

For Immediate Release: November 12, 2020

PRINCIPAL TOPPING REAPPOINTED FOR THIRD TERM AT VST

The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping has been reappointed to a five-year term by **The Vancouver School of Theology**. Dr. Topping's third term will begin on July 1, 2021. Topping has been Principal of VST for over 7 years, and the St. Andrew's Hall Professor of Reformed Studies for over 11 years.

Board Chair Michael Francis made the news public following a recent meeting of the school's board of directors. Mr. Francis noted that *"Professor Topping has provided exemplary leadership during a challenging time for the Vancouver School of Theology. The Board of Governors is thrilled that he has agreed to continue in his role as Principal for another five years. Richard's intelligence, diligence and generosity are at the heart of the school's success. I'm sure all our stakeholders will celebrate this extremely positive development."*



In acknowledging the reappointment, Dr. Topping says he *"considers it a privilege to work with the outstanding team of the board, faculty and staff whose hard work and commitment make VST thrive in the service of the Gospel. I look forward to us making the most of the challenges and opportunities for theological education with such outstanding students in this time that requires transformative and imaginative change in the service of God's reconciling work."*

During Topping's principalship, the Vancouver School of Theology team has led a time of renewal with new thresholds set in student enrollment, donor commitment, innovative programming, strategic partnerships and recruitment of outstanding faculty and staff. Vancouver School of Theology has recently been acknowledged for bold transformative change (In Trust), significant innovation in its Studio for Entrepreneurial Leadership (Association of Theological Schools) and as one of the ten most improved theological schools by QS university ranking.

Recent grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Fellowship of the Maple Leaf, The United Church of Canada, The Anglican Foundation, the MJ Murdock Charitable Trust and The Hager family support initiatives in preparing Indigenous Leaders for the Indigenous Church, the new Congregational Flourishing through Community Engagement project and endow programs like the Certificate for Leadership Excellence through the Sauder Business School. VST is closely aligned with the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the United Church of Canada, representing over 5000 churches nation-wide.

VST has also strategically expanded its theological partnerships with institutions around the world – including Durham University in the U.K., for a Ph.D., program, the Sauder School of Business at UBC, St Mark's College for an undergraduate program, Huron College at the University of Western Ontario and a number of theological schools in Asia - to further its reach, influence, and capacity to innovate and respond to how leaders are prepared for the church in our changing world. VST attracts growing numbers of students across the span of ecumenical traditions.

For Immediate Release: November 12, 2020

PRINCIPAL TOPPING REAPPOINTED FOR THIRD TERM AT VST

Dr. Topping's reappointment is welcomed by VST denominational partners, as noted by the Rev. Michael Blair, newly appointed General Secretary General Council of the United Church of Canada: *"Congratulations to the Board and community of VST on the reappointment of Dr. Richard Topping as Principal. I have greatly appreciated Richard's creativity and strategic thinking, his understanding of the changing character of the church, his deep faith, passion and willingness to collaborate."*

Archbishop Melissa Skelton states: *"Richard Topping is, hands down, the most outstanding head of a school of theology with whom I have ever worked, and I have worked with a number."*

VST students are equally delighted with Topping's reappointment. Robin Galey said: *"I have been fortunate to be Rev. Dr. Richard Topping's student and I think he is an excellent Principal to lead our school through the difficult times ahead. In my experience, Richard strongly believes in and is committed to his work as Principal. He epitomizes the school's mission, demonstrating thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leadership. I think the students at Vancouver School of Theology are fortunate to have Rev. Dr. Richard Topping as their Principal, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to learn from him."*

Alumnus and international student, Samuel Andri also shared: *"Dr. Topping's joyful-leadership at VST has shown us that when the love for God, the church, and the world become the chief motive in leadership, the organization and its people—by the grace of God—will flourish."*

In addition to serving as Principal, Dr. Topping also holds the St Andrew's Hall Chair in Studies in the Reformed Tradition. He teaches in the areas of Reformed and Systematic theology, Reformation history, faith and culture and theological interpretation of scripture. He was Lead Minister at the Church of St Andrew and St Paul in Montreal from 2000-2009 and taught at Presbyterian College, McGill University, for eight years. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in Canada where he has been active producing resources both scholarly and popular leadership and faith formation. He is a Strategic Advisor at Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, a Christian non-profit that equips the Church to support mental health and wellbeing. He is Minister-in-Association at Richmond Presbyterian Church, British Columbia and serves on the Ministry Committee of the Presbytery. He is a member of the Anglican (Heads of Schools), United Church (Theological Circle) and Presbytery (TELEG) national committees for leadership in theological education. Topping is a member of the Senate of the University of British Columbia where he serves on the academic facilities and library subcommittees.

Dr. Topping received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies from University of Waterloo, a Master of Arts in Theology from St. Michael's University in the Toronto School of Theology and a Doctor of Philosophy in Theology from Wycliffe College, under the direction of the late Prof. John Webster.

For Immediate Release: November 12, 2020

PRINCIPAL TOPPING REAPPOINTED FOR THIRD TERM AT VST

About VST

VST's core mandate is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the church in the 21st century. Among theological schools, VST is viewed as a change agent and an innovator for the church.

As an affiliated college of the University of British Columbia, VST is now ranked in the top 50 schools globally and in the top 10 of most improved theological schools. VST is accredited by the Government of British Columbia, and internationally by ATS (Association of Theological Schools). The Vancouver School of Theology welcomes students from many Christian communions, other faith traditions and Indigenous communities, while celebrating its core relationships with the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and United Church of Canada. The Indigenous Studies Program at VST is central to the school's identity and commitments. In 2021, the Vancouver School of Theology will celebrate its 50th Anniversary as a leader in theological education.

The Vancouver School of Theology acknowledges that the land on which they are located is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) People.

Contacts

Contact: Michael Francis
VST Board Chair
Vancouver School of Theology
6015 Walter Gage Road, Vancouver, BC Canada, V6T 1Z1
c/o: klee@vst.edu • 604-822-9808

Contact: Richard Topping
Principal and Professor of Studies in the Reformed Tradition
Vancouver School of Theology
6015 Walter Gage Road, Vancouver, BC Canada, V6T 1Z1
richardt@vst.edu • 604-822-9809