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PRO CHRISTO ET ECCLESIA

Montreal Diocesan Theological College Newsletter

“Experiential learning is not just an educational technique, it is in fact how we all learn. It is how we learn to walk, to talk, to relate to people, to do all those complicated things that allow us to be members of a family, to be participants in the community and to take our place in society. It is also the way Jesus taught his disciples.”

Convocation 2014 address by the Rev. Dr. Richard Cawley, p. 6

THE MONTREAL DIOCESAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

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Cover: Principal John Simons, Chaplain Elizabeth Rowlinson, and Director of Pastoral Studies Karen Egan at MDTC Orientation Retreat August 2013.

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REMEMBERING REV. DR. ELLEN AITKEN

Eliza Rosenberg

On June 14, 2014, Montreal Diocesan Theological College mourned the loss of a close friend. The Rev. Dr. Ellen Aitken, Dean of McGill University's Faculty of Religious Studies (FRS) and scholar in early Christian Literature, died at the age of 53. Dean Aitken, an honorary faculty member at the college and a member of the college Corporation, oversaw an impressive number of important projects from which the college and FRS have benefitted: for example, a collaboration with the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and the endowment of a Chair in Interfaith Studies at FRS. She also contributed to the Chalk Report on the future financial viability of the college. She offered a compassionate presence and wise guidance.

The following is a reflection offered by her doctoral student, Eliza Rosenberg, who is also an examiner for the college's Reading and Tutorial Program.



The Rev. Dr. Ellen Aitken and MDTC Dio graduate Maïda Vandendorpe, M.Div. 2010

In addition to her work for the church and the diocese, Ellen was a professor of early Christianity and the Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University. The multiple demands of these positions made her schedule a busy one, and she was organized to an almost baffling degree. Even in her last weeks, she continued to offer guidance to colleagues and students.

I wrote to Ellen not long before she died of some words of Scripture that had lodged themselves in my mind: “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren.” (James 3:1) Having had the opportunity to study with one of the exceptions was an unearned grace. Speaking with other students, I was unsurprised to find that the feeling was shared. The relationship between a student and an adviser is often the critical factor in the success of graduate studies. A good one tends to produce a positive experience for both parties; a bad one can be disastrous. A superb advising relationship is not something that anyone can expect, but Ellen’s graduate students all tended to feel that they had one with her. She was the best kind of teacher and mentor: asking a great deal of her students and giving back even more, often without the students’ awareness of it until much later.

“She was the best kind of teacher and mentor ..”

Ellen keenly appreciated the value of scholarship. She was zealous in bringing us to learn more, think further, and communicate better. If you were struggling with Greek, she could suggest other learning strategies; if you were struggling to compile your first course syllabus, her reflections on her own experiences were immensely helpful.

None of this is to say that she took herself too seriously. She had a staggeringly detailed knowledge of the New Testament's history and could recite very respectable portions of *The Life of Brian* from memory. A research seminar on Rome's first Christians meant long hours in the brutal July heat at an archaeological site, with enthusiastic comparisons of gelato at lunch. That evening, Ellen demonstrated a unique ability to

keep a dozen jet-lagged, sweat-soaked, and sun-blinded people engaged in a long, energetic discussion of its research implications. But she also knew how to let herself be distracted by the evening's constellation of vesper bats, pausing the conversation for us all to lean back against a seminary courtyard's walls and watch them rise to flutter in a glorious dusk.



DISCOVER YOUR MINISTRY: TANIA LESACK REFLECTS ON EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

A few years ago, Tania Lesack was seeking an opportunity and a space where she could discuss her faith with other people:

“Our [Anglican Church] worship services are not set up to give people a chance to discuss; and a lot of people find it difficult to discuss their faith; they're uncomfortable because we don't do it a lot.”

Lesack also found gathering people for parish bible study was often challenged by scheduling issues.

Now a graduate of the diocesan Centre for Lay Education's Education for Ministry (EfM) program, Lesack reflects on how the program provided students with a safe space to explore their faith, look at the basics of Christianity, and gain a level of comfort in talking about faith and issues related to personal faith.

What exactly is EfM? It is a program of theological education for lay people, comprising four years of study total, meeting in small groups with a trained mentor. The program

combines academic study with integrative components to help participants take what they learn about Scripture, church history, theology and ethics into their own lives and hearts, supporting them in living out a vibrant baptismal ministry in the church and in the world.

“I have a much deeper knowledge, certainly a knowledge of the context [in which scriptural texts were written], which is really important. When you attend church services you get snippets of the bible. In EfM, you don't just

read it; you study it. The program texts speak about how the bible was put together and you come to understand it's not a book you read cover to cover, which is normally how we read books; and it would appear to make sense with the bible because it starts with "In the beginning..." and ends with the events after Jesus' resurrection; yet it's not really that sort of book at all. It's more like a library between two covers."

One of the books read by the class this year examined the topic of interfaith relations. Lesack remarks that she learned how interfaith relations work most effectively through relationships between people rather than meetings where the topic itself is interfaith relations:

"When you attend church you get snippets of the bible. In EfM, you don't just read it; you study it."

"The stories were not about Christians impacting others but how the faith of other people had an effect on the person who was writing the story. Fascinating, especially in a multicultural society where we need to be much more open to interfaith dialogue."

For more information about the EfM program offered by the Centre for Lay Education and to sign up for classes starting in September, please contact the Director of the Centre for Lay Education, the Rev'd Tim Smart at:

revtimsmart@gmail.com

or visit the Centre for Lay Education webpage at: www.dio-mdtc.ca/lay-ed



Tania Lesack EfM 2014 graduate and current MDTC M.Div. student

MONTREAL MISSION INTERNSHIP

A PROJECT OF THE MONTREAL DIOCESAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Vocation • Mission • Discernment
Multicultural • Urban • Bilingual

Do you know someone aged 18 - 25 who is exploring a call to missional ministry in the Church and is looking for a paid internship for the summer of 2015?

Email mmi2015@dio-mdtc.ca to sign up for updates.

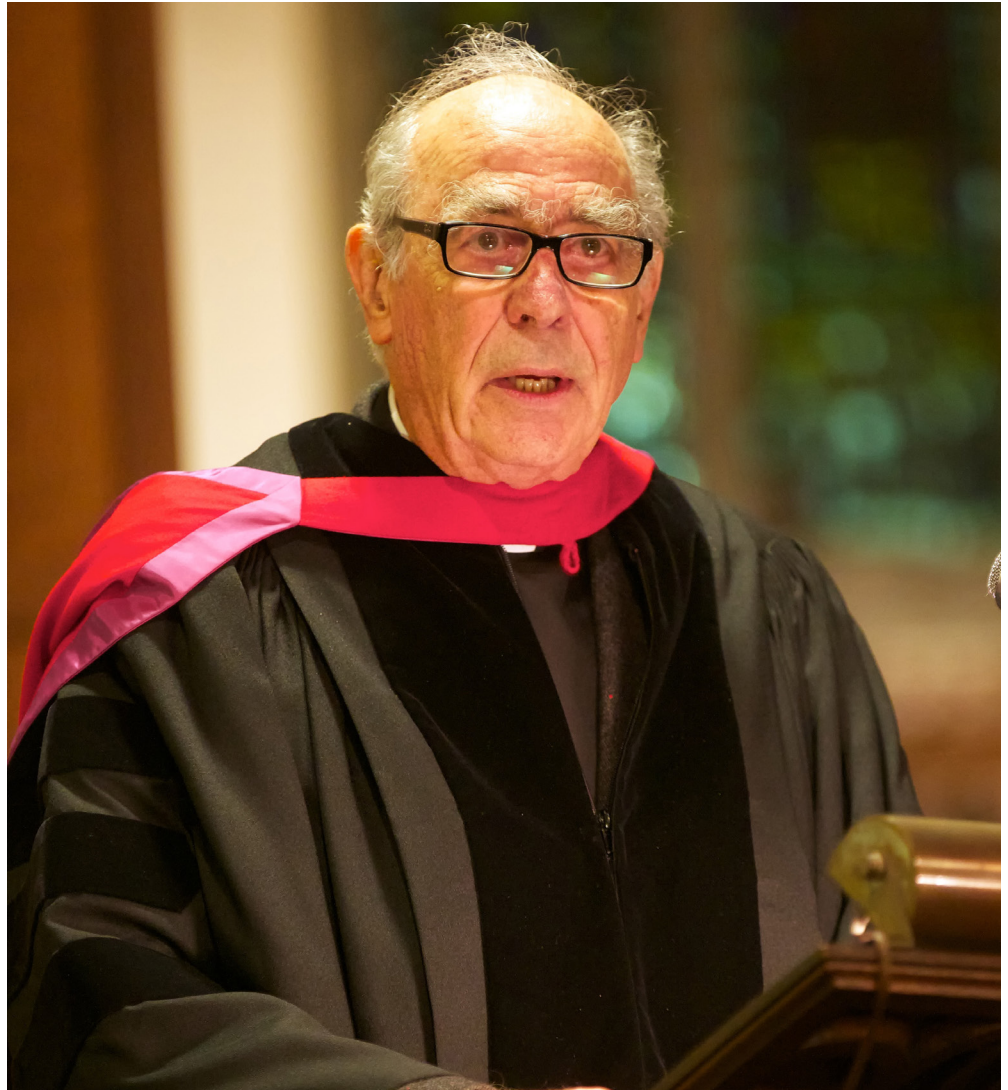
CONVOCATION 2014 ADDRESS: LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTION

The following text is an edited version of the address given by the Rev. Dr. Richard Cawley at the 2014 convocation of Montreal Diocesan Theological Education. Dr. Cawley is this year's recipient of the college's honorary doctoral degree.

Almost 15 years ago Andrew Hutchinson, then bishop of the diocese of Montreal appointed me to chair a commission on education and formation in the church. The final report was submitted in December 2000 A.D. It had been four years in the making.

Since then much has happened in the field of education in the church in our diocese. The Report seems to have generated a good deal of reflection among both clergy and laity and considerable change has taken place since that time in matters educational in parishes, in the diocese at large and at the college. Clergy continuing education is now considered normal.

In the Report I can see that we laid emphasis on lay education and made only passing reference to the role of the college in the education of clergy for full-time ministry. In part this is because the college program was then and is now both progressive and innovative and has



The Rev. Dr. Richard Cawley, recipient of MDTC honorary D.D. 2014

been in the care of some remarkable educators who are constantly seeking to expand and improve the program. I know this from my years of membership on the college Board.

I am convinced that the context in which education takes place is a central component in all learning. The approach to learning

encountered particularly in the college's In-Ministry year ensures that the internship experience in parish assignments is the central focus in learning. This educational approach is called the action/reflection learning model. It means that what is encountered in the internship becomes the basis of reflections in class. This leads in turn to the development

of understanding and insights, which lead to more appropriate and skillful action. This is often called experiential learning. Experience reflected on then is critical to learning, preparing students for pastoral ministry in the parish and society. Participants in the Education for Ministry program receive a similar, experience-based education. An experience-based education encourages graduates of both programs to continue to learn in their ministries and to do so while staying in touch with contemporary life.

Experiential learning is not just an educational technique it is in fact how we all learn. It is how we learn to walk, to talk, to relate to people, to do all those complicated things that allow us to be members of a family, to be participants in the community and to take our place in society. It is also the way Jesus taught his disciples. As they followed him they saw what he did and how he treated people – healing the sick, feeding the hungry, interacting with women as equals, reaching out to those people their society despised, the hated Samaritans, the mentally ill, the feared Roman overlords, in fact anyone different from themselves. As the gospel writers tell us, the disciples found this difficult and challenging but because they loved him and were committed to following him they could not avoid these experiences as they struggled to make sense of them. The disciples learned together, they reflected together and later on were sent out to

proclaim the gospel message of God's unconditional love and acceptance to the people. We may be sure that what they experienced in the time they spent with Jesus equipped them to become his apostles and messengers.

“...what is the purpose of education in the church?

...it is so that we may come to know and love God.”

We are all called to ministry and today we face a world, not so much indifferent to the message of Jesus, as unaware of its true import. So how does God teach us as Christians and how does God educate us as church community? The root meaning of the word education is to lead forth, to draw out. God has been leading the church throughout its long history, drawing us collectively to understand more deeply the message that Jesus proclaimed, to understand more fully the Gospel of compassion and inclusion that he taught by his example and

behaviour. His actions show us that no one is outside the circle of the love of God. Understanding this is as difficult for us today as it was difficult for the disciples. If we look at even the recent history of our church, we can see how difficult it is for us to grasp how wide and how deep and how utterly without boundaries is the compassion of God. The conflicts we have experienced over the full inclusion of women in the life of the church in ordination to the priesthood; the conflicts we have experienced over the full acceptance of gay and lesbian persons; the struggle we have had to include and embrace aboriginal Anglicans fully in the church – each of these created conflicts that have confronted us with painful difficulties in understanding where God is leading us. Like the disciples of Jesus we have experienced the pain of conflict and separation from our fellow Christians, we have experienced the confusion that results from confronting new and difficult understandings. Yet through it all God has been leading us to a deeper level of compassion and to a fuller understanding of the profound love of God for his creation and for every creature in it. So you see experiential learning is not simply an intellectual activity or a pedagogical technique, it is a profoundly human process that engages us emotionally. We may shrink from this kind of learning but we cannot escape from it. We have struggled and continue to struggle to express this kind of learning in the collective life of the church.

So where do we go from here? And what is the proper context of the education for lay and ordained ministry? When I was a seminarian back in the 1950's, ministry education was focused on the traditional theological disciplines and some practical training relating to pastoral ministry and parish administration and the conduct of public worship. Ministry, whether lay or ordained was focused on serving and maintaining the existing church community. But our world is utterly different. Religion is no longer taken for granted as it was then, the community of practicing Christians has shrunk and so many of us are, like myself, elderly. If we are to ensure that preparation for ministry is appropriate then the context of ministry preparation must be in the world, the world in all its pain and joy and confusion; that world where the most marginal and vulnerable are to be

found: in the streets, in the mental hospitals, among the elderly confined to the old age care facilities, in the prisons, among the drug users in the safe injection sites, among young people wherever they gather. Experiential education is a process of encounter with those in sorrow and despair. Our calling is among them. Let us be clear that ministry is the work of all of us and the learning context for every kind of ministry needs to be where these souls are found. Internship in these contexts is the appropriate context for the practice of ministry. It is in this context where Christians can begin to listen and so learn and thus come to act for we have a message of hope and salvation and the promise of the unconditional Love of God for everyone. The college is already showing us the way forward I am sure it will continue to expand its commitment to experiential learning.

As you can see I realized that the Report on education was incomplete. It didn't come to grips with the fundamental question that needs always to be asked when we consider matters educational in the church. That question is: what is the purpose of education in the church; why is it that we do this and place such importance on education and the role of learning in the church? And the answer is both simple and profound: it is so that we may come to know and love God. And we do so as we come to love and serve his people, especially his lost and confused and sorrowing people. And we do this so that we may become transformed by the God revealed to us in Jesus. For it is him we encounter in service to others. We can seek him and find him in each human being we encounter and especially among the lost and lonely and needy. This is the purpose of education for ministry.

PASSION IN CONTEXT:

THE MONTREAL MISSION INTERNSHIP 2015

This generation of young adults, raised in a diverse and interfaith society, are as socially engaged, and politically aware as ever; yet there is a profound gap between how the church views mission and the developing notion of mission framed by the passions and interests of engaged young adults. The church has a great deal to

learn, not only about how our emerging urban culture understands itself, but also about how mission and service will be undertaken in this context defined by its diversity.

The MDTC Montreal Mission Internship (MMI) program projected for summer 2015

intends to break open a conversation between young people, between church members and the wider context, and between all participants and the God who looks upon us in love.

The church has a great deal of experience to offer those young adults who are exploring their

vocation, and developing their skills as emerging leaders. The college believes it can be of great service to the participants by giving them an opportunity to explore their vocation in a safe and supportive environment.

MMI 2015 will be a fruitful laboratory for all participants, encouraging young adults to explore their vocation in a broad urban context which will serve as their mission field. The college will select and gather a group of six young people ages 20 to 26, drawn nationally from a diverse background, who are inspired to serve the community and are willing to develop mission projects in our urban core.

Students will design their mission projects based on their passions, and the local context, and new projects conceived outside the typical area of Christian mission will be encouraged, though creative ideas within existing missions, such as St. Michael's Mission, are also expected. Wherever possible, the students will also be grounded in a local worshipping community, even if it is not their primary mission field.

Students will be supervised and supported in their work by a program which includes a framework of theological reflection, and experienced guides in fields of spirituality, and other practical missional skills as needed. The interns will be encouraged to communicate back

to their faith communities using a combination of social media and group presentations. The college looks forward to sharing the findings of this project and making them available to the wider church community.

Are you/do you know a young adult who may want to explore vocation through mission projects and theological reflection in Montreal in summer 2015? Contact us for information and updates on the Montreal Mission Internship at:

mmi2015@dio-mdtc.ca



Montreal Diocesan Theological College MMI 2011 participants

MDTC CONVOCATION 2014

ST. PHILIP'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
MONTREAL WEST



Clockwise from top left: **The Ven. Peter Hannan**, honorary D.D. 2008, deep in thought during the convocation address. MDTC associates, graduands, students, friends gather at **St. Philip's Anglican Church** in Montreal West for MDTC Convocation 2014. **Dr. Stanley Brooks**, current MDTC M.Div. student, reads one of the lessons. **Verna Dottin** receives her EfM diploma in the company of the **Rev. James Pratt**, the **Rt. Rev. Barry Clarke**, Dip. Min. '78, D.D. 2006, and **Karla Holmes**, Dip. Min. 2008. **Lee Greyfeather**, EfM grad poses with a friend.



Clockwise from top left: **Nancy Greene-Gregoire**, EfM grad, with husband Jean-Charles. MDTC chapel organist **Mark McDonald** leads the congregation in music. EfM graduate **Gail Turnbull**, Lay Reader at Holy Trinity in Lakefield, Lower Laurentians, completed her 4-year course online. She is pictured here with her husband Brian. Group shot of the 2014 EfM mentors and graduates: **the Rev. James Pratt** (mentor); **the Rev. Karla Holmes** (mentor); EfM graduates: **Tania Lesack**; **Verna Dottin**; **Nancy Greene-Gregoire**; **Leslie West**; **Lee Greyfeather**; **Vivian Lewin**. **Brian Perron**, M.Div. 2013, shows his support for MDTC and the Centre for Lay Education.

A CONTINUED LOVE FOR LEARNING: MDTC ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

The Rev. Canon Tim Smart

I'm proud to be a graduate of Montreal Diocesan Theological College and McGill University. Like many of you, I found my time of study and prayer to be challenging to the mind as well as the soul. I gained both knowledge and insights which would serve me well in the years to come. My love for learning and exploration of the questions of faith were encouraged during my years at Dio. I have never lost that love for learning which comes about when people of passion and faith come together.

We are now revitalizing our Alumni Association in order to encourage your active participation in the life of your Diocesan College.

Our current project is to assist in the upcoming Montreal Mission Internship 2015. The Alumni Association and Friends will help to plan and carry out this innovative program which invites young people from May to July 2015 to experience mission and ministry in the Diocese of Montreal. Previous programs that we have run have shown positive results for both individuals and the Church. This year we will be asking our Alumni for both their financial support and their practical support in implementing this internship.

We are also inviting both Alumni and friends of the College to a social evening, a Homecoming

Dinner hosted by MDTC on Wednesday, October 22, 2014. A light dinner will be served at 4 PM, followed by a lecture at McGill's Faculty of Religious Studies by Old Testament scholar John Collins.

You may have noticed recently in the Montreal Anglican newspaper a monthly article written by graduates of MDTC. In this way we are sharing the good news and adventures of what our Alumni have been up to. If you would like to submit an article for an upcoming issue, please email **Tim Smart** at: revtimsmart@gmail.com

And to keep up with current events on Alumni and Friends, please visit our website at: <http://dio-mdtc.ca/alumni/>

We look forward to staying connected!



Deacon Robert Coolidge (left) sits beside the Rev. Canon Dan Fleming at MDTC Convocation 2014. Canon Fleming was a retired priest in the diocese of Montreal and an alumnus of the college, where he earned a Licentiate in Theology in 1957 and an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1999. He died on July 17 this year.

MDTC newsletter goes digital. Please be advised that the Summer 2014 issue will be the last widely distributed printed edition of the MDTC newsletter. Future issues will be posted to the college webpage www.dio-mdtc.ca and distributed by email. If you wish to continue to receive a printed copy, or if you wish to subscribe to the digital version, please communicate your request to us by email info@dio-mdtc.ca or regular mail at 3475 University, Montreal, H3A 2A8.

Thank you for your continued support, and we welcome updates and news from our college alumni and affiliates.