



# McMaster Divinity College

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Inspired by the women who have gone before us and laid the foundation for women to study and serve in all areas of ministry, we are excited to share that a founding donor has come forward with a gift of \$35,000 to initiate the Women in Ministry Scholarship Fund. From our founding mother to the women who walk our hallways today, we want to share the stories of women who champion theological education.

## Advocating for Women in Theological Education Since 1888



Susan Moulton Fraser circa 1860

While the origins of the McMaster story often focus on Senator William McMaster, we want to highlight another story, that of Susan Moulton McMaster, wife to William McMaster and an early advocate for the theological education of women.

Susan Moulton was born in 1819 to a family of five girls and three boys. Her

father was one of the first to practice Baptist principles in Canada. At eight years old, she accepted Christ as her Saviour and through her studies at Ipswich Seminary in Massachusetts, she caught the vision of what a Christian education at a high level of study could contribute to families throughout the nation. Susan married Senator McMaster in 1871 and moved to Toronto where she made her home the centre of support for worthy causes and hospitality to many Baptist ministers and students over the years. Her interest in church-sponsored education influenced Senator McMaster in his relationships with the Toronto Baptist Theological College (now McMaster Divinity College) and its future.

When Senator McMaster suddenly died in 1887, Susan was given a life

interest in their home on Bloor Street and donated the property to the creation of a new school named Moulton Ladies' College. As told in *Per Adua: The Story of Moulton College*, "Mrs. McMaster's imprint was on the new school from the first...She showed such true caring that girls loved her dearly. They said her presence was like sunshine and her words a benediction." Mrs. McMaster's support of the College was evident until her final years. In the year prior to her death in 1916, she wrote, "During the past twenty-three years young women have occupied so much of my thinking that my interests are concentrated on them now."



Alfreda Carlotta Natalie Hall, alumna and faculty of Moulton College, writes, "The life of the College from 1888 to 1954 covered sixty-six years of cataclysmic change in the social, economic and educational life of the Province of Ontario and City of Toronto...Through all, the College continued to stand for the principles of Christian education that its founder Susan Moulton McMaster cherished. The spirit of love and charity towards others that she stressed was challenged fiercely in 1954 but scores of girls came to understand its power to heal."

After the closing of Moulton College in 1954, supporters of the College shifted their emphasis to assistance for women desiring higher education in commemoration of Moulton College, a tradition we are proud to be continuing today with the gift of funds towards the new Women in Ministry Scholarship.



Moulton College students in Ottawa circa 1936

# Embracing Calling

## A Q&A with Dr. Cynthia Long Westfall



### **Tell us about your journey to ministry and your experience as a woman entering academic ministry.**

I would say that I was always called to a teaching ministry, I think it's always been apparent. I attended a Christian liberal arts school and, at the time that I graduated, seminaries were not welcoming women, at least the seminaries that I

knew from my tradition. So, I went on to get an advanced degree in history, thinking that I would teach church history.

I got involved in a campus ministry, and that ministry required us to go to seminary every summer, so I was like, "Yes! I get to go to seminary!" And it was everything that I wanted and more, I loved it. After some time in seminary and ministry, I was encouraged to get a PhD in Biblical Studies and come back to seminary and teach. This was really quite late in life, and a lot had changed by that point in time from when I completed my undergraduate.

### **How have things changed for women in ministry during your career? What barriers do you still see women facing?**

Well, things have changed a lot for women. First of all, women like me started showing up more and we were persistent, but there were many classes in which I was the only woman attending. Now, McMaster Divinity College has always trained women, but this hasn't been true of all schools. During the time in which I've been involved with seminaries, it's gone from being the only woman in a class to now pushing close to 50% in some seminaries.

But there are still barriers to women, a lot of times they simply don't get the encouragement and support to go to seminary and go into ministry. But beyond that, there's not a woman I know that hasn't had active opposition. Someone, telling you, "you aren't qualified to do this," or, "women aren't allowed to do this." Besides that, women are often dealing with family obligations which present time and energy barriers to pursue seminary in a timely manner.

### **In your role as professor, author, and speaker, what do you consider your role to be to encourage other women who are entering ministry?**

Well, the main thing I've done is work through the issues biblically. Growing up I had heard that women weren't welcome at seminary and shouldn't be pastors, and I was willing to accept whatever God's will was, but my question was, "is this what the Bible really teaches?"

I worked through this issue thoroughly, I needed to be convinced about what the Bible taught. After many years, I published a book, *Paul and Gender*, that laid out what I had discovered from an intense study of the Word of God. I think every woman needs to really work through it and say, "I'm on firm ground. I understand my calling and I understand what's biblical."

But beyond that book, I've always wanted to be an advocate for women, to come alongside them, encourage them, and equip them to do what God has called them to. I want to be a safe place where we can talk about the issues, the barriers, and the unique things that we bring to the table, all these kinds of things need to be explored. A scholarship like the MDC Women in Ministry Scholarship provides financial encouragement and provides emotional encouragement that you have support, you're on the right track, and we're beside you and seeing you through.



**To watch the full interview with Cynthia, scan the QR code or visit [mcmasterdivinity.ca/WIMscholarship](https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/WIMscholarship).**

## A Student Perspective Natasha Crozier's Story

My name is Natasha Crozier, and I've just completed my MDiv here at McMaster Divinity College.

Growing up I hadn't seen women as pastors and then in my 20s I was attending a church that didn't affirm women in ministry and had been doing a lot of research into finding your calling in life and asking what it looks like to have a vocation. I kept seeing stories of women being called to be pastors and questioning this, so I spent a good chunk of years changing my theology around women in ministry, just objectively, I was not thinking about going into ministry myself. Then, I felt as though God had played a hilarious trick on me because, one day all of a sudden, I realized that I was called to be a pastor too.

Because I was in a church that didn't affirm women, I was really discouraged and really wrestled with what was next for me. Eventually I ended up in a church with a female pastor and just watching her, I felt like this is the kind of job I want to do. I started looking for schools where I could do my MDiv and read about MDC's support for women in ministry and felt like this could be a place where we are already so far past the conversation that I can just relax, because I had been so in the thick of all the arguments of why it was fine to be a woman in ministry.

I came from an evangelical conservative background in the United States, so there are still major obstacles facing women in ministry in certain circles. You can be a director, but they won't acknowledge that work you're doing is actually pastoring, you won't get your education paid the same as male staff members, even women's ministry budgets are secondary. Here in Hamilton, I have not had



that experience, I've been working in churches with female pastors, and realizing that I can use my voice and it will be respected. There's a learning curve for me to have the confidence to be in the place I am now, as I move into circles that are affirming of women there is still a realization of, "Yeah, we can do this. We're supposed to be at the table and participate."

As a student I have found the professors so encouraging. I took two preaching classes, and we had multiple discussions on how women are important voices in the Church and gave explicit encouragement to us directly. I took the Women in Christian History course and learned about women who I've never heard of before and understand their faith experience through a shared bond. To see their example almost a thousand years later and realize that women have been there all along is really encouraging.

As I leave MDC, I think we do still have a way to go in modeling to other women and being in the spaces. Somebody like Dr. Westfall is a great example of someone who has been paving the way in making spaces safer for women in academics, and that invitation opens the doors for everyone else. Modeling this example for kids especially is something I feel is really important, for little girls and boys.

Financial aid is a big piece. During my time as a student, I was a recipient of financial aid and that made a huge difference for me. I was able to take school full-time and dedicate myself to studies instead of working part-time or finding other income. That funding is especially just an encouragement to women that we value you and want your scholarship and your voice big.



**Watch Natasha's full story by scanning the QR code or visiting [mcmasterdivinity.ca/WIMscholarship](https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/WIMscholarship).**



# JOIN THE WOMEN IN MINISTRY INITIATIVE

McMaster Divinity College is proud to support women in all forms of ministry—from academic teaching to pastoral leadership.

Through our Women in Ministry Scholarship Fund, we hope to build a community of like-minded individuals to continue the work of removing barriers that women face in training for ministry and leadership. This scholarship has been developed to provide opportunities and encourage women as they live out their calling to become effective Christian leaders for the church, academy, and society, with the gifts God has entrusted to them.

All gifts designated to this fund will go directly to financially support female students across all of our programs. If you are interested in studying with us, please reach out to our Admissions Team at [divadmit@mcmaster.ca](mailto:divadmit@mcmaster.ca) to learn how you can benefit from this scholarship fund.



To make a donation, please scan the QR code below or visit [mcmasterdivinity.ca/WIMScholarship](https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/WIMScholarship).

