

KNOX COLLEGE, CANADA | SPRING 2023

VOCATIONS

WHEN GOD SAYS

'Build my kingdom'



ALSO: A HOG FARMER BECOMES A MINISTER;
& AN INTERVIEW WITH ACADEMIC DEAN CHRISTINE MITCHELL

“It’s vital for each of us to see that our experiences of suffering or trauma are described or reflected in biblical texts – and were condemned by God, not condoned.... If your spiritual ‘toolbox’ is only filled with uplifting scripture, then you have no theological foundation for dealing with the human condition and experience, which is full of suffering, pain, grief, and loss.”

—Christine Mitchell, Knox College Academic Dean and Professor of Hebrew Bible

Dr. Christine Mitchell began as Academic Dean and Professor of Hebrew Bible at Knox College in July 2022. Find an interview with Dr. Mitchell beginning on pages 8-9 and concluding online at knox.utoronto.ca/mitchell.

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ON THE COVER: Sileen Phillips. Photo by Stephanie Hanna. See story on pages 4-5.

IN THIS ISSUE



When God says, 'Build my kingdom'

An encounter with the Holy Spirit pushed Sileen Phillips into theological studies.



'If you can work with pigs, you can work with people'

Ernie Naylor was a hog farmer. He wasn't a minister.... was he?



An interview with our Academic Dean

Learn about Dr. Christine Mitchell's passion for Old Testament scholarship, the Old Testament's relevance today, and more.

10 Principal's Message in translation

12 Knox news and alumni notes

16 Principal's Message



KNOX COLLEGE

WHEN GOD SAYS: 'Build my kingdom'

By Sileen Phillips



AS I WALKED TO WORK one morning through bustling streets, my heart was full, but conflicted. Our church service the night before had been such an amazing experience of intimacy with God – like heaven on earth. We hadn't left the church until 2:45am! That morning, in my heart I prayed, "Lord, I wish that you would change what I do for a living and make it so that what I do every day has to do with you. Why can't every day be about you?"

I was a young adult at the time. Life went on, and the memory of that church service faded. I forgot all about that whispered prayer – but apparently God didn't.

As a young person, my career path had always felt quite clear. From the time I was 11 years old, I planned to be an architect. But when we moved from Canada to Jamaica, I discovered that despite my excellent grades, I wasn't eligible to be part of the pre-engineering program in high school. Why? Because I was a girl. Things have changed by now, but at that time gender was a significant barrier.

After high school I moved back to Canada and was accepted into the architecture program here at a university in Toronto. Of the 40 students in the engineering program, I discovered that I was the only black student. I then looked at the photos of graduating classes, and I had to go back six years to find even one black student. I wasn't too concerned about that initially – until a professor told

me, in front of the entire class, that black students didn't belong in this program; we belonged in the arts.

I did my best to ignore that comment, and I was doing exceptionally well in all of my other classes. But I didn't do well in his class. I fought for better grades there, but his public displays of racism were devastating for me.

Eventually I was forced to drop out of the program. I got a second job, and I put away all of my books and hid every reminder of school. I had always been so consumed by learning; but now I never wanted to see a school again.

It took six years until I had the courage to consider studies again – and even then, only because of God's intervention.

I was walking with my son past a local college, seeing all of the students on their way to classes and feeling really low – when I distinctly heard a voice. I turned around, looking for the speaker, but I quickly realized that it was the voice of God, the Holy Spirit. I knew instantly that this was a turning point. A deep sense of peace settled over me, after six years of feeling like I had been trampled.

The voice said to me, "If you had become an architect, you would have been a great one, but it would have been about you. Instead, I want you to build my kingdom – my kingdom that will not pass away. I allowed those difficult things; you can let them go now."

"Okay, God," I replied. "If this is you, you'll have to show me exactly where to go and how to get there." I knew I was being a bit of a brat and making excuses.

This happened early in the week. That Friday when I went to church, I bumped into a young woman I hadn't seen in years. She wasn't a close friend, just an acquaintance. She said, "Sileen! Guess what I just completed: my Bachelor of Theology degree."

"Good for you!" I told her, and I quickly started to leave the conversation.

"Come back here!" she said. "All of this week, you were on my mind. So much so, that I brought all of my textbooks along with me, right here. Go and register for the program." I replied that I didn't have money for such things, and she told me the school had good scholarships and bursaries. "Apply," she said. "I'm not taking 'no' for an answer." She handed me the books, the registrar's phone number, and everything I needed to apply. Soon I recalled my long-ago heaven-on-earth church experience, and my prayer, which God had apparently heard.

That's how I started on this path of theological studies. Over the last decade I've now completed multiple bachelor's and master's degrees in theology and religious studies, and an MDiv – all while also working in legislation interpretation and enforcement as my "day job."

Then in 2020, the Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS) degree drew me to attend Knox College. I had done a lot of informal counseling over the years and was interested in providing spiritual care and psychotherapy formally.

Knox was the first place in the long time that it felt okay to be myself. I really appreciated the teaching and the open style of learning. I was sorry to not get to be on campus much because of COVID restrictions during my MPS; but I hope to also do doctoral studies and spend more time on campus.

My own experience with a mental illness when I was 30 has driven me in the direction of wanting to help people. I can empathize with people who have had psychological encounters. At the time of my mental illness, I was so sick that I wasn't expected to be able to work again. But prayer works! That's why I can't boast about any of my accomplishments; God is clearly the one who helped me through.

My MPS and an interfaith internship experience helped me determine that I want to be in Christian practice, providing emotional and spiritual support. Given all of my experiences and studies, my dream now is to create a centre for spiritual wellbeing and emotional health – a hub of "repair." It would include a free walk-in clinic for spiritual or emotional counseling, one-on-one and group therapy, and networking with shelters and prison ministry for physical needs. I'm eager to see what's next. ■

Sileen Phillips is a 2022 Knox Master of Pastoral Studies graduate.

"I knew instantly that this was a turning point. A deep sense of peace settled over me, after six years of feeling like I had been trampled."

Facing page: Sileen Phillips. Photo by Stephanie Hanna. Below: Sileen Phillips (centre) and her mother (right) talk with Professor Angela Schmidt at Knox College's 2022 Convocation. Photo by Jason Shum Photography.



‘If you can work with pigs, you can work with people’

A HOG FARMER CALLED TO MINISTRY

By Ernie Naylor

A MINISTER ONCE TOLD ME that hog farmers are the best ministers. If you can work with pigs, you can work with people. It sounds harsh or funny, depending how you take that statement. But the reality is that hog farming takes patience. You need to understand what a pig is thinking and respond to that thought process. You need to deal with the unexpected and be multi-talented, with your skills ranging from accountant, to plumber, to electrician, to welder, to midwife. Often on the same day. It’s a lot like ministry.

I was raised on a farm, and from an early age I knew I was going to be a farmer. I loved the care of the land, livestock, and those farm sights, sounds, and smells that tantalize the senses. There is nothing more pleasing than the smell of freshly cut hay! But our lives don’t always go where we expect. This is the decades-long story of a hog farmer who became a minister.

Rural churches often face a shortage of ministers, and the church we attended, Knox, Monkton, was no exception. In the mid-1990s when our interim moderator was forming a worship planning team, I volunteered. I wanted to intentionally work on my spiritual life – and what a wonderful experience it was! The team shared lots of laughter as we explored God’s Word.

Then came the inevitable question: “We need someone to preach the Word. Would you do it, Ernie?” Hesitantly I agreed. I still remember being a bundle of nerves standing in front of a congregation. But remember that

shortage of ministers? Once word got out that there was a person who would preach, I had no lack of work. But I was a farmer, not a minister....

In 1998, disaster struck the hog industry and led to a financial crisis for farmers. At one point I was losing \$100 per hog shipped, and I was shipping around 50 a week. I was a small player, but others had even larger losses. As this unfolded, I saw farmers become spiritually broken. Their sense of calling as farmers was threatened; they were questioning God’s purpose for their lives. There were suicides.

Farmers had a culture of not admitting weakness. I routinely talked with a group of four, and one said, “I get some sleepless nights, but you know what? A couple aspirins and two shots of rye sure help you get to sleep.” Their spiritual crisis was leading

to substance abuse. There was also a sense of pride: Surely if you work hard, you’ll be successful! In this situation, farmers would *work harder*. My dad in his wisdom said to me, “I see that you’ve been working hard. Is it doing any good?”

I wrote a letter to Presbytery, and they allowed me to make a short presentation about the problem: I wanted the leadership become aware of those in our midst who were struggling.

A week later, an elder phoned me. He said, “This farm crisis is serious! What are you going to do next?” My first thought was, *Wait a minute – I was asking the Presbytery to do something!* But we set up a committee to explore the situation, and we held information sessions with guest speakers. More than 50 people showed up to the first meeting.

I began to really wonder: Was I a farmer? None of the ministers in the Presbytery had a rural church background, so they had no idea of the crisis.

But I understood the issues and personalities of farmers – and I wanted to help.

This was an epiphany for me. I had a skill set that would be valuable to rural churches. Perhaps this realization was the first step in my process toward becoming a minister, although it would still be more than a dozen years until I put myself forward as a candidate for ministry.

In time, some older church women suggested I pursue seminary. I vividly remember one such moment: One of the women elders was very clear that things should be done in proper order; people respected her, yet feared her at the same time. When I was done preaching, I saw her get up and march determinedly to me at the front. All I could think was, *I must have done something wrong!* But she grabbed me by the shoulders and said, “You need to be a minister.”

My wife, Leslie, was not initially keen on the idea. She knew a family member who was a pastor with two failed marriages. Growing up, she had seen the struggles and expectations placed on clergy spouses. She was also introverted and liked her privacy. She was concerned that as a pastor’s spouse she might be required to take an active ministry role.

But one day Leslie sat me down and said, “I think

you should do this. You would be good.” With that, I had affirmation from my wife and from my congregation. But I continued to wrestle with my identity: wasn’t I a farmer?

Yet every time I preached, people would affirm that I should to be called to ministry – and eventually I felt it as well. In my mind there had been a lot of “background noise” that I didn’t understand. Interestingly, as soon as I said yes to ministry and submitted an application to my session and to Knox College, that “noise” disappeared.

In a strange “coincidence,” our Presbytery had three candidates for ministry all with hog farming background: God was up to something!

The time at Knox allowed me to evaluate my sense of calling. Knox is the perfect place to discern: you are placed among fellow Christians who are on the same path of discovery. Some are very sure they’re following God’s call, and others are just starting the journey. Initially I was concerned about attending seminary, as my background was not academic and because I was older. But I found that about half the class was at the same stage of life I was – balancing children, spouses, and careers as they studied.

The professors were excellent as well. The blend of academics, plus students supporting each other, worked together to help develop me as a minister. When I took certain courses, I wondered what the purpose was – only to discover, after entering ministry, how foundational those courses were. I also took a rural ministry course that was amazing; it explained some of the “why” behind my lived experience and observations of rural people.

I graduated from Knox in 2016. Somewhere along the line, God had shifted my identity from farmer to minister. I ended up being called to Atwood Presbyterian, a rural congregation. It’s a place full of hope and excitement about spreading the gospel message. This is a place where I have felt Jesus’ presence, and a place to fulfill my calling to ministry. And when my wife Leslie died unexpectedly this past year, this beautiful body of Christ called Atwood Presbyterian ministered to me. I am incredibly grateful.

I suppose, in the end, that my identity didn’t change all that much. As a farmer, I was focused on care of God’s creation, of animals and land. Now my focus has expanded to care of God’s people. I know that this is where I am supposed to be. ■

Ernie Naylor is a 2016 Knox Master of Divinity graduate. He is minister at Atwood (Ont.) Presbyterian.

None of the ministers in the Presbytery had a rural church background, so they had no idea of the crisis. But I understood the issues and personalities of farmers – and I wanted to help.

Facing page: Ernie Naylor and his son, Josh, walk down their farm lane in 2002. Photo provided by the author.



Dr. Christine Mitchell

AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR ACADEMIC DEAN

DR. CHRISTINE MITCHELL joined Knox College in 2022 as Academic Dean and Professor of Hebrew Bible. Before coming to Knox, she served for nineteen years as Professor of Hebrew Scriptures at St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon (Sask.).

Vocations interviewed Dr. Mitchell to learn more about her passion for Old Testament scholarship, the Old Testament's relevance today, and why the difficult parts of the Old Testament are vital to our theology. Find the complete interview at knox.utoronto.ca/mitchell.

Why is Old Testament scholarship still important, for the church, and for society more broadly?

For the church: Without the Old Testament, Christian scripture would be missing so much from the human experience and would have an impoverished theology and liturgy. There would be no songs or proverbs, no stories of faithful people across many times and places, no poetry. It would have no theological depth.

Contemporary liberal Protestants tend to be de facto Marcionites. That is, they operate with a biblical canon that is essentially one or two of the Gospels, and some of Paul's letters. This was the position of Marcion, a 2nd century Christian, who thought that Luke and the Pauline corpus were all Christians needed for scripture. The early church rejected this position and included in its scripture the texts it inherited from Judaism.

Even though it did include these texts, the church has taught for most of its existence that Christianity

Tanakh also depicts a God who is merciful and just, and the New Testament also depicts God and Christ as wrathful and violent.) The damage this teaching of supersessionism has done to Jews is incalculable. In my teaching, I work to help students understand that both Judaism and Christianity inherited these texts – the Jewish Tanakh / Christian Old Testament – and that any interpretation that denigrates Jews, Judaism, or Jewish interpretation is not a faithful interpretation.

For society at large: we have a fascination with all kinds of ancient texts, and there's a lot of really dreadful stuff out there – “Ancient Mysteries” and other TV shows like that. Regardless of the secularization of Euro-American society, much of our culture is built on how the Bible (specifically the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible) has been interpreted.

For one example: the concept of *terra nullius* (empty land) has been central to European colonization. This concept is based on interpretations of ritual cleansing of the land (found in Chronicles, Leviticus, and Ezra) conflated with the concept of conquest in the book of Joshua. Neither of these was actually how things happened; scholars say that ancient genocides were mostly just rhetorical claims. Genocides mostly hadn't happened – until Europeans entered the new world: then the conflation and synthesis of these biblical traditions led to the well-documented genocides in the Americas.

Ultimately the whole law of land tenure in Canada is still based on *terra nullius* – the idea that the Crown owns all land, by virtue of the land either having been empty (because colonizers brought disease and violence), or having made treaties for it, or by not recognizing the humanity of the people who did inhabit the land. Our entire legal system regarding land is based on a theo-

logical interpretation of these biblical texts. As biblical scholars, we have a responsibility to educate people about this. Knowing the roots of this system is important if you want to work toward a just and equitable society, particularly for relationships between settlers and indigenous people.

What about the stories of violence and suffering we see in the Old Testament – how do those connect to our faith?

The idea that we should only read “uplifting” texts from the Bible (in worship, especially) is deeply flawed, but it's very common. I understand the impulse to want to be inspired and uplifted in worship. Grief and pain are hard, and we live in a culture that doesn't want to deal with these things. **But the Bible is a mirror of the complexity of the human experience: all of the things we see wrong with the world – violence, brokenness, pain, suffering – are described in biblical texts.**

For many years I've taught a course on gender and power in the book of Judges; I plan to teach it in 2023-24 at Knox. Every time I've taught it, there have been news stories that mirror the stories in the book. One year I was teaching the story of the dismembered woman in Judges 19-20 at the same time as the trial of Robert Pickton, who killed and dismembered women on his pig farm in BC. Another year we were reading the story of the rape of the women of Shiloh in Judges 21 at the same time as girls were kidnapped in Nigeria from their school to become “wives” for men in Boko Haram.

These biblical stories help us describe and analyze what we see in our own broken world. It's vital for each of us to see that our experiences of suffering or trauma are described or reflected in biblical texts – and were condemned by God, not condoned. **If your spiritual “toolbox” is only filled with uplifting scripture, then you have no theological foundation for dealing with the human condition and experience, which is full of suffering, pain, grief, and loss.**

It's easy to want to just preach on positive texts; but if people can't see themselves in the scriptures, how are you helping them? How are you providing them with any theological resources for understanding their lives? Over the years, so many students have told me that reading the difficult, painful biblical texts equips them – to both deal with their own difficulties, and to help people who come to them in pain.



Above: Christine Mitchell in her Knox College office. Facing page: Christine Mitchell presents the sermon at Knox College Community Worship. Photos by Stephanie Hanna.

How do feminist and gender studies inform your theology of the Old Testament?

Biblical texts were written by men – elite men, in most cases – and have been interpreted most influentially by men, in the interests of men. Feminist and gender studies bring those power dynamics to the surface and make them visible.

The Bible is a collection of deeply patriarchal texts. I don't usually try to make them friendly to women, because they're usually not. But I do look for what we can take from these texts that are fundamentally unfriendly to anyone who's not a dominant-culture man. There's a vision of a God who is loving, who is loyal, who is righteous and powerful, protecting the vulnerable, giving hope to the hopeless. That's worth holding on to – even though there are also other visions of God in these texts.

What caught your interest and steered you toward Old Testament scholarship, and toward 1-2 Chronicles specifically?

 Find the answer online at knox.utoronto.ca/mitchell.

Dr. Mitchell welcomes continued conversation on these topics; contact her at drchristine.mitchell@utoronto.ca.



Register today for Dr. Mitchell's webinar: “Women, Gender, and Genesis,” March 8, 11am ET >> knox.utoronto.ca/alumni-seminars

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: MANDARIN TRANSLATION

篤信力行的神學

要定義神學為何物，方法可以說是十分豐富。有些說簡單而言，神學是思想神的事情作為；有些說神學是研究神的本質和其教義；有些則說神學是研究基督宗教的信仰，例如研究其聖經和信經；也有些學者側重發掘基督信仰在今世的實存意義。

就對以上最後的定義而言，神學是研究聖經的文本原意和其在當世所含有的意義。若進一步闡釋，這樣的神學研究，不單是要清楚明白所信的是甚麼，更加是要因著這些認知，探究信眾們可有怎麼樣的回應，篤信而力行。


對神學這樣的理解，其實也見諸於窩夫米諾士拉夫 (Miroslav Volf) 和 麥恩羅里年萊恩 (Ryan McAnnally-Linz) 最近合著的《神的家：萬事萬物的簡史》(The Home of God: A Brief History of Everything)；書中第二十二頁有這樣的記述：「毋論是在學理探究或在日常生活中，神學所觸碰的是每一位基督徒所言所行的信仰表達；這即是說，上主藉著基督耶穌顯明自己這亮光啓示下，引導著每一位神學探究者，在活出豐盛人生的每一個舉動中，他或她所推敲、演譯和決斷，都以神學作為思考基礎.....神學故此是每一位基督徒，刻意要思考，如何活出基督樣式的生命。

我冠名這是知行合一、篤信力行的神學。上主的兒女，毋論是神學家還是平信徒，上主藉著主基督耶穌彰顯自己的亮光下，察驗何為真正的生命，並刻意按領受，活出基督的樣式；或許馬太福音七章二十一節是很好的寫照：「凡稱呼我主阿，主阿的人不能都進天國；惟獨遵行我天父旨意的人才能進去。」

最近，本諾克斯神學院制定並公布本院的立場：平等、多元、包容：「諾克斯神學院是一個多元群體，矢志於學術鑽研、明辨慎思；恪守正直、秉持操守、追求卓越、公平及尊重每一個體；故此，對每一範疇思想、看法，我們都珍惜其多元性；至於不同種族、有差異的社會、經濟、文化、宗教、語言、國族，我們也會接納擁抱；我們也承認在上主國度中，存在不同技能、弱勢、及不同性別傾向和性取向的個人；諾克斯神學院相信尊重多元、平等和包容，是上主國度的基本特質。」讀者可在本院的網站主頁中找到這陳述。

以上便是所謂的篤信力行的神學。在本神學院，因著我們的多元習性，我們矢志辨識和踐行。就辨識而言，我們從學理上，層層深究窺探；就踐行上，我們擁抱多元，並力求平等、包容。故此，我們容許在思想和意念上，多元拼放；在行動上，我們包容所有的人。

知行合一或篤信力行的神學，我們試圖去克服多元群體中必然存在的差異；在其中，我們有恩慈與尊重；在這神學實踐中，我們營造一個充滿恩典的社群，在其中人人得到接納和尊重。這是本神學院立志要達成，也相信這是上主所託付我們要完成的。以下約翰一書四章十二至十三節，便是恰當的描述：「從來沒有人見過神，我們若彼此相愛，神就住在我們裡面，愛他的心在我們裡面得以完全了。神將他的靈賜給我們，從此就知道我們是住在他裡面，他也住在我們裡面。」

 Also available online at knox.utoronto.ca/mandarin.
Translation by Wan-Kit Keng and Helen Cheung.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: KOREAN TRANSLATION

행동하는 신학

신학이 가지는 정의는 아주 많다. 어떤 사람들에게는 신학은 단순히 "하나님을 생각하는 것"을 의미한다. 또 다른 사람들에게는 신학은 하나님의 본성과 종교적 믿음에 대한 연구이다. 어떤 이들은 신학을 성경이나 신조와 같은 기독교 신앙의 원천에 대한 연구로 보며, 또 어떤 이들은 오늘날 기독교의 의미를 탐구하는 데 초점을 둔다.

후자의 그룹은 신학은 "본문이 무엇을 의미하는지" 뿐만 아니라 "본문이 그들에게 무엇을 의미하는지"에 대한 질문을 던진다. 달리 말하면, 이러한 신학의 이해는 우리가 무엇을 믿는가 만이 아니라, 우리가 믿기 때문에 무엇을 해야 하는 가에도 초점을 둔다.


이러한 이해는 Ryan McAnnally-Linz와 공동 집필한 Miroslav Volf의 가장 최근 출판물인 하나님의 집(The Home of God)에서 나누어진다. 그는 "신학이 학문적이든 일상적이든 이는 그리스도인의 삶을 생각하는 것으로 예수 그리스도 안에서 하나님의 자기 계시에 비추어 풍요로운 삶의 비전을 분별하고, 명료히 하고, 위탁하는 실천이다"라고 썼다. [신학은] 모든 기독교인들이 기독교적 삶을 주의 깊게 살아가도록 하는 사고와 같은 것이다(22쪽).

나는 이를 행동하는 신학이라고 부른다. 신학자이든 평신도이든, 하나님의 자녀들은 예수 그리스도 안에서 하나님의 자기 계시에 비추어 진정한 삶이 무엇을 의미하는지를 파악하고 그리스도인의 삶을 잘 살 때 실천하는 신학이 된다. 마태복음 7장 21절의 예수님의 말씀을 다시 표현하자면, "주여, 주여"라 부르며, 아버지의 뜻을 행하는 자들이 하나님 나라의 자녀들이다.

최근에 나스 칼리지는 형평성, 다양성, 포용성에 대한 우리의 입장을 발표했다. "나스 칼리지는 지적 참여, 비판적 탐구의 이상과, 그리고 우수성, 공정성 및 모든 사람을 존중하는 원칙에 헌신하는 다양성을 지닌 공동체이다. 따라서 우리는 사고와 사상의 다양성을 중요시하며, 민족적, 사회경제적, 문화적, 종교적, 언어적, 국가적으로 다양한 배경을 가진 사람들 뿐만 아니라, 능력, 장애, 성별 정체성 및 성적 지향성에서 다양성을 가진 사람들을 포용한다. 나스 공동체는 다양성, 형평성, 포용성의 가치가 하나님 나라의 근본으로 이해하고 있다." 여러분들은 이것을 학교 웹사이트 홈페이지에서 볼 수 있다.

이 입장은 행동하는 신학이다. 나스에서 우리는 다양한 공동체로서 인식하고 행동하려고 노력한다. 우리는 지적으로 참여하고 비판적으로 탐구할 때를 파악하게 된다. 우리가 모든 종류의 다양성을 수용하고 평등과 포용을 위해 노력할 때 우리는 그렇게 하는 것이다. 우리가 인식할 때, 생각과 사상에서 다양성을 중요시하며, 우리가 아무도 배제하지 않을 때 우리는 행하는 것일 것이다.

행동하는 신학은 다양성을 가진 공동체에서 다름을 극복하고자 노력한다. 행동하는 신학은 연민과 존경을 구현하려고 노력한다. 행동하는 신학은 모든 사람이 환영 받고 존중 받는 은혜가 충만한 공동체를 만들려고 노력한다. 나스칼리지는 이렇게 되기 위해 노력하는 공동체이고, 우리는 이렇게 되도록 부름 받은 공동체이다. 요한일서 4장 12~13절의 말씀으로 맺는다: "어느 때나 하나님을 본 사람이 없으되 만일 우리가 서로 사랑하면 하나님이 우리 안에 거하시고 그의 사랑이 우리 안에 온전히 이루느니라. 그의 성령을 우리에게 주시므로 우리가 그 안에 거하고 그가 우리 안에 거하시는 줄을 아느니라."

 Also available online at knox.utoronto.ca/korean.
Translation by Nam Soon Song.

Sarah Travis receives Calvin Institute grant

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, Assistant Professor of Preaching, Worship, and Christian Ministry at Knox College, has been awarded a grant of \$15,000 US by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

Dr. Travis's project is one of 15 awarded funding in this first round of grants for 2023-2024. Eleven, including Dr. Travis's, are in the Teacher-Scholar stream of Grants, and four are in the Worshiping Communities stream of grants.

Her project proposes to enhance the worship and self-identity of small congregations through a theology of playfulness. Dr. Travis said, "God's nature is playful, and God invites us into an experience of playfulness and creativity. Worship enables us to connect, explore, and wonder about the world around us — like children enjoying a playground."

"Through playful worship, small churches can come to a greater sense of their identity and purpose. Most of the churches The Presbyterian Church in Canada are 'small,' with fewer than 50 people attending worship, and anxiety about the smallness of congregations is increasing."

Dr. Travis will study small churches at worship, networking with leaders and engaging themes of playfulness and creativity in worship. She explains, "This project



Sarah Travis

has several phases. The first is to bring playful worship to life in one or more small congregations in the PCC. Participants will meet for a meal following worship to discuss their experiences. The second is to bring together the leaders of small churches for a 'Worship Playground' event to worship and learn together. The third involves writing and research. The project will culminate in the writing of a book about Small Churches and a Theology of Playfulness, a resource designed to enhance worship in small congregations."

Knox College Principal Ernest van Eck said, "This grant and project link perfectly with Dr. Travis's previous work on what she has called the needed 'de-establishment' of the church in our current cultural context. One way in which we can make what the church preaches every Sunday relevant is to guide the hearers of the gospel toward experiencing God in new, playful, and creative ways — enabling us to reconnect to God and be amazed about the world around us. There is no one better than Dr. Travis to lead us playfully and creatively, helping us experience more of what some people think cannot be experienced. Knox

"Through playful worship, small churches can come to a greater sense of their identity and purpose."

College is proud to be associated with the work of Dr. Travis and hopes to be part of this journey of discovery."

John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, said, "Teacher-Scholars from a wide variety of disciplines have so much to contribute to congregations and parishes — helping us all see things we otherwise might miss, offering access to essential wisdom for ministry. We are grateful for each of these Teacher-Scholars and the promise of their work for strengthening congregational life." Grants in this stream range from \$9,850 US to \$20,000 US.

Since it began in the year 2000, the Vital Worship Grants Program has now awarded over 1,000 grants to churches, schools, organizations, and teacher-scholars across North America for projects that generate thoughtfulness and energy for public worship and faith formation at the local, grassroots level. An advisory board of pastors and

teachers from a variety of backgrounds assists in the grant selections, and the program is generously supported by Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. Founded in

1937, the Endowment's major areas of programming are religion, education, and community development. For more information on the grants program, including a complete list of this year's grants recipients, please see worship.calvin.edu/grants.



Women, Gender, and Genesis

A webinar on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 11am ET

Presented by Christine Mitchell, Knox College Academic Dean and Professor of Hebrew Bible

Learn more and register at knox.utoronto.ca/alumni-seminars.

Free and open to the public, but registration is required. Can't attend at that time? Registrants will receive a recording.

KNOX COLLEGE CONVOCATION

Saturday, May 27, 2023: 2pm at Convocation Hall

Join us for a special Convocation — celebrating four years of graduates!

- Conferral of degrees upon the Class of 2023
- Special recognition of the Classes of 2020, 2021, and 2022, who graduated under COVID restrictions

You won't want to miss it! Learn more at knox.utoronto.ca/convocation.



Attention, alumni!

The Knox-Ewart Graduates' Association (KEGA) is looking for Executive Committee members. Join the team to have fun and do good work!

KEGA works with the College to organize gatherings for fellowship, networking, and mentoring; plan Continuing Education events; promote the College; and more.

Email knox.advancement@utoronto.ca to learn more.

Welcome to our new Director of Finance and Administration



Toyin Fambege

Knox College is delighted to announce that Toyin Fambege began as Director of Finance and Administration on January 3, 2023. Toyin has more than 15 years of experience and progressive expertise in all facets of financial and management reporting within high-profile organizations in non-profit, public, and private sectors, and she has a track record of success in financial recording and reporting, budgeting, investments, and payroll. Welcome, Toyin!

Did you know?

Monthly donations have a big impact, sustaining all Knox College does.

You can be part of the backbone of Knox's support — with a monthly amount that works for you.

Invest in the future of the church, and build vibrant communities of God's love and hope.

It's easy: go to knox.utoronto.ca/give or call 416-978-8738.

Thank you!

CLASS NOTES

1950s



Hazel Smith (E'52) passed away August 14, 2022.

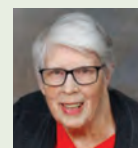
JoAnne Walter (E'55, K'96) passed away January 30, 2023.

1960s



D. Garry Morton (K'63) passed away October 29, 2022.

Charles Scott (K'63) passed away December 11, 2022.



Mary Whitson (E'63, K'88) passed away November 3, 2022.

Ian Glass (K'66) passed away August 7, 2022.



1970s



Noble B.H. Dean (K'78) passed away on November 1, 2022.

George Zimmerman (K'78) retired January 1, 2023.

Amethyst (Amy) Campbell (E'79) retired December 1, 2022.

David B. Vincent (K'79) passed away December 12, 2022.



1980s

Keith Humphrey (K'80) passed away November 29, 2022.

D. Barry Mack (K'81) retired October 1, 2022.

Shawn Croll (K'82) retired November 1, 2022.

John Zondag (K'84) retired January 1, 2023.

Glenn Ball (K'85) retired January 1, 2023.

Douglas Rollwage (K'88) retired November 1, 2022.

1990s

Paulette Brown (K'91) retired January 1, 2023.

David Whitecross (K'91) was inducted at Trinity Church, Carp (Ont.), on January 8, 2023.

Billy Park (K'99) was inducted at Celebration, Markham (Ont.), on September 25, 2022.

Timothy Raeburn-Gibson (K'99) was inducted at Westmount, London (Ont.) on October 25, 2022.

2000s

Penny Garrison (K'02) retired January 1, 2023.

Katherine McCloskey (K'03) was appointed Community Chaplain and Executive Director of ARISE Ministry on September 1, 2022.

2010s

Joon Ki Kim (K'11,14) was inducted at Little Harbor, New Glasgow (Ont.), on September 11, 2022.



David Chung (K'12) was inducted at St. Andrew's, Moncton (N.B.), on October 30, 2022.

Dale Henry (K'12) was inducted at Rexdale (Ont.) on October 25, 2022.



Marianne Emig Carr (K'13) was inducted at St. Paul's, Caintown (Ont.) on September 25, 2022.

James Clark (K'16)

was inducted at Knox, Listowel (Ont.) on September 1, 2022.



Deborah Stanbury (K'16) was inducted at Port Elgin (Ont.), Tolmie Memorial, and Knox, Burgoyne on November 6, 2022.

Boghos Barbouri (K'18)

became a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces on September 1, 2022.



Henna Hyun Hwa Kim (K'18) was ordained on September 11 and inducted on September 18, 2022, at Trinity, Amherstview (Ont.).

Robert Hayashi (K'19, BOG'20-) was ordained and inducted at Richmond Hill (Ont.) on October 2, 2022.



2020s



Mark Oteng (K'21) was ordained and inducted at Toronto (Ont.) Ghanaian on November 6 and St. Stephen's, Toronto, November 13, 2022.

Byron Kappes (K'22)

was ordained and inducted at Knox, Walkerton (Ont.) on October 2, 2022.



Brett Main (K'22) was ordained on December 11, 2022, and inducted January 1, 2023, at Nassagaweya, Campbellville (Ont.).

K: Knox; E: Ewart; R: Resident

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Have you published a book? Gotten married? Been called to a congregation? Send your news to *Vocations* at knox.communications@utoronto.ca.



Ernest van Eck
Principal of
Knox College

Theology in action

Definitions of what theology entails are abundantly available. For some, theology simply means “thinking of God.” Others see theology as the study of the nature of God and religious belief. Some see theology as the study of the sources of Christian belief like the Bible and the creeds; others focus on exploring the meaning of Christianity for today.

For that latter group, theology asks the question of “what the texts meant” as well as “what they mean.” Put differently, this understanding of theology focuses not only on what we believe, but also on what we have to do because we believe.

This understanding is shared by Miroslav Volf in his most recent publication, *The home of God: A brief history of everything*, co-authored by Ryan McAnnally-Linz. He writes: “Whether academic or daily, theology is the thinking side of Christian living, a practise of discernment, articulating, and commending a vision of flourishing life in the light of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ.... [Theology is] the kind of thinking every Christian does by attentively living a Christian life (p. 22).

I call this theology in action. God’s children, as theologians or laity, practice theology when we *discern* what true life means in the light of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ – and also attentively *live* a Christian life. To rephrase Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:21, those who say “Lord, Lord” and do the will of the Father, they are children of his kingdom.

Recently, we at Knox College published our stance on equity, diversity, and inclusion: “Knox College is a

diverse community committed to the ideals of intellectual engagement, critical inquiry, and integrity, and to the principles of excellence, fairness, and respect for all people. We therefore value diversity in thought and ideas, and we embrace persons of varying ethnic, socio-economic, cultural, religious, linguistic, and national backgrounds, as well as those with various abilities, disabilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations. The Knox community understands these values of diversity, equity, and inclusion to be fundamental in the kingdom of God.” You can find this statement on our website’s homepage.

This stance is theology in action. At Knox, as a diverse community, we strive to *discern* and *do*. We discern when we engage intellectually and inquire critically. We do when we embrace all kinds of diversity and strive for equity and inclusion. When we discern, we value diversity in thought and ideas, and when we do, we exclude no one.

A theology in action seeks to overcome differences in a diverse community. A theology in action seeks to embody compassion and respect. A theology in action seeks to create a grace-filled community in which all are welcome and respected. This is the kind of community Knox College strives to be, this is the community we are called to be. In the words of 1 John 4:12-13: “No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”

Find the Mandarin and Korean translations of the Principal’s Message on pages 10-11.

“This understanding of theology focuses not only on what we believe, but also on what we have to do because we believe.”

➔ To receive *Vocations* electronically instead of in print, contact us at knox.college@utoronto.ca.

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