Managing the Complaint Department

Principal’s Message

There is nothing new about people complaining. The New Testament church had its share of complaints. Not long after it was still celebrating a membership class of 3,000, there were complaints about the food distribution program. When Peter received his commission from Jesus, one of his first thoughts was whether other disciples were pulling their weight.

There have been various studies about complaining, especially in the workplace. The majority of people spend more than ten hours a month complaining about their bosses and upper management and one third spend more than twenty hours. That does not include the complaining they do about their colleagues! I couldn’t find figures for complaining in the church, but I doubt it would be much different.

Why do we spend so much time complaining? It releases pent-up energy making us feel good, it requires very little risk, and it’s easy. These studies show, however, that complaining doesn’t simply release pent-up energy, it spreads it, creating a culture of negativity.

Contrast that with Paul’s letter to the congregation at Philippi. With all the challenges Paul is facing with his new congregations and in his own life, how is it that he speaks so passionately about joy rather than writing a litany of complaints?

Paul is a realist, but he is a realist in both the holy and the human. He knows people don’t always get along. He knows that there are many challenges for the young congregations he has planted, but he also knows that Christ is present with his people. He also knows that God is at work in surprising ways. What differentiates Paul is that he gives more weight to the holy than to the human. He is confident that God’s purposes will win out over human shortcomings. He encourages those around him to orient their thinking in the same way: “Whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence...”

1 See Peter Bregman, Harvard Business Review.
and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things (Phil. 4:8).”

In this edition of the newsletter, we want to highlight those things we believe are worthy of praise. We are grateful for the young leaders joining us from other parts of the world. We are grateful for the generosity we have received from many in our financial campaign. We are grateful that God is still calling people into various forms of ministry. We are grateful for the work of our ecumenical partners and the faculty in the School of Religious Studies. We are grateful for the denominational support we received and for the work of our sister colleges.

We hope that after reading this newsletter and reflecting on God’s work in your own context, that you too might think about all those things worthy of praise.

Dale Woods
Principal

Message from the Board Chair

Don Walcot, Chair

I think spring at the college is my favourite season. Fall is full of anticipation, as new students arrive and old students return; winter is a slog of studying, bad weather, and papers due. But spring, with the cherry tree in blossom in the courtyard, and Convocation, speaks to the future and all its potential.

And the college now has so much potential. The new strategy of revitalization and recruitment is well in place. Students are coming from around the world; the staff is strong; facilities are steadily being upgraded; we have a new cafeteria/restaurant and McGill has one of its services in our building; our relations with the Montreal School of Theology and McGill are stronger than ever; and our finances have stabilized. Now, emphasis is on more recruitment of new students—tell everyone you know about what a vital and interesting place The Presbyterian College in Montreal now is.

For me this a somewhat bittersweet message as, after 13 years on the board, I am retiring. I have seen the board move from being a senate to that of an operating board; from the Dr. John Vissers era to that of Dr. Dale Woods. New windows and paint in bedrooms, new classrooms, new technologies, new programmes, new students—what a new and exciting time to have been involved! And my wish and prayers are that the college reach its full potential and become a significant centre of learning and training in North America—a dream, I believe, that it is fully capable of being realized.

My thanks to Dr. Woods, Dr. De Vries, Dr. Marr, Dr. Shute, and all the staff for their help over the many years. My thanks to the board for being so supportive and involved during my time on it. And particular thanks to our donors whose generosity has helped to make it all happen. May the college continue to light up the world with Christ’s message of love and hope. God bless you all!

Donald Walcot
Chair

The Presbyterian College welcomes Annie Baldessari

Annie joins The Presbyterian College as its new Administrative Coordinator after completing her Master’s Degree in Informational Studies at McGill University. With over ten years of experience in customer service and an eye for organization Annie hopes to help the college in its work and vision.
What our Faculty are Doing

Roland De Vries, Director of Pastoral Studies, has a paper accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of Théologiques, the theology journal of the Université de Montréal. The issue is dedicated to the theme of migration, and Dr. De Vries’ article is entitled “Becoming a Guest: Christology and Ecclesiological Identity.” His paper explores the guest Christology of the late Nigerian, Presbyterian theologian Enyi Ben Udoh, who insisted that the Christ introduced by missionaries to the Nigerian context was a tyrant who gave little respect or place to their culture. Udoh argues that Christ must be re-introduced within Nigeria precisely as a guest. The article also takes up the question of what it means for its identity that the church must become a guest, with Christ, in the cultural context of Quebec and Canada today.

Lucille Marr, Chaplain and Academic Dean, is also an academic historian and has recently published an article in the journal of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society (December 2017), in which she examines the life and personal journal of Frances Davidson, a missionary of the Brethren in Christ. Frances Davidson’s journal gives expression to her deep faith, her keen intelligence, her leadership abilities, as well as her joys and discouragements. Writing of her experience of God’s call to mission, Davidson offered these words to her journal: “Last Friday I felt that the Lord had really called me to go into the Foreign Mission Field for him, and Oh! What a feeling came over me. How I longed to show even in small measure how I loved him…” There is also a very personal connection between the author of this paper and its subject matter, since Frances Davidson is the great aunt of Dr. Marr’s mother.

Torrance Kirby, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the McGill School of Religious Studies, and member of the teaching faculty in our M.Div. program, has published (together with P.G. Standwood, M. Morrissey, and J.N. King) a collection of sermons that were preached from the open-air pulpit of St. Paul’s Church, London in the sixteen and seventeenth centuries. The book is entitled Sermons at Paul’s Cross, 1520-1640 (Oxford Press, 2017), and includes sermons by John Donne (English poet and cleric) and Hugh Latimer (one of the Oxford Martyrs), among others. Though it may be difficult for us to imagine today, the open-air pulpit of St. Paul’s church was at the centre of political, cultural, and religious developments in that period. This volume invites us, perhaps, to ask how the church might speak the gospel faithfully, and publicly, in its context today.
A Passage to India—Going Global

Dale Woods

In 1995, the senate of The Presbyterian College drafted a new mission statement which included the vision that the college would be a place of international study. Connected to an international university, it would invite students and scholars from around the world. With the goal of advancing this part of our mission, I made a trip to India for a higher education three-day event. It was oriented for students who wanted to study abroad in a variety of disciplines. I met with agents, students and other presenters who were interested in theological studies in Canada. I was also fortunate to meet with Father Joseph Puthenpura, who heads the All India Association for Higher Christian. Formed in 1967 by Principals of various Christian colleges, it seeks to provide an ecumenical approach to higher Christian education. During my visit with Father Joseph, I was able to observe the interview system used by one Christian university, where 3,000 students were being interviewed for 600 possible placements.

Such ventures do not bear fruit overnight, but we believe we have much to learn from the global church as well as having resources to share. I hope that in the future we might have some students from India studying at the college and would look forward to the possibility of a student or faculty exchange.

The Library: A Report from the Front

Dan Shute, Librarian

Libraries are still thriving in spite of the advent of e-books. Even so, the reality of digital resources has meant that library spaces are changing. To use a small example, library tables need to have outlets in case a user’s computer starts to lose power. It’s my biased prediction, but so far well supported by the evidence, that libraries are here to stay but are no longer an unassailable necessity. Each library needs to justify its existence. The college’s library, for example, has certain features that make it a partner in community building within the college and the consortium of theological colleges.

First, PC library is a talking, slurping, and munching library. That is why the coffee maker and mugs are in a central position in the reading room. Long before I arrived, the library was a place to socialize, to argue, and to compare notes. This in itself is a positive good in an age of social media alienation and a palpable lack of face-to-face interaction. In PC library, those who wish to be alone simply put on their headphones or disappear, hopefully to be heard from again, into the stacks where study tables await and the quiet of an undiscovered tomb reigns.

Another unique feature of PC library is that its reading room is not just noisy but also sunny, flooded with light that comes through three floor to ceiling windows that take up an entire wall. This natural lighting makes the reading room a pleasant place to hang out. (These very large windows are in parlous condition and need replacing at $3,000 a window. I say this, should you, or you and your friends, be able to help.)

A third feature of PC library is that it has had historically a good collection of Biblical commentaries, appreciated by all three denominational colleges, and Reformed/Presbyterian works, a boon for students of our denomination. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, the addition of new resources (Cont’d. on page 8)
Theological Education Goes Camping

Dale Woods

At the heart of theological education is the belief that God calls all of us into ministry whether in the church or in the world. But who helps us discern that sense of call?

In May, I had the opportunity to work with forty young adult camp leaders from Cairn Camp and Camp Kintail, both in Ontario. Each year, camp leaders meet for training and leadership development, alternating between the two camps. This year it was Camp Kintail's turn to host the event.

Along with Rev. Tom Vais, we ran a two-day event called Dependable Strengths. The program is designed to help people identify those gifts unique to them and gain clarity on how best to use those gifts whether in the workplace, the congregation, their family or community. By reflecting on experiences in their lives, telling their stories to others, gaining valuable feedback and distilling those gifts that continually rise to the top, participants gain a greater sense of confidence in their own unique set of gifts. Frederick Buechner once wrote, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Our goal in offering Dependable Strengths is to help young people find that place of deep gladness and then to consider how it might meet with the world’s deep hunger.

At the end of the program, participants form small groups of five or six, listen to each other’s strengths and then create a dream project that makes use of everyone’s strengths. I can only say that the projects created, and the enthusiasm shared by each person’s contribution was truly inspirational.

I would like to thank Theresa and Jonathan for their wonderful hospitality and for the great work they are doing. You can find out more about the camping ministries at Kintail and Cairn on their websites: www.campkintail.ca and www.ilovecamp.org.
John Markus Arseneault

*Diploma of the College, Master of Divinity*

Challenge can lead to growth, and growth can give glory to God. Many people are surprised that it was Dan Brown's book, *The Da Vinci Code*, that caused me to take Christianity as my own faith, but it challenged me to ask questions and learn, to expand my understanding of life. I think others would be surprised that being challenged would lead to an M.Div. from The Presbyterian College. Yet with guidance from many people in my life's journey, from Nova Scotia, to Montreal, to South Korea and back, I have grown stronger in my convictions. I've learned much from the college and hope to serve others to help them see what is beyond us, to challenge our tunnel vision of the world, and to feel the Holy One who holds us close. Then perhaps we can come together at the table of the Lamb, share in the abundance of Grace and pour each other a Cup of Humility. Let us give glory to God the Father in Jesus Christ, and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, so that we can all be called saints in love. Amen.

Sandra Scarlett

*Master of Divinity*

In 2015, I entered the M.Div. program at The Presbyterian College, having previously completed a B.A. in Human Relations/Theology and an M.A. in Theology (both from Concordia University). My intention was to continue my studies part-time. However, in September of 2017 I took a sabbatical from my full time job, at Canada Post, to pursue full-time studies. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made. As a Pentecostal, I found The Presbyterian College very welcoming and I felt at home. I really enjoyed my academic experience at The Presbyterian College—has been amazing and rewarding, yet, challenging. The depth and detail of the classes and field placement, and what I learned, was far beyond what I expected. The course load was intense; therefore, time management was the key to my success. The college encouraged me to be academically strong and to become a better person in life. Through the M.Div. program, I was introduced to many new concepts that have changed my view of the world. Although I am returning to my full time job at Canada Post, I will also be working at the Chateauguay Community Church as a part-time assistant pastor. My academic journey started with uncertainties about my future and calling, but today I have gained theological insights and confidence, and a better sense of who I am in Christ. I can confidently say that I am ready for my future.
Graduating Class of 2018!

Katelyn S. Macintosh

*Diploma of the College, Master of Divinity*

Almost three years ago I moved from New Glasgow, Nova Scotia to Montreal to attend the M.Div. program at The Presbyterian College. For me, these have been three wonderful years of growth as I deepened my own faith, theological perspectives, and skills for ministry. What particularly stands out to me from this experience is the beautiful sense of community that is fostered at The Presbyterian College. I always enjoyed how each academic year began with a retreat, affording us the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with one another. In a world where it can be difficult to find time to stop and reflect, this was also a beneficial time of personal renewal in my own faith. I also greatly enjoyed our weekly gathering for worship and lunch. How inspiring it was to step out of the busyness of our week, to gather as faculty, staff, students, and friends of the college to worship He who creates and sustains. It was also beneficial to gather regularly to share our experiences and uphold one another in prayer. As I currently seek a ministry opportunity, I remain grateful for the community that I found at The Presbyterian College.

Pierre Shenouda

*Bachelor of Theology*

My journey in studies with The Presbyterian College has been one of challenge, growth, and self-development. Studying what I have always regarded as faith-based notions and principles in a rigorous, secular academic light was both greatly interesting and greatly challenging. Far from the traditional seminary setting, where all of your classmates and colleagues subscribe to the same faith and even the same version of that faith, McGill's classrooms are bustling with manifold religious (and nonreligious) expressions. This was fertile ground for interesting conversation and dialogue, which is valuable in showing an outsider’s perspective and also helping you think deeper about things you may have taken for granted. This setting could also be challenging for a student of faith, but there is also much to gain. Instead of living in your own bubble, it helps you become more aware of the wider world, allowing you to better share the gospel. I am immensely thankful for The Presbyterian College and for the multifaceted support, encouragement, and opportunities that it has provided for me, without which I wouldn't be where I am today. (Pierre Shenouda will complete his final classes in summer 2018.)
News from the Leadership Centre

Tim Keener, Director of the Leadership Centre

“Seminary didn’t train me for this”—the case for Congregational Vitality Studies in seminary.

One Sunday, at the end of our morning service, a pastor approached me about a particular challenge he was facing in the life of his community. As he described the nature of the challenge, he sighed and confessed, “Seminary just didn’t prepare me for how to deal with this.” It wasn’t the only time I’ve heard this type of comment from a good leader, with good training, from a good institution. The reality is, it is difficult to prepare students for the complex task of congregational leadership.

One of the most critical tasks for the church in North America today is the renewal of established churches. Unfortunately, the curriculum in theological colleges often does not address this need. Theological education still primarily focuses on the church leadership tasks of: teaching (providing Christian education); liturgics (leading services); and pastoral care (offering counsel and support). These remain key to healthy congregations but in a time of change we also need to take seriously the preparation for leading change.

The vast majority of graduates will go directly into an established church setting. Many of these will arrive in a church that is either at risk, at a critical moment, or simply stable (which does not necessarily mean healthy and missional). The dynamics of leading change are treacherous and if we haven’t prepared them for this… it is quite possible that all their preparation in theology, liturgics, and pastoral care may be lost in the trials of congregational renewal. We simply must do better to prepare our leaders, and to care for our established churches.

A Positive Vision for the Future

In light of these challenges, The Presbyterian College has a vision—a generation of graduates from our seminaries across Canada entering congregational ministry equipped not only with the biblical, theological, and pastoral skills needed, but also prepared to lead existing churches through intentional journeys of congregational renewal.

Imagine leaders who can empower their people and inspire change. Imagine congregations learning to discern what God is calling them to, assessing their level of health and mission, and making plans to dream again as a People of God.

There are no quick and easy fixes. Ultimately, congregational vitality is the bi-product of doing consistently good ministry and the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit. The way to Congregational Vitality is a long journey of growth and transformation but it is not haphazard. It requires an utter dependence on God, and it requires new knowledge and new skills. In the church, and in the seminary, we must be teachers, learners, and practitioners of the unique skills of leading congregational renewal. We want to hear our graduates saying, “My seminary prepared me for this challenge!”

Tim Keener is the director of the Leadership Centre at The Presbyterian College. He is a student of organizational behavior and the church, and he is passionate about helping churches better understand and travel the pathway to congregational vitality.

(Cont’d. from page 4)
Taking a Moment to Celebrate

Tahra De Lallo

Three and a half years into our five-year Taking a Leap of Faith Capital Campaign, I am delighted to report we have exceeded our first milestone of $1.75 million in gifts and pledges!

Through the generosity of over 55 churches from Atlantic Canada to Vancouver Island, gifts have been gratefully received through special offerings, special events, endowment funds, project and mission funds to name a few. We have also graciously received gifts from over 250 individuals and families who are part of our Presbyterian College family. No matter how big or how small, we have gratefully received these gifts and welcome all support to our mission that God has entrusted to us. Some individuals have chosen to give a one-time gift in celebration of the campaign, others have pledged their gifts over a number of years, others have given by PAR (monthly automatically withdrawal) and some have remembered the college in their wills or have notified there is a provision in their will for the college. We have also received gifts In Honour and In Memory (please see the list on page 10) and others have chosen to give by donating shares. (For more information on the latter, please see the article on Donald Walcot, chairman of the board of The Presbyterian College who has given annually through the gift of shares.)

We are also grateful for the gifts received from several Montreal Foundations and organizations within The Presbyterian Church in Canada and beyond. These gifts help us to advance our mission to equip faithful and effective leaders for the church and the world.

Many blessings to all!

If You Like what You Read

At The Presbyterian College, we are trying to make a difference in theological education. Too much has changed in our world for the equipping of the church to be locked into past traditions. That does not mean getting rid of tradition; it means bringing the best of our tradition to create something new. As writer and consultant Kennon Callahan says, “God honours the past, but God does not live in the past.”

But not only programs and visions need to change. The funding of theological education will also need to change. Once dependent on large gifts to endowment funds and denominational support, theological colleges will need to find new ways of funding their mission to equip leaders for the church and the world.

We believe one way into that new future is to build a larger base of smaller donations. Of course, “smaller” is like beauty, it's in the eye of the beholder. What constitutes an affordable gift depends on the resources one has and the other commitments one has already made. Nevertheless, we have set a goal of two hundred donors who would be prepared to give $20 a week or $80 a month or $1,000 a year. Some can give more, others would need to give less.

If you like what you read about the initiatives at The Presbyterian College, we would invite you to join us. Various options are described on the donation form—we are happy to provide further information.
In Honour and In Memory

Tahra De Lallo

The Presbyterian College has gratefully received *In Honour* gifts from those who wish to celebrate a loved one’s anniversary, birthday, or milestone. Other gifts have been received *In Memory* of those loved and always cherished. No matter how big or how small, *In Honour* and *In Memory* gifts recognize the gift of others and will be gratefully recognized.

Mrs. Grace Mackay Bragg
Mr. James Douglas Dimock
Rev. Dr. Allan M. Duncan, Grad 1957, Hon. D.D. 1990
Rev. Dr. Lloyd W. Fourney, Grad 1969, Hon. D.D. 1999
Rev. Thomas Gemmell, Grad 1963
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Bramhall
Rev. John Jennings
Rev. Dr. William Klempa
Rev. Dr. Lloyd George Macdonald, Grad 1974, Hon. D.D. 2004
Rev. Donald W. MacKay, Grad 1968
Rev. Dr. Donald MacMillan, Grad 1933, Hon. D.D. 1979
Rev. Archibald Donald MacKinnon
Mrs. Margaret Joyce McLean
Ms. Verna Medina (Joseph)
Rev. Dr. Oliver Nugent, Grad 1937, Hon. D.D. 1961
Rev. Dr. Ian (Donald) Victor, Grad 1979

This is a new program at The Presbyterian College. If we have omitted someone’s name, our sincere apologies. Please contact our Development and Stewardship Officer, Tahra De Lallo, at tdelallo@pcmtl.ca so we can make the necessary corrections.

A new Initiative—Developing Global Leaders

Dale Woods

Core to our mission of The Presbyterian College and taken from our mission statement passed by the senate in 1995, which stated *The College seeks to be a centre for education and research... attracting students from churches in Canada, the USA and around the world*, we have recently begun seeking funds to build a dynamic and vital global place of learning. Our goal is to extend the rich resources of the college and its affiliation with McGill University to budding young Christian leaders from around the world who, in turn, bring with them the rich resources of their faith and Christian experience.

We have already begun welcoming students from Brazil, Egypt, South Korea, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria. The diversity of experience and culture adds a great deal to community life and learning. Some of these students require financial support. We have, therefore, begun a new project to support international students. These gifts would fund students, enriching not only their own lives and the congregations they will eventually lead, but enriching our Canadian students who will have the opportunity to grow and study alongside the global church. Please join us in this initiative by completing the form on page 12.
Many ways to Share

Tahra De Lallo

Donald Walcot's term as the chairman of the board will come to an end this June. Don came to the college first as a member of the senate in 2005 and continued as a valuable member of the board of the college. As Don commented: “I love the new vision of the college—its progress from a traditional seminary to one that is international and reaches to all parts of the church.”

While on the board, Don helped to create a policy statement for the Investment Committee, a best practice guide to managing the college’s Endowment Fund. Over the years, Don has served on various committees including Finance, took on the role of treasurer and most recently chair of the board. We are grateful for his time and expertise and will miss him, as he must now step down having served the maximum of two terms.

We have not only been blessed with Don’s gift of time and dedication to the college over the years, but we have gratefully received his financial gifts through his donation of shares to the college.

I had the chance to sit down with Don and ask him personally why annually he chooses to give the gift of shares rather than another form of giving. Don’s response was, “First and foremost, I give to the things I believe in. Donating shares allows me to get a tax receipt for my gift but also not incur any capital gains if my shares have gone up in value. That means that I can save tax in two ways; one through my charity tax receipt that I receive from the college, while the second is if my shares have gone up in value, I do not incur the tax associated with the gain.”

According to Don, giving shares is relatively easy. You call up your financial advisor and they contact the college about the specific transfer instructions. They can also help advise you on which stocks to donate and which ones you should keep for a longer period of time. “It’s easy, beneficial and a cost effective way I can support new programs like Developing Global Leaders and the Leadership Centre.”

Celebrating the Life of our Oldest Living Alumnus

Dale Woods

In May, I had the privilege to stop and visit with Rev. Major Donald Howson, who this past year celebrated his 103rd birthday. Rev. Howson graduated from The Presbyterian College in 1940 and was ordained the same year. That’s 78 years as an ordained minister!

Rev. Major Howson was born in 1914 and attended Trinity College, Toronto in the late 1930s where he received his BA. He then went to the University of St. Andrew’s Scotland. There he had the good fortune to study under well-known theologians Donald Baillie and Edgar Primrose Dickie. Due to the uncertainties of the time, he was unable to complete his studies. He returned to Canada and enrolled at The Presbyterian College. He graduated in 1940 and was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament on Ascension Day.
He accepted a call to St. Andrew’s, Fredericton but in 1944 took a leave of absence to join the Canadian Navy; here he served until the end of WW II. He returned to Trinity College and completed an MA in psychology, and coming back to St. Andrew’s, Fredericton, he served as their minister until 1950. During that time, he brought the sacramental understanding he gained during his studies in Scotland, and introduced the concept of liturgical colors into The Presbyterian Church in Canada. When the Korean War broke out, he joined the Royal Canadian Army as chaplain, serving 1951-1953. He was particularly honored and proud to be the chaplain of the Royal Black Watch during this time. Upon returning to Canada, he continued to serve as a chaplain in various parts of Canada until 1968.

In 1968, he returned to his home in Peterborough and became a clinical psychologist at the local hospital until mandatory retirement at the age of 65. He remained active, becoming a consulting psychologist for the Northumberland Board of Education until the age of 80. He served on the Peterborough Board of Education from 1970 until the early 1990s. He continues to be involved in his home congregation of St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church as well as various community groups, including the Order of St. Lazarus, a Christian organization dedicated to the care and assistance of the poor and sick, and the for the advancement and advocacy of palliative and hospice care.

For many years, Rev. Major Howson has been a supporter of the college, giving monthly through the PAR program. It’s not often that I get to visit someone who has been an ordained minister for 78 years and who continues to read history and theology! It was a delightful conversation and we are grateful for his many years of service and generosity.

## Join us in Our Mission

Please fill out the information about your donation send it to: The Presbyterian College • 3495 University Street Montreal, QC • H3A 2A8 • info@pcmtl.ca

Or donate online at [www.presbyteriancollege.ca](http://www.presbyteriancollege.ca).

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OR

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