



Introduction

What is the continuity between settlers from the late-nineteenth century and young adults who enroll in our school today? What would cause someone at the dawn of the twentieth century to leave everything and everyone they loved to move to a place marked by harsh and long winter seasons, and a brief growing season, where life would be daunting and (sometimes, maybe oftentimes) brief? What kind of people were these? They were people longing for a better life, longing for a future that they would have a hand in shaping, longing for a life of significance, longing for a chance to define, or redefine, themselves. They did not want to be confined by the status quo. They did not relish the familiar. And that is precisely the kind of young men and women that God still beckons out west. These are spiritual adventurers who want a story of their own to tell. They are willing to risk, and to forfeit for the opportunity to be a part of God's magnificent story in bringing a nation to Himself. Life will not be easy or convenient. The costs will be steep, and sometimes it will seem almost unbearable. But out of the groundwork of their obedience God will bring spring rains, summer growth, and autumn harvest in this land! Communities will be born where faith is encouraged and nurtured, and where contemporary local and global cultural challenges are taken seriously. These are men and women who crave to know God and to love Him, love His Word, and Love His people. These are God-called men and women who are rising up to be trained to thrive as twenty-first century leaders in tough places.

The Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary and College must be more than an institute of Christian higher education. It must be more than a ministry training school. It has to be a Kingdom outpost where a Christ-centered counter-cultural movement is embraced, where ambassadors for Christ are prepared for engagement with a society long-alienated from the mind and heart of God, where servants are encouraged in their competency, calling and character. Such an endeavor demands courage and faith marked by the power and favor of God.

In a recent newsletter, Ralph Enlow (president of the Association of Christian Higher Education) examined the difference between the favor of God and the power of God. He said, "The power of God moves in and through us to impact others to advance God's Kingdom agenda. The favor of God moves in or through others to open doors for us to advance God's Kingdom agenda." I know we need both God's power and His favor as we engage in training leaders for tough places.

As we pray for God's power and favor, we must maintain a posture of courageous and expectant faith. Max Lucado, in his 2009 book *Fearless*, wrote, "Fear never wrote a symphony or poem, negotiated a peace treaty, or cured a disease. Fear never pulled a family out of

poverty or a country out of bigotry. Fear never saved a marriage or a business. Courage did that. Faith did that. People who refused to consult or cower to their timidities did that.” The future of our school depends on this.

Ministry Highlights

There have been some important and notable ministry highlights in our school over the past year. For each of these we thank God. As well, we already have much to look forward to for the fall 2019 semester.

From September 11-14, 2018 we hosted our annual Spiritual Emphasis Week, with Chuck Lawless speaking on “Journeying with Joshua: An Exposition of the Book of Joshua.” Dr. Lawless is Dean of Doctoral Studies and Vice President of Spiritual Formation and Ministry Centers at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He is also Team Leader for Theological Education Strategists for the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The week was peculiarly impactful, and I encourage you to listen to his series of messages through the link to Online Chapel Services on our website at www.csbs.ca.

Simultaneously with our spring 2018 trustee meeting we welcomed Lynn Mincheva as our new Director of Finance and Administration. As was noted then, Lynn has a rich history of work at the University of Calgary, Faculty of Medicine, at a variety of Alberta companies (most recently on contract with Sodexo Canada in Fort Hills, Alberta), and at community organizations and church. Her experience has had an immediate positive effect on our school. She has already become an important and strategic member of the President’s Administrative Team (PAT).

On August 11-12 our campus became home to the No Greater Love Christian Music Festival (NGL). This is the largest Christian music festival in Canada, and an event of singular grand scope and design. We were approached late in May about the festival relocating to our campus, and on a truncated timeline a great many details were worked out to enable it to happen. Roughly 7,500 people were in attendance; many of those attendees had no previous knowledge of our school. I believe that festival coordinator Kari Ward has a vision that resonates with that of our school. On August 10-11, 2019 our school has committed to again host NGL on our campus. This year the projected attendance is 10,000. In order to lessen stress on already taxed administrative departments we hired a liaison to prepare us to host the event; the new hire is Tracy Onley, and she began working with us on April 15.

As the president of the Association of Ministry Guidance Professionals, Glenn Watson influenced us to host the annual meeting on our campus on August 1-3. He chose our school’s vision statement to be the theme of the meeting. Several of our faculty, including myself, led sessions that not only stimulated some good discussion, but also gave participants and spouses a good picture of our school and our ministry context.

Calvin and Devra Morris returned to our campus in January 2019, and they have once again blessed our school throughout the spring semester. In their first hours back in Cochrane, they

were found in a quiet corner of a local restaurant sharing the hope of Jesus with a Spanish-speaking worker. They exude missionary zeal, and a love for Jesus and each other. The divine timing of their participation in our learning community is precise.

Danny Akin will be our commencement speaker at this year's graduation. He is the president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS), in Wake Forest, North Carolina. I spent time with Dr. Akin in March, and I look forward to having him on our campus and in our ministry setting in a matter of weeks, and to dream together about what a partnership between our schools might look like. There are already an encouraging number of linkages developing between our school and SEBTS. It is important to note that SEBTS has welcomed Steve and Susan Booth during their stateside assignment/sabbatical this spring semester. They have been provided housing and have been promoted on campus for the sake of our work in Canada. Susan has been designated as a Scholar in Residence, which means that SEBTS provides her with work space and resources to assist in her writing endeavors, which includes a Research Assistant for her.

A turn over in leadership is imminent within the Student Services Office. After a decade as the Director of Student Services, Sherri Watson has resigned. She and Glenn will be off-campus for stateside assignment/sabbatical from May 2019-January 2020. Upon her return, Sherri is excited to discover a new area of ministry on our campus as well as in the Town of Cochrane. Mary Parra has been hired as the new director. She has assisted in the office since September 2018, and she is a natural choice as the next leader. During the transition, the office has been renamed the Student Life Office, so Mary's official title will be Director of Student Life.

For our 2019 Academic Lectureship we welcomed Dr. Gary David Stratton of Johnson University. He spoke for five sessions from January 30-February 1 on the theme "Educated to the Knowledge of Christ: Jonathan Edwards, Christian Higher Education, and Spiritual Awakening." The lecture series examined: Do Christian Colleges (and Churches) Need Revival?; "The Devil Has Prevailed Against the Late Great Revival of Religion"; "Benevolence Which Seeks Another's Good"; "They Will, By United and Extraordinary Prayer, Seek to God, That He Would Come and Manifest Himself"; and, Educated to the Knowledge of God. It is impossible to adequately express the importance of these meetings in the life of our school. A spontaneous student-led prayer meeting immediately commenced. There was an obvious and profound resonance of Dr. Stratton's heart and message with what God has been stirring on our campus for close to a year and a half now. Soon I plan to visit with him on his campus, where he serves as the Dean for the School of Arts and Science, and the Professor of Spiritual Formation.

Again this year, during the first weekend of March (March 3), a collection of CSBS&C ambassadors spread out across five of Canada's six time zones for Seminary Day. This group was comprised of students, alumni, and administrators. While the group that went out was smaller in size than is typically the case, it was still a very successful event. Students brought testimonies of God's activity as they spoke in two chapel services (found through the link on our website).

It is confirmed that early in our fall 2019 semester we will welcome Dr. David Dockery to be our speaker for Spiritual Emphasis Week (SEW). The special SEW chapel services will run from September 10-13. It is our hope that his presence on our campus will not only impact our students, but also have an effect on churches in our surrounding area.

It is now confirmed that our Spiritual Emphasis Week speaker in September 2020 will be Dr. Phil Young. He has become a dear friend of our school and serves as the Director of Missions in Knox County Association of Baptists in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Before we know it we will be in the midst of a reaccreditation site visit from each of our accrediting agencies, ABHE and ATS. These are scheduled to take place in fall 2020. Steve Booth will commence substantial preparations for the visits immediately upon his return to campus in August 2019.

In our April trustee meeting I presented the preliminary draft of a new CSBS&C Master Plan. This is not an amendment or update to a prior document; it is an almost complete overhaul in light of the realities and challenges that our school must address in 2020 and beyond. As we enter our fourth decade of ministry it is time to think and dream in fresh ways about what God would have our future look like, and how to prepare for that future.

Concluding Remarks

As is typically the case, as I reflect on a dozen years of ministry as the president of the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary and College, I believe we have been faithful to strive toward the worthy purpose of **training God-called men and women for twenty-first century leadership in tough places**. I have felt honored to serve with an outstanding faculty and staff to provide theological education for those called to lead in churches, marketplace ministry, and other Christian ministries, working together to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ in Canada and around the world.