

PASTORS OF EXCELLENCE

A Program of the Leadership Centre at The Presbyterian College, Montreal

The Need

Congregational ministry is challenging work, and when clergy suffer in their work, congregations also suffer. And when congregations suffer, the contribution a church can make to its community is diminished. A study that included ministers of the United, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Lutheran Churches in Canada, as well as the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, reported these findings.

- 60% indicated they considered leaving ministry, 33 percent leaving their denomination.
- 67% strongly agreed with, “I sometimes project my job frustration on my family.”
- 70% moderately or strongly disagreed with: “I feel fulfilled in ministry.”
- 16% indicated depression (double the national average in Canada.)
- 83% agreed with: “My church wants a CEO rather than a pastor.”
- 91% agreed with: “Being ‘minister’ is more like a job than a calling.”
- 78% strongly agreed with: “I feel my position as a minister demands perfection.”
- Few (4%) went to denomination-based support in a crisis.

The need is clear: pastors are suffering, and they need help.

The Program to Meet the Need

The Presbyterian College is working on a collaborative ministry with Ashland Theological Seminary (Ohio) to establish the Pastors of Excellence program in Canada.

This program focuses on the importance of clergy renewal, and for almost a decade, has helped hundreds of pastors rediscover the joy of their calling, and has provided the opportunity to discover a healthier way to fulfill that calling.

Based on small clergy peer groups, mentored by experienced, carefully chosen ministers, the ministers take part in six transformational learning retreats over one year. An overwhelming majority of participants have shown significant growth in such areas as spiritual vitality, effective leadership, stress processing, and self-awareness of strengths and areas for growth.

How You Can Help

Healthy clergy help build healthy congregations, and healthy congregations make a significant difference in their communities.

Your gift of \$1,600 supports one minister in participating in the Pastors of Excellence program for one year. Gifts can be pledged over a period of up to five years.

Our goal is to provide Pastors of Excellence bursaries for thirty participants per year for the next five years by raising \$240,000 in our campaign.





One Story - Reverend Chuck Congram

Chuck Congram began as a student minister at Lakeshore St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Tecumseh, Ontario with a small congregation. When he retired, 35 years later, the congregation numbered more than 1,000 on most Sunday mornings. Chuck has been a passionate supporter of the need to develop leadership skills in clergy. This is his story.

If I were to be asked - "What was the most significant and shaping learning experience of your 35 years in ministry?" - the answer would come quickly and easily. Though there have been a myriad of valued experiences, without doubt the one with the most profound and lasting effect and impression was that provided by the Pastors of Excellence program at Ashland Seminary, Ohio.

Ironically, this program was not designed to enhance ministry skills, nor to impart church management or church growth skills. It was instead designed to help me understand and appreciate more fully who I was, how I behaved and how that impacted others. In particular, it enabled me, in the safety of a caring group of fellow believers, to discover a deep healing for some profound woundings which were impeding my relationships and ministry because of a set of false beliefs and some chosen dysfunctional behaviors I had embraced to deal with the pain.

In the decade following my journey in this direction I have been abundantly blessed to travel through a similar journey as a mentor with a number of other pastors, including some from the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Inevitably, the extent to which an individual is impacted by this experience is in direct proportion to their willingness to engage in an open and full-hearted way.

I understand that the Presbyterian College, with the permission and support of Ashland Seminary, is planning to import and implement this excellent program in Canada. I wholeheartedly support this initiative and highly recommend the program to all of my colleagues in ministry. Healthy ministers make for healthy congregations.

The Broader Impact

Participants in the Pastors of Excellence Program are part of the Presbyterian College's Leadership Centre whose mission is to develop, train and nurture transformational leaders. The Centre provides programs for people of all faiths, young and old, who aspire to make a positive and profound difference in our world in the name of Christ.



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