Ministry Through Hope: C. Douglas Jay Exploring the Lines that Divide Humans

One of Canada’s most highly regarded theologians, C. Douglas Jay Vic 4T6, Emm 5T0, is honoured by the ECAA Executive this year for his extraordinary ministry to the church and society at large. As a child of the Great Depression, Jay grew up with a profound sense of desperation and hope, influencing both his views of ministry and the trajectory of his life.

Born in 1925 to the Rev. Charles A. and Luella G. Jay, Douglas Jay grew up in Hamilton, Ontario. The stock market crashed just four years after his birth; depression and poverty polluted the community. The situation was desperate, but in that despair, his parents made it their mission to help those around them, especially those in financial need. Gardens were cultivated by the community and his parents, in turn, tried to sow and nurture faith in their neighbours. Nothing changed drastically, he recalls, but where there had been no hope, there was some: seeds of change and optimism had been planted.

By the time Jay arrived in Toronto and at Victoria College in 1942, the Depression had given way to the Second World War and Jay, like many Christians at the time, struggled with reconciling his philosophy and theology with the harsh realities of battle. He read with great interest scholars and theologians who related their philosophies to the social issues of the day: John McMurray, John Line, Gregory Vlastos and Victoria College’s Professor Eric A. Havelock—scholars who knew the horrors of war but never lost their faith.

Jay was inspired by their commitment to faith—a feeling he experienced again as a lecturer at Queen’s University in Kingston. Following the completion of his degree in philosophy and history in 1946—and in spite of his not having a PhD—Queen’s hired Jay to teach. Many of his students were around his age and most were war veterans. His lessons on probability and possibility challenged them and he, in turn, was “moved by their very good questions.” The experience at Queen’s—while unplanned—was formative to his faith. Meeting “those boys” who had already seen and experienced so much and yet remained faithful and motivated to learn, compelled him to re-enter academia and join the ministry. He felt obligated to explore those lines that divide humans—socio-political and religious—and how they might be bridged.

In 1948 Jay graduated with an MA in philosophy from the University of Toronto and by 1950 he had completed his MDiv from Emmanuel College, earning the prestigious Sanford Gold Medal in Divinity. The United Church of Canada (UCC) ordained him to the ministry that same year. By this time, too, he had married Ruth (Crooker) Vic 4T5 and together they moved to Edinburgh, Scotland, so that he could pursue graduate work. He “worked like a beaver,” completing his PhD in just over 18 months and in time for the birth of their first son, David Vic 7T4, in 1952.

The completion of graduate studies brought the Jays home to Canada, where he ministered to the Elk Lake, Ontario,
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But Jay could not sit still. During his time at Emmanuel College, he would travel to over 50 countries and take on several roles. He lectured at the United Theological College in Bangalore, India, and at the Hankuk Theological Seminary in Seoul, Korea; at the United Church of Zambia Seminary, Kitwe, Zambia; and at the Federated Theological Seminary in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and the Union Theological Seminary in Manila, Philippines. He served as chair of the national Division of World Outreach (DWO) for three terms between 1975 and 1982, and represented the DWO on A Foundation for Theological Education in both South East Asia and New York from 1975–1992. A member of the commission of the Association of Theological Schools on accrediting in the U.S. and Canada since 1966, he rose through the ranks until he was elected president from 1984–1986, only the second Canadian in its 50-year history.

Jay’s progressive ideologies about diversity and interfaith dialogue and Christianizing the social order inevitably sounds imperialistic . . . We should adopt a missiology which emphasizes the goal of abundant life for all, without claiming all for Christianity or the church.”

As Hutchinson pointed out, Jay “defended a different interpretation, while admitting that the commission was probably pushing the church to the edge of where it was prepared to go at that time.” Remarkably, his 1966 response remains a cornerstone of today’s UCC policy and is a testament to the forward-thinking nature of his theology.

Jay is also well known as the founding director of the Toronto School of Theology (TST), the largest ecumenical consortium for theological education in Canada. The TST is rich in diversity and currently includes seven schools, most of which are on U of T’s campus. Jay has always stressed the importance and need for “open and respectful dialogue in crossing the lines that divide us from persons of other faiths and cultures” and it seems that this is what led him to the TST director position as well as his ministry, more generally. He has always believed that God can be seen in religions other than Christianity, although he recognizes the controversy in such a statement. As principal emeritus since 2010, he is pleased to see Emmanuel College as a leader in ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, particularly with the inception of the Muslim Studies Program.

Named to the Order of Canada in 1988, Jay has received numerous accolades. U of T celebrated his outstanding service with an Arbor Award in 2001. In 2002 he was awarded the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Medal and, in 2012, the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal for his continued devotion to providing interfaith understanding and cooperation. In spite of these accolades, the five honorary degrees, his extensive education and career, he remains humble and his theology simple: “No one can have a full and perfect knowledge of God, or faith or the realm of science,” he says. “But God, under various names, is always consistent with love.”

As 1 Corinthians 13:13 says “these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” And it is love—a love of God, of learning and of others—that sustains Jay in his retirement, especially the love of his late wife, Ruth, their three boys and the hope and faith he shares with family and friends. His memories of colleagues, such as Northrop Frye Vic 3T3, Emm 3T6 who dedicated his last book, The Double Vision, in part to him, bring him great comfort when he recalls their conversations.

His many awards have confirmed his place in the academic and theological spheres, and the Distinguished Alumni/ae Award will forever confirm his place at Emmanuel and, thus, in faith, in love, and—perhaps most importantly—in hope.
In many respects, our work over the past five years at Emmanuel College has been about anticipating a different kind of future, one we believe will be faithful both to our past and to God who calls us forward. We cannot yet see it fully, so it remains somewhat a mystery to us. As Albert Einstein once put it, the essence of faith is mystery, a “knowledge of the existence of something we cannot [quite] penetrate.” I believe a faith in mystery can actually provide us with an appropriate perspective toward the world. The problem with much of Christianity today is that it is terribly uncomfortable with mystery. More often than not, Christians do everything in their power to explain it away. We prefer certainty. We like to have all the answers, especially in times of crisis. Sometimes we jump to answers before we should, trying to insure our own survival. In the same way, we are not very good with anticipation. We have lost our ability to be childlike, to imagine a different future from the one that seems to be right around the corner. We adults tend to judge things based solely on our own experiences. But the experiences we accumulate sometimes weigh us down. Anticipating something unexpected, something outside the realm of our experience, becomes very difficult for us to do.

A few years ago, I heard the tail-end of what had evidently been a long argument between two students about religion. One of them finally said to the other one: “Look, we’ve been arguing for a couple of hours about this point. When all is said and done, and we both might as well admit this and be done with it, we are both talking about what we believe to be true—you in your way, and me in God’s way.” For many, God becomes merely an extension of themselves. Yet God intends to be faithful to the entire creation, not just to our personal experiences. Frankly, creation means that if we genuinely love God, then we, like God, must embrace life. By that, I don’t mean embrace individual life and its individual experiences. We must embrace the beauty of all life, from the beginning of time until now and in a way that anticipates the future. Now is the time both to honour the past and embrace the generations of people who will follow us. Can we begin to imagine a vision of both theological education and the church 50 years to 100 years from now?

The United Church, we hear all around us, is in crisis. In response, theology might play a role. Loving God connects us to an ability to embrace life with hope, even when things, based on our personal experience, seem rather hopeless. Faith in a time of crisis may also demand that we acknowledge that God, and the world God loves, are both bigger than our personal experiences.

So, what does the future hold for the United Church or for Emmanuel? I’m not sure. Sometimes leadership means being able to admit as leaders that we do not know everything. Faith, after all, should leave a little room for mystery. But I do know that when we love the God of creation, we express faith in a God who wants all creation to flourish. In this way, we can begin to see that creation does not revolve around us, whether we are Upper Canadians or Maritimers, just plain Christians, or Christians wearing a United Church stripe. Instead, life revolves around the God we love. When as people of God we anticipate God’s future, welcome a little mystery, and embody the broad spirit of creation, whatever crises we may face, whether in the United Church or in theological education, might not seem quite so hopeless.
Two Emmanuel ThD Students Receive SSHRC Awards

Susanne Guenther Loewen and Becca Whitla Emm 1T3, current Emmanuel College students, are recipients of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) awards for their doctoral work in theology.

Loewen’s research brings liberation/feminist theologian and peace activist Dorothee Soelle into conversation with her own tradition of Mennonite peace theology. “My focus is on nonviolent interpretations of the cross which critique the traditional notion that God required or orchestrated the violent death of Jesus,” she says.

Whitla began her doctoral studies this past January: “I plan to use critical post-colonial theories to analyze the dominance of Western European hymnody in congregational singing in mainline Protestant Canadian churches. It is my hope that a greater diversity in congregational singing will breathe life into the song of the church by including global and contemporary hymns as well as carefully de-colonized and reclaimed elements of Western European hymnody.”

“We feel like the underdogs that are being affirmed.”

As both scholars and mothers, the two women reflect on the impact that financial awards provide in the complicated life of today’s student. Freedom from economic stress allows both students to focus on their academics without feeling guilty about not earning: “[The SSHRC funding] is not just for me,” noted Loewen who gave birth to her first child in June. “It’s for my family, too.”

The application process for SSHRC funding is extremely competitive. The Toronto School of Theology has a submission quota of only four doctoral applications: “Emmanuel is proud of the fact that three of the four SSHRC applications going forward from TST were from Emmanuel students and that all three were forwarded by U of T to SSHRC,” says Principal Toulouse. The top-ranked candidates are forwarded to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) at U of T, and are assessed alongside other SGS students from various departments. Finally, the top-ranked candidates from that screening process are forwarded directly to SSHRC for a final ranking. “We feel like the underdogs that are being affirmed,” laughed Whitla. “Winning the SSHRC is really a shout-out to all students and faculty in theological and pastoral disciplines.”

The Future of the Church: Douglas John Hall Delivers the Cousland Lecture

Emmanuel College warmly welcomes Douglas John Hall Emm 0T3 to its campus for the Cousland Lecture. Hall is professor emeritus of Christian theology in the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University. He is the author of numerous books on theology and the recipient of many notable awards, including the Distinguished Alumnus Award of Union Theological Seminary, the Joseph Sittler Award for Leadership in Theology and the Order of Canada. Following his lecture, The Future of the Church, there will be a reception, and all are welcome to attend.

The Cousland Lecture, organized by the ECSS, honours The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Harrington Cousland Emm 2T6 (1894–1987), who taught church history at Emmanuel College from 1927, and served as principal of the College from 1956 to 1963.

Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2013, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. with a reception to follow.
Location: Emmanuel College, Room 119
RSVP: Betsy Anderson at 416-813-4096, or betsy.anderson@utoronto.ca
Emmanuel Professors Honoured with Prestigious Grants

Two Emmanuel College faculty members have been awarded funding to support their academic research. Paul Scott Wilson, professor of homiletics, was awarded the Sabbatical Grant for Researchers from the Louisville Institute, a Lilly Endowment-funded program based at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in Kentucky. Pamela D. Couture has been named a 2013–2014 Henry Luce III Fellow; one of six scholars named by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

Wilson’s project, *Preaching Poetry in an Age of Math*, looks at developing a theology and transforming preaching practices. His primary focus will be how to make preaching more effective. “Like many people, I have seen many . . . depart from the church and have experienced uncertainty as to how best to lead.” He questions whether ideas about preaching have become too fixed: “This project does not have final answers, but open, constructive discussions and offers practical directions for faithful alternative practices.”

Couture, who holds the Jane and Geoffrey Martin Chair in Church and Community, will document and analyze the story of Kamina, Democratic Republic of Congo. This community of Luba Congolese people, largely Methodist but working in an interfaith context, who keep the peace and respond to the war in Congo that killed 5.4 million people. “I seek to bring the practices of ministry into active conversation with social conflict, global Christianity and issues of poverty, especially as they relate to women and children.” Couture will examine how Christian ministry, faith and practice can inform interfaith peace-building and—as is the case with the story of Kamina—the rebuilding of a nation. *Where’s the Peace to Keep?* is the name of her project and focuses on religious peace-building efforts during the years 1996–2008.

Emmanuel College Takes over Trusteeship of the Emily Lucy Eccles Fund

Emmanuel College has recently acquired the Emily Lucy Eccles Trust Fund, formerly managed by Centenary United Church in Hamilton, Ont. The trust provides financial assistance to Emmanuel College MDiv students, with preference to those from the Hamilton Conference. The fund was established by John Henry Gibon Eccles, who was an active member of Centenary United, and named in honour of his mother. Please visit http://www.centenaryunited.org/history-2 to read more.

Prayer Room: A Welcoming and Quiet Atmosphere

The Qur’an 15:6 reads “Enter here in peace and security.” These words are inscribed on each entrance of the Masjid an-Nabawi, the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, Saudi Arabia. They are also inscribed on a painting that lines the entrance to the new prayer room and ablution facilities at Emmanuel. On January 22, 2013, Principal Toulouse welcomed faculty, students and alumni at the opening lecture, reception and tours.

Ingrid Mattson celebrated the launch and gave the lecture, *Rooting a Canadian Muslim Identity*. Principal Mark Toulouse explained that the new Muslim Studies Program and facilities at Emmanuel stemmed from the College’s “belief that the concepts of justice, goodness and love are much larger than any one particular religion or tradition can fully define.” Muslim Studies, he said “is part of our effort to create an environment where persons representing diverse faiths can engage one another, discover common concerns and interests, and learn to respect and appreciate the differences that provide fullness to our experience of what it means to be human.”

Emmanuel College thanks The Canadian Jaffari Muslim Foundation, Islamic Foundation of Toronto, The Islamic Institute of Toronto, Muslim Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto, University of Toronto Muslim Students’ Association—all of whom contributed financially to refurbishing the room.
For as long as most readers of this newsletter have known me, I have been working on a book about the United Church of Canada. As I write this column in August, I am still awaiting the final page proofs that my publisher advised me to expect in June. But the book can now be pre-ordered online from Indigo and Amazon, so it is virtually finished!

One of the unexpected consequences of my slow writing is that publication of A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada coincides with the comprehensive review of the United Church’s mission and structures that is now underway. The opening chapter describes what was in a sense an earlier comprehensive review that convinced three Protestant denominations to let go of old structures in order to meet the demands of the 20th century. Mobilizing for the sake of God’s Kingdom in Canada was the mission that inspired the church union movement of the early 1900s. Its leaders believed that their venture in ecumenism would not only improve the operational efficiency of the uniting churches but also create better persons, better communities and a better nation. They saw adaptation to time and place as a sign of vitality, and believed that they had been called to work together in a new way.

As the 40th anniversary of church union approached, the United Church appeared to have made remarkable progress toward that end. Morale was so high that “outsiders often complain that we act as if we were the church in Canada,” wrote John Webster Grant in 1963. But by the end of the decade the moral and cultural framework that the founding generation took for granted was collapsing. The failure to become a church “which may fittingly be described as national,” as the Basis of Union had put it, occasioned a crisis of mission in the wake of a revolution that brought an end to Christendom in Canada. The United Church’s remaking was led by leaders who called for new ways to connect faith and community by “listening to the world.” They were convinced that its mission needed to be reconceived to meet the spiritual needs of a New Age.

The changes in church life championed during the 1960s are often blamed for setting the United Church on a course that ultimately hastened its decline. My book suggests a more charitable assessment of the handling of the adaptive challenges it faced. It draws on theories of organizational change that find it is during times of uncertainty that innovation is likely to happen. But innovation is only one element of successful adaptation. A second critical element is conserving the wisdom and experience of the past that are needed for recovery. As one writer put it, healthy systems in society, as in nature—whether a forest after a fire or a coral reef after a storm—rely on “memories” during times of reorganization and renewal.

The United Church that emerged after the 1960s was different from the church that had come into being in 1925. It stepped toward the future with new models of worship and fellowship, a new creed and a new organizational design. A new mission drove its agenda. It no longer considered itself a national church in the old sense. Instead it had a ministry in and to the world that came with a new emphasis on social action. The crisis kindled a difficult but unavoidable conversation about its identity that continues today. And in that exchange both conservatives and innovators planted seeds of memory and hope, beneath the hard soil of an indifferent culture, for another generation to harvest.

Making the United Church in 1925 was possible because its founders refused to be tied to a fixed view of the church or the world. Its remaking in the 1960s grew out of a similar conviction: the church is not called to escape from time and place, but to engage them more faithfully. If there are to be more chapters added to its story in the 21st century, the United Church will undoubtedly undergo another such metamorphosis. Historians tend to be rather modest about making predictions, but I feel quite confident in offering this one: in a culture that has lost much of its Christian memory, re-Christianizing those affiliated with it will require as bold a venture as church union once seemed, with even more uncertainty about the outcome.

Phyllis Airhart is an associate professor of the History of Christianity at Emmanuel College and teaches in U of T’s Department for the Study of Religion. Her upcoming book, A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada, is published by McGill-Queen’s University Press.
MILESTONES

Alumni are invited to send information for inclusion in MILESTONES. For marriages, please indicate, if applicable, whether you prefer to be known by your married or birth name. An obituary must accompany death notices.

Or e-mail your Milestones news to emm.alumni@utoronto.ca.

Achievements

ALAN COOPER VIC 6T9, EMM 9T7
has written a book, The Second, to be published in November by Exile Editions. Through fictional storytelling, Cooper addresses spirituality versus religiosity and examines the correlation between decreasing church attendance and membership and increasing spiritual hunger.

CHERI DI NOVO EMM 9T5, EMM 0T2,
MPP for Parkdale-High Park, has been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. She also received a Lambda Literary Award for her book Qu(e)erying Evangelism. She was named newsmaker of the year by Xtra Magazine as well as Grand Marshall of Pride for the passage of her bill Toby’s Act.

TED DODD EMM 7T8 was named co-recipient of the Davidson Trust Award from the United Church of Canada for “excellence in teaching and scholarship in theological education.”

WAYNE FRASER EMM 7T2 and ELEANOR JOHNSTON VIC 7T2
have written and published a novel about Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway’s Island is available at www.wayneandeleanor.com, amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com; an e-version is available at lulu.com.

Emily Young Vic 1T3 photographed at the June 18 convocation with her parents KATE (McLARTY) YOUNG EMM 8T8 and NEIL YOUNG EMM 8T6, current member of the Board of Regents and ECAA Executive.

Deaths

DAVID P. BOULD VIC 5T3, EMM 5T6, in Kirkland Lake, Ont., December 16, 2012.


DONALD CRAIG KERR EMM 4T2, in Sarasota, FL., June 5, 2013.


DONALD E.C. MCLEAN VIC 4T6, EMM 5T1, in Kitchener, Ont., March 18, 2013.

J. OMAR WALMSLEY VIC 4T8, EMM 5T2, in Oshawa, Ont., August 7, 2012.

E. RUTH (BEWELL) WILKINS EMM 5T6, in Regina, on May 12, 2013.

Call for Nominations

Do you know an Emmanuel College graduate whose vision and leadership have distinguished her or him through extraordinary and exemplary ministry to the church, academy or society-at-large? Nominate her or him today for the 2013 Distinguished Alumni/ae Award by November 30, 2013.

Visit www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/alumni to make your nomination or download the nomination form.

On May 7, 2013, Emmanuel College graduates enjoyed lunch at St. Andrew’s United Church. As the Emm 1T3 Class Representative, Laura Springate brought celebratory remarks and congratulations for her fellow graduates.

Congratulations, Graduates!

Grad Year: Vic Emm
Name (Please add title and/or maiden name if applicable)
Address
City Province Postal Code
Telephone: E-mail:
Please include my e-mail address in my Milestones notice.

MILESTONES

Alumni are invited to send information for inclusion in Milestones. For marriages, please indicate, if applicable, whether you prefer to be known by your married or birth name. An obituary must accompany death notices.

Or e-mail your Milestones news to emm.alumni@utoronto.ca.
**NOVEMBER**

**Difficult Conversations: Speaking the Truth in Love** with Kathy Underwood
November 1, 10 am to 3:30 pm, Emmanuel College.
Workshop fee $85 plus HST, includes lunch. Register by October 25.

**The Toronto Festival of Preaching**
with Paul Scott Wilson, David Lose, Jana Childers and John Buchanan
November 3–5, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, Toronto.
Workshop fee $245, $50 discount for full-time students, includes Monday lunch, dinner, coffee breaks, and a wine and cheese reception.
Please visit www.yorkminsterpark.com/page/56/lester-randall-preaching-fellowship-2013/ for more information and to register.

**Starting Well for those New in Ministry**
November 4–7, Rundle’s Mission, Thorby, AB.
Please contact clergy.care@utoronto.ca for more information and to register.

**Thrive Where You Are: From Survival to Sustainability** with Marvin Anderson and Vivian Carter
November 23, 10 am to 3 pm, Delhi United Church
Workshop fee $60 plus HST, includes lunch. Register by November 15.

**Fiqh of Muslim Minorities in Canada**
with Sheikh Ahmad Kutty
November 5, 12, 19, 26 and December 3, 7 pm to 9 pm, Emmanuel College.
Course fee: $150, $90 for students and a reduced fee may be arranged where financial need is demonstrated.

**DECEMBER**

**French for Ministry Course, Level 2** with Stéphane Gaudet and Angelika Piché
December 9–13, 9 am to 5 pm, Emmanuel College.
Workshop fee $250 plus HST.
Please visit www.utc.ca for more information and to register.

**EMMANUEL DAYS 2014**
Save the Date – May 7, 2014

**JANUARY**

**Resilience for Times of Transition and Change** with Anne Simmonds
January 18 and 25, 10 am to 4 pm, Emmanuel College.
Workshop fee $150 plus HST includes lunch. Register by January 10.

**The Qur’an and its Interpretation in the Canadian Context** with Walid Saleh
January 21 and 28, February 4, 11, 18 and 25, 7 pm to 9 pm, Emmanuel College.
Course fee: $150, $90 for students and a reduced fee may be arranged where financial need is demonstrated.

**Creating Sustainable Missional Ministries** with Eric Law
January 24 and 25, February 25, March 29, April 22, May 9 and 10, Emmanuel College and on-line.
Workshop fee $2500 for each congregation with up to six participants. Apply by December 1.