



McMaster Divinity College

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Dear Friends of McMaster Divinity College,

One of the great rewards of being a seminary professor is to see our students and graduates use their gifts for ministry in the various practices and places of ministry. However, we also recognize that ministry is more complex now than it has ever been, and so our students and other ministering people need all the resources that we can make available to them.

As a result, one of the very exciting developments at MDC is the launch of our Centre for Church and Culture, which you will learn more about in the following pages of this newsletter. The Centre is one means by which we enable our students to navigate the challenges of ministry in their changing church contexts. Students in our MDiv and MTS programs have had the ability to specialize in Church and Culture to help them focus the courses in their programs on how to minister more effectively in our challenging cultural milieus, and we have seen how this helps to create relevant and thoughtful pastors. However, we believe that we need to expand and build on this, both for our students and especially for other ministry practitioners. The goal of the Centre for Church and Culture is to

provide cutting-edge resources for our current students, former students, graduates, churches, and all those interested in enhancing their ministries. The Centre is drawing upon the deep knowledge and experience of our excellent faculty and other experts to develop an array of conferences, special programs, and other tools to help the church not just be relevant in today's world but understand and address the major ministry questions of our day.

We look forward to partnering with you and your church to equip you to address contemporary culture from a thoroughly Christian standpoint and to enable your church to be a faithful witness in your community.

With every blessing in your continuing ministry,

Stanley E. Porter, PhD
President and Dean

SECULARISM AND THE PURSUIT OF TRANSCENDENCE CONFERENCE

This past April, McMaster Divinity College hosted its' inaugural Church and Culture conference on the topic of "Secularism and the Pursuit of Transcendence." The conference was attended by over 200 people and was our largest conference to date, with attendees from across Canada, the United States, and even as far as Brazil!

We were delighted to welcome renowned speaker, Christina M. Gschwandtner, who delivered insightful and thought-provoking plenary sessions on the secular in post-modern culture and transcendence in immanence. MDC President, Dr. Stanley E. Porter, closed the conference by bringing together key takeaways for those serving in Christian ministry and education alike.

It was inspiring to see such a diverse group of individuals come together to explore and discuss such an important topic of the life of the Church. The next Church & Culture conference has been set for 2025 and will explore the topic of "Imaging God in a Technological World: Discussing AID, MAID, and Beyond." Be sure to sign up for our email list to receive more information on this and other upcoming events.



As a pastor, I see the implications of secularism in my congregation every day. Thinking about it academically at this event was very worthwhile and a great place to explore such ideas.

– David G.

This particular topic is highly relevant and practical in pastoral ministry. I was able to interact with a number of attendees during the breaks. To me that indicates a conference well-done because the sessions informed in a way that prompted conversation between people I only just met.

–Kayla H.

This is a front-and-centre issue for churches and Christian in our culture. I will interact on this topic for some time, this conference gave me much to chew on before I will go looking for related content anytime soon.

–Andrew C.

INTRODUCING THE CENTRE FOR CHURCH AND CULTURE

In society today, many church leaders are under-resourced and under-supported in their congregational spiritual work. Society is becoming increasingly complex—and polarized. As a result, churches require careful reflection to thoughtfully explore tough questions and address new challenges.

Throughout its history, MDC has supported Christian leaders by educating them for ministry. We have traditionally done this by means of ministerial degrees, but it has become increasingly clear that the pace of cultural change now requires greater attention to both formal and informal ongoing education. While it has never been ideal for a pastor to rely solely on their foundational seminary degree for the duration of a lengthy ministerial career, in today's culture, it is inconceivable.

The vision for the Centre for Church and Culture (CCC) is to provide an interactive educational environment to enable pastors and other Christian leaders to address urgent and relevant cultural issues that may threaten the Christian church. The formation of this Centre will create new opportunities for informal ongoing education resources for the benefit of the Church.

This new Centre aims to achieve the following goals:

- To engage contemporary Christian leaders with expert resources on complex issues emerging in the context of Christian ministry in Canada today.
- To advance the understanding of complex issues facing the church in contemporary culture through collaborative engagement with Christian leaders and careful listening.
- To advance the flourishing of congregational leaders in Christian ministry in Canada through educational initiatives designed to support ongoing cultural engagement.
- To expand and multiply high quality research on critical issues facing the church and explore their practical implications for contemporary ministry in the Canadian context.



Dr. John W. Hilber, Professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College, has been named the Director of the new Centre for Church and Culture, "Having spent the first half of my career in pastoral ministry, I appreciate the value of an academic institution that seeks to partner with church leaders to facilitate important conversations around emerging cultural issues. It's thrilling to be part of MDC's efforts to address that need today."

The primary work of the Centre for Church and Culture is focused on the biennial symposium, with the inaugural event having taken place this past year. This event is a gathering of scholars and ministry professionals on a relevant topic for the benefit of the church. Other activities and events including networking and learning events like a "Lunch & Learn" for pastors, webinars, newsletters, and more.

Students currently enrolled in our Church and Culture specializations stream will have the opportunity to gather and mutually benefit from collaborating with experienced professionals in ministry and share their research.

Scan the QR code below or visit mcmasterdivinity.ca/ccc to sign up for our email newsletter and get notified about upcoming events.



Follow the Centre for Church & Culture and learn more about these upcoming events by signing up for our email list!

NEW!

CHURCH & CULTURE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

This new 6-course certificate is designed to help you meet your ministry goals. Courses are directly applicable and provide training in a specific area of ministry. These specialized graduate certificates are beneficial for ministry practitioners and lay people alike, regardless of previous theological education. Study where you serve with our remote learning options.

GET STARTED

Choose from the following courses being offered in 2023-24:

Preaching in the 21st Century

Dr. Michael Knowles

Gender in Ministry

Dr. Cynthia Westfall

Critical Events in Christian History

Dr. Gord Heath

Preaching in a Post-Christian Era

Dr. Michael Knowles

Critical Understandings in Ministry

Dr. Lee Beach

Theology of Worship

Dr. Wendy Porter

Theology of Suffering

Dr. Phil Zylla

Spirituality of Exile

Dr. Lee Beach

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact our Admissions Team

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Email: divadmit@mcmaster.ca

Schedule an Appointment

calendly.com/MDCAdmissions



Scan the QR code or visit:
mcmasterdivinity.ca/certificate



CENTRE FOR
**Church
and Culture**