

NEWS RELEASE

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Montreal School of Theology receives Lilly Endowment Inc. grant for project:
Transforming Pastoral Leadership through Contextual Engagement

The Montreal School of Theology (MST) is pleased to announce it has received a grant of \$1,000,000 (USD) from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help MST identify, equip, and support pastoral leaders who are able to lead congregations into creative and confident engagement with their ministry context.

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment's Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. It is a three-phase initiative designed to help theological schools across the United States and Canada as they prioritize and respond to the most pressing challenges they face as they prepare pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

Through a new Montreal Mission Internship for those considering ministerial leadership, a revised Field Education program, and renewed Mentorship Program, MST will equip leaders with personal qualities, spiritual grounding, skills, and knowledge to lead congregations in connecting with, engaging with, and learning from their ministry context, whether a local neighbourhood, community, or city. While traditional pastoral competencies oriented towards congregational leadership continue to be important, leaders today need skills for contextual analysis and community engagement, together with theological reflection.

The Director of MST, the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries, comments: "This grant from Lilly Endowment will enable MST to pursue its renewed mission with creativity and with strengthened institutional capacities—particularly in engagement with our unique and dynamic context of Montreal. This project and supporting grant represent a profoundly hopeful moment as MST and its constituent colleges—the Montreal Diocesan Theological College, The Presbyterian College, and the United Theological College—creatively reimagine theological education for the present moment and the church now emerging."

The Montreal School of Theology is one of 84 theological schools that are receiving a total of more than \$82 million in grants through the second phase of the Pathways initiative. Together, the schools represent evangelical, mainline Protestant, nondenominational, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic and Black church and historic peace church traditions (e.g., Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, Quakers). Many schools also serve students and pastors from Black, Latino, Korean American, Chinese American and recent immigrant Christian communities.

"Theological schools have long played a pivotal role in preparing pastoral leaders for churches," said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment's vice president for religion. "Today, these schools find themselves in a period of rapid and profound change. Through the Pathways Initiative, theological schools will take

deliberate steps to address the challenges they have identified in ways that make the most sense to them. We believe that their efforts are critical to ensuring that Christian congregations continue to have a steady stream of pastoral leaders who are well-prepared to lead the churches of tomorrow.”

Lilly Endowment launched the Pathways initiative in January 2021 because of its longstanding interest in supporting efforts to enhance and sustain the vitality of Christian congregations by strengthening the leadership capacities of pastors and congregational lay leaders.

Note:

The receipt of this grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. is conditional upon the Montreal School of Theology obtaining a charitable status designation from the Internal Revenue Service. An application for such status was submitted in the first quarter of 2021, and the MST expects to receive a favorable response in coming weeks.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

[Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly, Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of [community development](#), [education](#) and [religion](#) and maintains a special commitment to its founders’ hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. The primary aim of its grantmaking in religion, which is national in scope, focuses on strengthening the leadership and vitality of Christian congregations in the United States. The Endowment also seeks to foster public understanding about religion and lift up in fair, accurate and balanced ways the contributions that people of all faiths and religious communities make to our greater civic well-being.