

EDUCATING LEADERS FOR JUSTICE, COMPASSION, AND TRANSFORMATION



You shaped the path for Deepak Nitesh Yohan, David Mugadzi, Emmah Mutisi, Prince Nkhoswe, Lawrence Muvunzi, Jason Byassee, Whitton Daley, Sourav Nag, Lexina Nyirenda, Elijah Mwandila, Liberty Maadza, Togbeola Olubisi, Michael Kalito, and Martin Mwale (top to bottom and left to right).

These ministers find their place, with your help

You made it possible to develop, plan, and facilitate the Admissions Circle, but more than that, you welcomed ministers from all over the world into warm CCS community.

“Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening.” That was the standard greeting in the online UCC Admissions Orientation Learning Circle in August. The fourteen participants joined CCS program staff, from Canada, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and India.

The Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) is doing the online orientation for ministers who are seeking to be admitted from other denominations into ministry in the United Church of Canada (UCC).

CCS is particularly suited to offer this. An important part of our diaconal approach to education is being aware of the big picture and equipping leaders to be responsive to context.

CCS understands that building community and developing collegiality is an important part of formation. This circle provides a way to counter isolation and build a robust network of support with other Admissions Ministers, as

participants grow in familiarity with United Church polity, history, theology, and ethos.

CCS is doing this to respond to inequities Admissions Ministers face in finding a position in the United Church. Even though they are experienced leaders in their own denominations and

INSIDE: READ MORE STORIES ABOUT YOUR GENORISITY

THESE MINISTERS FIND THEIR PLACE WITH YOUR HELP page 1

DONOR PROFILE page 2

YOUR SUPPORT EQUIPS FOR MINISTRY page 3

A WORD FROM ALAN LAI page 3

GIVE MAYA THE TOOLS SHE NEEDS TO TOUCH LIVES page 4

there are many vacancies, search committees can be suspicious about the ability of these applicants to understand and navigate Canadian and UCC cultures.

The Orientation Circle offers ways to explore and better understand Canadian cultural diversity. Some of the participants are already in Canada and can share experiences and practical learning. There are also tools to help ministers be in fruitful dialogue with search committees and participate in the wider church.

Rev. Sourav Sampat Nag summed up the experience, “The supplementary resources shared with us were valuable references that I will continue to use in the process of getting to know the UCC better.”

DONOR PROFILE Elizabeth’s Leadership Promotes Giving

Elizabeth Brain (graduate 1993) is one of CCS’s generous donors. As a graduate and co-chair of Central Council, she started giving monthly and encouraged others to take up the practice.

When Elizabeth came to CCS she was a medical doctor and had been teaching at McMaster. She was looking for a change and CCS appealed to her so she applied. There were three other Anglicans in her year so they could support each other.

Upon graduation, Elizabeth became a volunteer hospital chaplain and eventually co-created and led a pastoral ministry program in her Calgary parish. At the time, Elizabeth was already on Central Council and then became Anglican co-chair.

Elizabeth started out as an annual donor when she graduated, but as co-chair she knew more intimately the financial side of CCS. She felt the regularity of donations was as important as the amount, so she decided to give monthly through Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR). She encouraged

other members of Central Council to do the same.

For her, CCS is so unique, doing great work that is not well known. Elizabeth says, “The whole world won’t support it so it’s important for those of us who are part of the community to fund it to the best of our ability. I feel really called to give to CCS.”

Your support equips for ministry

You’ve said you appreciate reading stories of graduates and how they reveal the range of possibilities for diaconal ministry. Together with Elizabeth Brain’s profile, you can read about the ministry of a graduate from each of the last four decades.

Kim Debra Schweyer (Graduate of 1983)
Debra came to CCS with a yearning to experience another way of learning than in university. She became a diaconal minister to test the United Church’s view of the breadth of what diaconal ministry could offer.

After working in congregations, many in teams, she needed to do something different. Teaching a high level writing course to immigrants became a springboard for English as an Additional Language, then doing language assessments for immigrants, and eventually managing the assessment office.



Thanks to you, graduates like Debra Schweyer and Elizabeth Brain, become good leaders.

“I used more skills from CCS there than anywhere: analyzing systems, group work, managing conflict, and spiral reflections when I couldn’t figure out what to do.”

Now retired, Debra is an online trainer for language assessors where she encourages learners to participate in their own learning. Debra says, “As long as it remains great fun, I’ll keep doing it.”

Laura Fohse (Graduate of 2003)

Laura was searching for something when she got involved in church in her early 20’s. Then she was asked to be the youth minister. Laura says, “I knew nothing!” but she was encouraged to try and to enter discernment for ministry.

She wasn’t convinced ministry was for her until she saw a CCS display and diaconal ministry grabbed her. She came to CCS.

After graduation, Laura was settled to the Rainbow Ministry in Winnipeg. She felt 100% equipped for the work as she helped congregations understand same gender marriage and develop policies. Moving to Saskatoon, she joined a three person team at McLure United, where she was responsible for Christian Education, outreach, and pastoral care.

Laura has been the vocational minister for three central regions for a year now. Knowing about learning styles from CCS has been helpful in intercultural work with candidacy board interviewers and students. Laura says, “CCS is the single most important thing I did with my life.”

Alice Watson (Graduate of 2013)

Alice says, “I don’t think there’s much to tell; I officially retired this spring.” Coming from a Counselling career, she arrived at



Students like Alice Watson find they have something worth saying, thanks to you.

CCS after being a lay leader in her small, rural congregation in the Kootenays.

All her life she felt she had to come up with the “right” answers but at CCS she discovered the freedom to say what she thought. In her mid-sixties, she learned that she had ideas to share that were valued.

Alice served in congregations in Saskatchewan and B.C before returning to counselling. “I don’t think I had a remarkable ministry” Alice shared, “but I think I left my mark in some way. CCS confirmed who I was and how I could be in the work.”

A word from Alan Lai, Principal

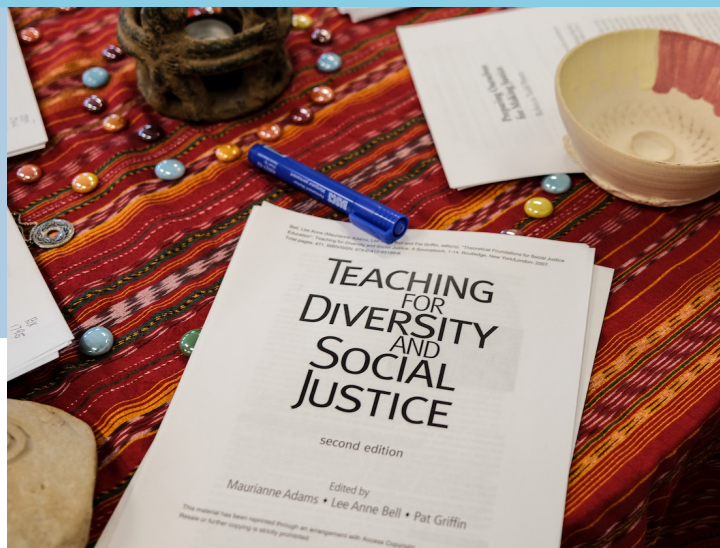


As a national theological school one of our strengths is facilitating online learning. This is the reason why the United Church of Canada approached us to offer an online Admissions Orientation Circle to ministers who are in the process of joining this denomination.

We were truly blessed to have a chance to offer the Admissions circle in the last two weeks of August. While our typical students are Caucasian and from Canada, most of the 14 ministers attending this circle were from Asian and African countries. Such rich cultural diversity added much to the dynamic of learning. It’s inspiring and a big deal in terms of serving the Creator’s diverse planet earth!

I can’t say enough to thank you for your financial support to CCS so that we can offer vibrant learning activities and keep experimenting with relevant events for interested groups. Despite being a small theological school, our hearts for mission and transformational learning are big. I am glad that you are part of this ministry with us!

Give Maya the tools she needs to touch lives



Maya is on a unique journey. She wants to learn how to engage meaningfully with people who do not attend church—people who seek a spiritual path to right relations and justice in their communities and in creation. Her passion is deep and her vision is inspiring.

Here’s the challenge: the Centre for Christian Studies doesn’t bring in enough funds annually to cover the costs of experienced program educators who can nurture Maya’s growth.

That’s where you come in. Your support isn’t just about money; it’s about making Maya’s dream come true. When you donate, you give

Maya the tools she needs to touch lives and make a real difference.

Can you imagine the ripple effect? Maya, with your support, will go on to impact countless people who are seeking spiritual guidance and a path to justice.

Please make a donation today. Your contribution, big or small, is a vote of confidence for Maya’s journey.

YES! I will support Maya’s journey.

Please use my gift to give Maya the tools she needs to touch lives.

My donation is in the amount of \$25 \$50 \$100 other _____

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