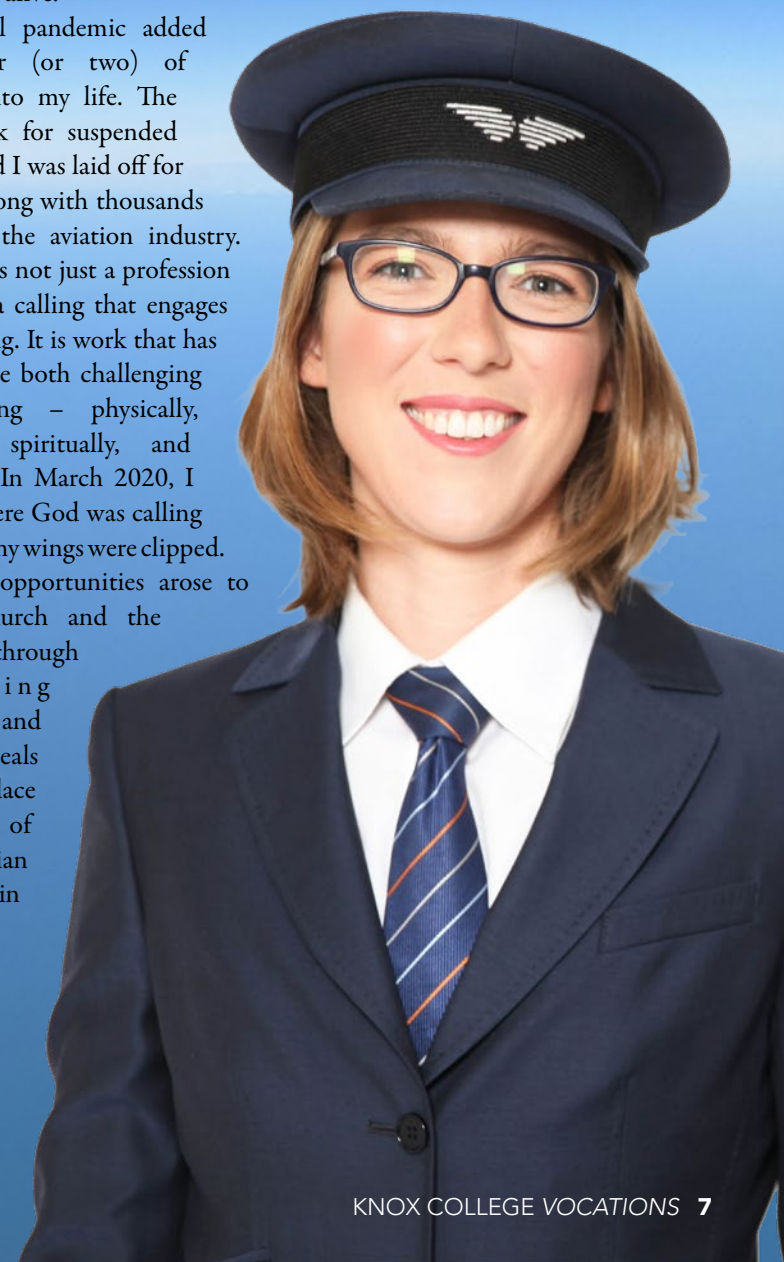
I was drawn to Biblical Studies, curious about the history, context, and interpretation of scripture,

and eager to learn to read it in its original languages. While I admired the logic of Greek and the beauty of Hebrew, I also wrestled with ambiguities in meaning and syntax. In places where I expected black-and-white answers, I found myself simultaneously frustrated and fascinated by shades of grey. Yet, it was precisely in the complexities and nuances of my studies that I felt my faith come alive.

The global pandemic added another layer (or two) of complexity into my life. The airline I work for suspended operations and I was laid off for 18 months, along with thousands of others in the aviation industry. Being a pilot is not just a profession for me: it is a calling that engages my entire being. It is work that has potential to be both challenging and rewarding – physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. In March 2020, I wondered where God was calling me, now that my wings were clipped. Before long, opportunities arose to serve the church and the community, through coordinating virtual choirs and delivering meals to Portland Place (a mission of The Presbyterian Church in

*Continued on page 8.*

*At right: Claire Lemiski. Facing page: Aerial view of the Red Sea, as photographed by Claire on a ferry flight in February 2021. Photos provided by author.*



Canada). But the thought of flying again was never far from my mind.

My dream to return to the sky became a reality when I began a contract as an international ferry pilot. One memorable trip happened at the end of February 2021, when we were delivering a brand-new aircraft from the de Havilland factory in north Toronto to its new home in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The route covered some 15,000 kilometers across Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, and it took four days in the Dash 8-400 aircraft I was flying. On the second day,

after tracking the eastern coastline of the Adriatic Sea down to Greece, I realized we were entering the region that is the backdrop of the Bible. Just after sunset, city lights started glowing on the horizon – that was Corinth, with Athens just a little further off. That night we landed at Iraklion on the island of Crete, which Paul visited on his voyage to Rome in Acts 27.

The next morning, we crossed the Mediterranean into Egyptian airspace. I was amazed at the stark contrast between the fertile land along the Nile River

and the surrounding desert. I was taking a course on Ancient Israel at Knox, but I had asked to be excused from class that day because of my travels. As it turns out, Dr. Irwin was lecturing on Ancient Egypt, so he was happy to receive a few pictures I sent him “from the field” to include in his PowerPoint presentation.

That afternoon, we crossed over the Red Sea, which is perhaps one of the most iconic landmarks of the Old Testament, a symbol of how God rescued the Israelites out of bondage. As I looked out the window, I could not help but take a moment to reflect on God’s provision in my life, despite the difficulties of the past year.

Now four years after enrolling at Knox College, I am still a pilot who studies theology, but my perspective has changed. Rather than compartmentalizing these seemingly disparate parts of my life, I am learning to appreciate how they inform and complement each other. It is a joy to be able to respond to God’s call once again, in such a way that even my work is an act of worship. ■

*Claire Lemiski is a Master of Theological Studies student at Knox College.*

*“Now four years after enrolling at Knox College, I am still a pilot who studies theology, but my perspective has changed.”*

# The church of ~~tomorrow~~ **TODAY**

## RETHINKING YOUTH MINISTRY

**“So how should we as Christians understand this pandemic?” I opened a conversation with our youth.**

**It was March 2020, and the virus was just beginning to significantly affect our lives. I had wanted the youth to rethink the narrative that God was allowing this pandemic.**

**But I was about to, yet again, be surprised and impressed by an adolescent’s perspective.**

**“Humans tend to blame God for what they’ve done – like this pandemic,” answered one of the Grade 8 girls. “But the pandemic is an opportunity for us to stop and really pay attention to the injustice around us, like what we know about now through the Black Lives Matter movement. The pandemic is a real bummer. But maybe God is not allowing this pain as much as allowing us to see the pain that was already prevalent around us – and we were too busy with our own lives to acknowledge it before.”**

**Eser Kim is a doctoral student in religious education at Knox College and a youth worker with Vaughn Community Church (Thornhill, Ont.).** Her research focuses on the role that youth and adolescents have in our church and society – particularly that they should be considered full participants in our faith communities *now*, not just once they become adults. *Vocations* interviewed Eser to learn more. ▶

*“What they need is someone who walks with them in their faith journey no matter how messy it gets – not someone who helps them or tells them what to do.... Taking youth seriously, and allowing them the same freedom to experiment that adults have, serves the church far better long-term.”*



**What spurred you to research this topic?**

My interest in youth started with my own adolescent experience. My parents were both theologians, and we could have real debates about hard theological questions. I remember asking my parents, “Does God exist? If so, why the Christian God?” Having access to those conversations really helped me through my own adolescence. But we didn’t get answers to those hard questions in church. So I wondered, *What about all the other people who don’t have these parents? Where do they flesh out those questions?*

When I began my graduate studies, initially I was interested in adolescent suffering and flourishing; I then shifted to social justice issues and how faith formation happens when adolescents are participating in meaningful ministries. But the foundation for all of those studies is acknowledging youth as agents. So I decided to begin with who youth are, how we’ve been misunderstanding youth, and how we should understand them.

I focused specifically on Korean-Canadian adolescents because they’re in a particularly liminal, hybrid space – between cultures and between ages, with some independence but also partially marginalized. I’ve only lived in Canada for four years, but the “between-ness” of this group really connected with me. I was born in Germany to Korean parents and moved around a lot – to Korea, the United States, back to Germany, and so on. I believe that theology is autobiographical, starts with your own experience. And cultural hybridity runs deep for me.

**How would you encourage us to understand youth and youth ministry, and why?**

We often talk about youth as being the church for the next generation, the church of tomorrow. We as adults design church programs for youth – fun games, adult-directed Bible studies. We think of youth as “consumers” of religion rather than as people who are capable of being full actors, able to lead and create. Youth ministry needs to be more than just games and pizza. The youth are important not only for the future, but also in our current church and world. They’re not just the next generation, they’re living in the present.

The youth are also theologians. For example, at our Friday night

*Left: Taking youth seriously includes not taking yourself too seriously. Eser Kim dressed for pajama night with the Vaughn Community Church (Thornhill, Ont.) youth group.*

*Facing page, top: Eser Kim leads the Call to Worship for an in-person and YouTube streamed worship service.*

*Facing page: Eser Kim. Photos provided by author.*

youth Bible studies, we decided to tackle some really hard theological questions: *Does God hate women? If God is good, what about sin and suffering?* Each week I prepared information about the various sides of those questions to share, but after the Bible study I always realized that I had learned so much from the youth as well.

I’ve been educated and trained as a theologian, but their perspective is very different. So many times I’ve come away thinking, *I never thought of it that way!* They apply these questions and their thoughts to their lives, school life, and friendships. That’s a constant reminder for me that they are living real lives now, having real struggles, and thinking about their faith pretty seriously. We can all benefit from their unique perspectives.

Sometimes it’s hard to stay objective during a student leadership meeting. I want to “help” or tell youth that something won’t work because I’ve already tried it, etc. At times having more life experience comes in handy, but that also can hold the youth group back from innovating. What they need is someone who walks with them in their faith journey no matter how messy it gets – not someone who helps them or tells them what to do. “Efficiency” isn’t necessarily a value that goes with Christianity. Taking youth seriously, and allowing them the same freedom to experiment that adults have, serves the church far better long-term.

Youth can also help churches to take action. Their generation is interested in social justice movements. But a lot of churches are hiding behind the idea of a “personal Jesus” instead of going out and making changes; we’re too comfortable within the church building instead of reaching out. Adolescents, however, aren’t afraid of going out beyond those church walls, and they’re not afraid to make changes. That helps the whole congregation to move forward.

**How can we shift our approach to youth?**

To begin, we can make changes in our own churches and reframe our understanding of youth ministry. Let’s think about how this can really be the *youth’s ministry*. In my church, we’ve stopped calling our youth the next generation, and we’ve started to emphasize the members of the church of today, including our high school Christians.

We’ve given a lot of freedom and power to our youth instead of having the pastor/teacher run the program. Our youth leadership mostly plans everything, and they’ll come to us youth leaders with their plans and ideas. We’ll talk about pros and cons and move forward together.

Youth ministry that is inviting youth as agents and as theologians is very different than the youth

ministry that is prevalent in churches, which is ministry for them and to them. I’m aiming for ministry *along with* and *done by* youth.

Beyond reclaiming their own agency, empowering adolescents also makes us all more aware of the power dynamics that exist in ministry and the ways we’ve been conducting ministry. Changes like this can begin within the youth ministry specifically, but the whole congregation has to be involved to make structural, systemic change that cultivates youth empowerment. Church is usually adult-centric, with the adults as the decision-making body in power. My goal would be to have a more mixed and integrated approach with the youth having a say in decision-making.

Rethinking ministry can challenge the congregation, but it reminds us of mutuality and interdependency, which benefit the whole congregation. When adults and youth minister with each other, learning happens both ways. We are all part of God’s kingdom, now and here, not just once we reach a certain age. ■

*“We’re too comfortable within the church building instead of reaching out. Adolescents, however, aren’t afraid of going out beyond those church walls, and they’re not afraid to make changes.”*



## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: KOREAN TRANSLATION

고난 당하는 세상에서 희망을 위한 교육

제가 낙스칼리지를 졸업했을 때, 제 첫 목회의 임무에는 저에게 교회를 개척하도록 한 그 지역 병원의 아동 병동에 가서 일주일에 하루씩 목회의 일을 하도록 되어졌습니다.

저는 2년 동안 매주 목요일마다 중병으로, 때로는 죽어가는, 아이들과 함께 힘들어하는 가족들의 아픔과 슬픔을 접했습니다. 종종, 저는 가슴 아프고 고통스러운 부모님의 질문들과 함께 앉아 있었습니다. 왜 하나님은 우리에게 이런 일이 일어나도록 하시는 걸까요? 이 고통 속에서 하나님은 어디에 계신가요? 왜 하나님은 우리를 버렸을까요? 우리에게 무슨 희망이 있나요? 지난 2년간 전세계적인 유행병 동안 많은 사람들이 같은 질문을 던져왔습니다.

젊은 목사로서, 저는 곧 제가 신학교에서 배웠던 많은 신학적 대답들이 완전히 틀린 것은 아니지만, 그때나, 지금이나 진짜 핵심이 아니라는 것을 깨달았습니다. 하나님의 뜻은 이해할 수 없는 것이 사실일 수도 있습니다. 인생의 고통스러운 경험이 우리를 더 나은 사람으로 만들어 줄 수 있다는 것도 사실일 수도 있습니다. 전능하고 자애로운 하나님에 대한 생각을 우리 세상에 존재 하는 악과 고통과 조화시키기 어려운 것도 사실일 수 있습니다.

하지만 40년 전 그 병원에서 배운 것은 이것입니다. 그리고 이건 지금도 맞는 사실입니다: 제가 복음의 사역자로 교육을 받은 것은 단순히 해답을 주기 위해서가 아니라, 듣고, 타인의 고난과 고통에 함께 하는 것이라는 것입니다. 나 자신의 인간의 영은 가끔 나약해지기에 예수님의 이름으로 그 모든 것을 하는 것입니다.

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Find the complete translation online at [knox.utoronto.ca/korean](http://knox.utoronto.ca/korean).

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: MANDARIN TRANSLATION

在苦難世界中孕育教導希望

回想當我從本神學院畢業之時，我被派往一個地區開展植堂工作；在這社區，我的侍奉還包括在其中的病童醫院作院牧工作。

正因如此，有兩年時間每逢週四，我都會接觸到病童醫院內，為他們垂危病重的子女憂心忡忡，飽受折磨煎熬的父母！跟他們交談時，他們滿是苦澀和淒怨！他們會質問為何上主容讓這些事情發生在他們身上？在苦難中，神啊，祢在那裡？上主啊，為何祢捨棄，掩面不垂顧我們？我們還有甚麼指望呢？類似這些質問，或許在過去這兩年全球疫情中，你也會經常提出。

作為一位初出茅蘆的傳道人，我很快意識到，自己在神學院數年的書本學習中，縱然並非全然錯誤，但對於當期間我所面對的處境，我從前被教導的，卻顯得蒼白乏力；這感覺在當時如此，今時亦然！你或許可以辯解說，上主的旨意，我們豈能測度！或許你也可以說，所有苦難都有意義，鍛鍊成全個人！是的，一位全能又全愛的神，怎能容讓邪惡和苦痛同時存在於祂所創造的世界呢？要自圓其說這矛盾是很困難的！

但可以告慰的是，差不多四十年前在這神學院學習到的功課，四十年後的今天仍然管用。這是說，作為傳揚福音的傳道人，我們不能單為問題提供答案，還有是要聆聽；當有人置身苦難傷痛時，我們與他們同行；這不是靠我們頹廢的個人力量，而是奉主耶穌的名，藉著聖靈的大能得以成就的。

及後當我在神學院任教時，我便把這些經驗溶合在課程中傳授給學生。在我設計的一些課程中，我刻意不單排序聖經的教導，還切實地把生活體驗融滙貫通在一起。。。。

Find the complete translation online at [knox.utoronto.ca/mandarin](http://knox.utoronto.ca/mandarin).

## RESIDENT STORY



## Knox Residents add light and colour with tree-decorating event

Originally from Edmonton, Alta., Mika Wrightson-Rivard is a third-year University of Toronto student at the Performing Arts Faculty. This is Mika's first year living in the Knox Residence. She helped to organize a COVID-safe event for residents on Friday, December 10, 2021, that included tree decorating, gourmet cookies, and hot cocoa. Mika said:

Knox is such a beautiful building that it lends itself well to seasonal decoration, so I was especially excited for everyone to add some light and colour. I love the holidays, and I thought it would be fun to encourage everyone to take a few hours off from the stress of exam season and get to know each other.

Knox has always been quiet, and the pandemic has certainly accentuated this. In some ways it is peaceful, but it does make it more difficult to host community events and create connections. It can be difficult to get residents out of their rooms to socialize, so I was really happy that so many people attended the event. I think everyone got the chance to talk to somebody new.

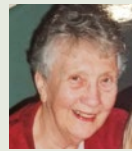
We are fortunate during COVID to be able to still interact with other residents and maintain friendships within the building. But for many residents, the isolation is quite heavy at the moment. Being unable to host outside guests has made it difficult for those who don't know many people in the building. Hopefully when more restrictions lift, we will be able to host some off-campus social activities so the residents can get to know each other a bit better.

*"I love the holidays, and I thought it would be fun to encourage everyone to take a few hours off from the stress of exam season and get to know each other."*

Some of the residents who gathered for a tree-decorating event, December 2021. Mika Wrightson-Rivard is at centre-right, kneeling. Photo provided by Sukanya Sharma.

CLASS NOTES

1950s



**Merle McGowan (E'58)** passed away on May 28, 2021.

1960s



**Charles Boyd (K'60)** passed away on September 14, 2021.

**William W. H. Baird (K'67)** passed away on October 10, 2021.



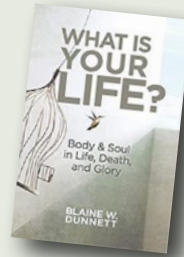
1970s

**Frances Sullivan (E'78)** retired on May 1, 2021.

K: Knox; E: Ewart; R: Resident

1980s

**Blaine W. Dunnett (K'82)** has published *What Is Your Life? Body and Soul in Life, Death & Glory* (Essence Publishing, Belleville, Ont.).



**Lorna G. Hillian (K'82)** passed away on October 16, 2021.

**Janet DeWolfe (K'83)** retired on March 1, 2021.

**Elaine Nagy (K'84)** retired on August 19, 2021.

**Charles McNeil (K'87)** was appointed for ministry on September 16, 2021, at St. Andrew's, Innisfail; West Park, Red Deer; and Knox, Red Deer (Alta.).

1990s

**Virginia Head (K'97)** retired on September 1, 2021.



**Dong-Ha Kim (K'98, K'08)** was inducted on November 7, 2021, at Knox, Woodstock (Ont.).

2010s

**Grace Show-Huei Chang (K'06, K'11)** was ordained on September 18 and inducted on September 19, 2021, at Trinity Mandarin, Toronto (Ont.).



**Young Suk Cho (K'11)** was inducted on October 31, 2021, at University PC, Toronto (Ont.).



**Marian E. Raynard (K'12)** passed away on October 7, 2021.



**Bonnie Sutherland (K'14)** was inducted on September 19, 2021, at St. John, Pittsburgh, and Sandhill, Seeley's Bay (Ont.).

**Francis Owusu (K'18)** was ordained on November 21, 2021, at Toronto (Ont.) Ghanaian Presbyterian Church for ministry at Town of Mount Royal PC (Montreal, Que.). Pictured at the ordination service with Principal Vissers.



2020s

**Glenn McCullough (K'20)** was appointed Associate Professor of Practical Theology and Spiritual Care at Emmanuel College (Toronto, Ont.) on September 21, 2021.



**Debora Rolls (K'20)** was ordained on September 12 and inducted on September 19, 2021, at St. Paul's, Peterborough (Ont.).

**Gerry Gallant (K'21)** was ordained and inducted on September 16, 2021, at St. Andrew's, Perth (Ont.).



Many Knox alumni and former residents will have fond memories of **Marjorie Durnan**, who was the Knox College receptionist for many years. Many students kept in touch with her for years. She passed away on December 1, 2021.



Welcome to new Knox College staff



▲ **Jennilee Psarologos** began as Constituent Relations Associate in the Advancement Department on October 18, 2021.



▲ **Priya Paul** began as Director of Finance and Administration on November 15, 2021. She succeeds Bob Adams, who retired in December 2021.



▲ **Sharmilla Reid** began as Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations on November 22, 2021.



▲ **Kylah Thomson** began as Assistant Registrar in the Enrolment Management Department on January 3, 2022.

The snow scene at Knox

A January 2022 blizzard brought 36 cm of snow to downtown Toronto. When Knox's maintenance person got snowed in at home, a group of Knox residents pitched in to clear the walkways and entrances!

This storm was one for the history books – but thankfully it did not approach Toronto's one-day record of 48 cm set in December 1944.

Photo by Sukanya Sharma.



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**John Vissers**  
Principal of  
Knox College

# Educating for hope

## IN A SUFFERING WORLD

**W**HEN I GRADUATED FROM KNOX College, my first pastoral assignment included a one day per week chaplaincy placement on the children's ward of the local hospital in the community where I had been appointed to plant a church.

For two years, every Thursday, I encountered the pain and sorrow of families struggling with seriously ill, sometimes dying, children. Often, I sat with parents whose questions were poignant and painful. *Why is God allowing this to happen to us? Where is God in this suffering? Why has God abandoned us? What hope do we have?* The same questions many have been asking during the global pandemic of the past two years.

As a young minister, I soon realized that many of the theological answers I had been taught in seminary, while not altogether wrong, were not really the point, not then, not now. It may be true that God's ways are incomprehensible. It may be true that the painful experiences of life can form us to become better people. It may be true that it is difficult to reconcile the idea of an all-powerful and benevolent God with the presence of evil and suffering in our world.

But what I learned in that hospital almost forty years ago is this, and it's still true: I had been educated as a minister of the gospel not simply to provide answers, but to listen, to be present to the pain and suffering of others, and to do so in the strength of the Holy Spirit,

because my own human spirit often flagged, and to do it all in the name of Jesus.

Since becoming a theological professor, I have tried to pass this experience along to my students, and to help create programs of theological education that combine robust theological study with deep experiential learning.

At Knox, we've developed the Master of Pastoral Studies program with this in mind: students 'learn by doing' in required supervised education placements in cooperation with hospitals, prisons, youth services, inner-city missions. We are revising the Master of Divinity program with a greater emphasis on reflective learning practices, based in congregational and community settings.

These are the places where our students wrestle with theological questions, as they encounter the pain and suffering of our world. During the pandemic, many of our students have been on the frontlines. This is how they are being formed for ministry and service.

And this is where they not only learn – but also experience – the power of God's love for the world in the gospel: that in Jesus Christ God has stepped into our world, to enter our suffering, to stand with us in it all, even death itself. In being present to others in the name of God's crucified Messiah, the One God raised from dead, our students are being educated to bring hope and healing to a hurting world.

Thank you for all that you do to help us in this work.

*Korean and Mandarin translations of the Principal's Message begin on page 12.*

*“As a young minister, I soon realized that many of the theological answers I had been taught in seminary, while not altogether wrong, were not really the point”*

➔ To receive *Vocations* electronically instead of in print, contact us at [knox.communications@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.communications@utoronto.ca).

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