



# EEWC-Christian Feminism Today

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## **JoDeanne Francis Receives Eighth Annual Nancy A. Hardesty Memorial Scholarship from Christian Feminism Today**

Indianapolis – The eighth annual Nancy A. Hardesty Memorial Scholarship, sponsored by Christian Feminism Today, has been awarded to JoDeanne Francis, a Master of Arts in Theological Studies candidate at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts.

Ms. Francis, who lives in Enfield, Connecticut, holds a B.A. degree with a dual major in Psychology and Sexuality, Women's, and Gender Studies from Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. In addition to her pursuit of a theological studies degree, she also is currently a candidate for a Master of Social Work degree at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. After completing her advanced studies, Ms. Francis plans to act as a translator between the academy and the Church, developing more readily accessible resources for Christian women of all social classes, faith backgrounds, ethnicities, and gender identities. She currently works in focused ministry with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship creating structures that support as well as equip Black students in New England and serves as a member of the Regional Black Campus Ministry Leadership Team.

Ms. Francis describes Christian feminism as “the companion that stood by me” in youth and adolescence while she “rebelled against ideological prescriptions of femininity and a woman's role.” She credits her intensive studies, through the lens of how human interactions are shaped by systemic issues, oppression, and injustice, as “transforming” her views. She finds parallels between ancient and contemporary women's stories of rape culture and abuse, out of which the invitation arises for Christian feminists “to have ears to hear and to keep on hearing”; and she asserts that “Because Christian feminism has wrestled with gender-driven stories of terror in the Bible, it is well-positioned to address current race-based moments of violence.”

On a practical level, Ms. Francis declares that “Christian feminism has helped to free me from sexist racist chains and given me a voice. Christian feminist and womanist theology offer a deeper knowledge of God and thereby a more intimate relationship with God. I long to be a part of this liberative spiritual work.”

The Nancy A. Hardesty Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a student who aspires to exemplify the values and achievements of Nancy A. Hardesty, a founding member of the Christian Feminism Today organization. The purpose of the \$1,000 scholarship, awarded every June, is to help a student who wants to be in a leadership role that supports and promotes Christian feminism. This year, the selection committee, in recognizing the caliber

of their applications, also has selected two Honorable Mentions: Josefine Parker, a student at Vanderbilt Divinity School, and Kimberly Shank, a student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

Nancy A. Hardesty (1941–2011) was a founding member of the Evangelical Women’s Caucus, which, over the past 46 years, has become better known as Christian Feminism Today. Until her death, Dr. Hardesty was a professor of religion in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Clemson University, in Clemson, South Carolina. Previously, she had taught English and writing at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, and had worked on the editorial staffs of *Eternity* magazine and *The Christian Century*.

Ms. Hardesty’s first book, co-authored with Letha Dawson Scanzoni, was *All We’re Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women’s Liberation*. Originally published in 1974, the book has gone through several editions and has influenced countless Christian feminists, from evangelicals to mainline Protestants to Roman Catholics. In 2006, *Christianity Today* magazine ranked *All We’re Meant to Be* among the top fifty books that had influenced the evangelical Christian movement over half a century.

Christian Feminism Today is an organization with a long history of working for gender equality. CFT welcomes members of any gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, color, creed, marital status, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, age, political party, parental status, economic class, or disability. Its biennial conferences, and online presentation series, [The Humble Gathering](#), sustain spiritual connectedness and foster learning about critical Christian feminist issues. The [Christian Feminism Today](#) website provides Christian feminist news, articles, book reviews, blogs, Bible studies, links to explore, and inspiration.

For more information about Christian Feminism Today or the Nancy A. Hardesty Memorial Scholarship, contact Marilyn McDonald, Christian Feminism Today Executive Council Coordinator, at [office \[at\] eewc \[dot\] com](mailto:office[at]eewc[dot]com) or 317-721-3660.