



CNBC Report for 2018 Annual Convention CSBS&C President's Report | Rob Blackaby

Introduction

As of April 1, I have been president of the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary and College for eleven years. I contend that our greatest need today is the same as it has been since our founding 30 years ago: we need to hear from God, and to act with decisive purpose on what He reveals. In all the business of Christian Higher Education, and the accompanying stresses and challenges, we cannot allow our focus to drift from this central task. We are warned in Proverbs 28:9 that God will not listen to the prayers of those who will not listen to Him. If we are deaf to God (1 Peter 3:7), God is deaf to us (Psalm 66:18). And it is vain to look for answers to prayer when refusing to obey what God has allowed us to understand clearly from Him. Our regular and mundane behaviour matters intensely to God. Duane Garrett, one of our founding faculty members, wrote, "Those who spurn [God's revelation] will lose the companionship of God, as indicated by His rejection of their prayers."

Other great needs are patience, persistence, and expectant faith. In his book *Monday Morning Prayers*, E. Thomas Arington says, "Too often we approach our soul work, our spiritual search, with the same [flawed] principles in mind. Quicker. More efficient. Better. It doesn't take long for frustration to set in because we come face to face with this painstaking truth: our Creator doesn't work like that. Where we push for quick growth, he slows us down and makes us take our time. Where we push for greater efficiency, he leads us on seemingly crooked paths. Where we strive to be better, he shows us our failures with gentle clarity." We enter our fourth decade of ministry confident that God is Master of the journey and the destination of our school. We follow Him at His pace in humbly persistent faith.

In the Report that follows I will outline *Ministry Highlights* that have occurred during the 2017/2018 academic year. I will then address *Important Updates* in strategic initiatives.

Ministry Highlights

There have been some important and notable ministry highlights in our school. For each of these we thank God. As well, we already have much to look forward to for the 2018/2019 academic year.

From September 12-15, 2017, we enjoyed our annual Spiritual Emphasis Week, with Mark Dance speaking on "Winning at Church and at Home." Mark and his wife, Janet, have invested much in our learning community. He leads the "LifeWay Pastors" division of LifeWay Christian Resources. The week he spent with us was a timely, precise and powerful charge with which to start a new academic year. I encourage you to listen to his series of messages that can be easily found through the link to Online Chapel Services on our website at www.csbs.ca. It is our hope that Mark's presence on our campus not only impacted our students, but also had an effect on churches in our surrounding area.

In January, we were excited to welcome the largest spring incoming class in our history. The student body that God has been knitting together is spectacular. I cannot remember a school year that has caused me as much excitement as this one. And the calibre of our students is amply reflected in a stellar Student Council. Steve Booth, our Academic Dean, reports, "The total FTE for spring 2018 was 43.92, a slight increase of 4.87% from the fall. There was a slight drop in the seminary but an increase in the college, due in large part to the arrival of five students from Toronto. Along with several continuing occasional students who enrolled in programs of study, this was the largest spring enrolment we have ever had (9)."

The Academic Department, led by Steve Booth, has worked hard to develop a more expansive set of entry points for students wanting to study in our college and seminary. In fact, several new programs of study have already become public this year. This has been done in conjunction with the completion of our third "Smart Classroom." The popularity of our interactive classrooms is encouraging, and it highlights our need to remain abreast of best-practices in delivering theological education remotely. Right now, it is possible for students to engage with our school in a variety of ways. A student can attend class live, attend class from a remote location (online live), or attend class through SeminaryLink (online flex).

David Ong, our Admissions Director, reported, "The goal of our department is prayerfully working towards having 31 students for the 2018-2019 academic year." As well, we recently held our third annual Preview Day, promoting it through social media, during Seminary Day visits, and mailings to our CNBC churches and others. We had 15 people signed up to come as of the Friday before Preview Day, so we were already encouraged by that. After all was said and done, however, David noted, "We had 22 visitors come onto our campus from as close as

Cochrane and as far as Saskatoon, SK. Out of those 22 visitors, there were 16 potential students that were interested in our school; 5 Seminary, 11 College.”

Again this spring semester, during the first weekend of March (March 4), 2018, 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, faculty members, and administrators. In addition, for the first time we sent a student outside of Canada, to South Korea. James Cho spent a week with Korean churches and a university. Early indications are that it was a successful trip.

We are grateful for the many donors who invest in our school and help us meet our Annual Fund goal each year. The target for our 2017-18 fiscal year is \$835,000. Our Development Director, Barry Nelson, noted, “Total donations have remained relatively stable and robust for the last few years. We are grateful to the Lord for the provision of funds for operations, student scholarships, and other designations. Please join us in praying for a healthy close to the 2017-18 fiscal year.”

Jeff Christopherson was our commencement speaker at this year’s graduation, accompanied by his wife, Laura. As we closed a year of celebration for our 30th anniversary, Jeff represented well the first graduating class of our seminary. After working in Canada with the CNBC for years as a church planter, Jeff is now the (Southern Baptist Convention) North American Mission Board’s Vice President of the Send Network.

Early in the spring semester our Student Services Office hosted their annual Student Enrichment Seminar with guest speaker Salt Jones on February 2-3. Salt addressed issues of community and relationship in a highly interactive and engaging way. After his years of investment in Canadian students in general, and in CSBS&C students in particular, it was an encouragement and refreshment to have him with us again.

We welcomed Michael Goheen to speak on “The Missionary Church: A New Paradigm for the 21st Century” during our academic lectureship, February 19-21. The lecture series examined a new paradigm for mission that is centered in the Bible’s teaching that the church is “missionary by its very nature.” That means a lot more than the church needs to evangelize and do cross-cultural missions. It means that its very identity is “for the sake of the world” as it finds its role in the biblical story. Goheen is the Director of Theological Education and Scholar-in-residence at Missional Training Center in Phoenix. He is also Jake and Betsy Tuls Professor of Missiology, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Senior Fellow, Newbigin House of Studies, San Francisco, Fellow in Mission and Worldview Studies, [Paideia Centre for Public Theology](#), Ancaster, and Minister of Preaching at New West Christian Reformed Church, Vancouver.

We have worked with Anderson University to pilot a joint lectureship June 4-8, 2018. The immediate interest in co-branding a week-long class on church planting, co-taught by Dr. Tim McKnight and Dr. Dan Morgan, has resulted in "Next Generation Church Planting". Anderson University has enlisted a cohort of students to engage in the class and then stay on throughout the summer to work in the Calgary area with CNBC church plants. We are enrolling students from our community to also participate in the class. We have now entered into an informal partnership with Anderson University and anticipate further collaboration in the future.

It was our pleasure to have Dr. Calvin and Devra Morris back on our campus for graduation. Calvin stayed on to teach an elective course during the week immediately following on Psalm 119, entitled "Living in God's Word." As well, native Albertan, Dr. Tawa Anderson from Oklahoma Baptist University, returned to teach our required apologetics course during the week of May 28.

Much work is being done to revitalize alumni relations. David Ong is chiefly responsible for strengthening our ties with many of our now-close-to 300 alumni. We want to provide multiple avenues for our alumni to connect with their alma mater, as well as with each other. One alumnus wrote, "God has given us the blessing of serving alongside each other in sister churches. We have seen Him continue to develop a great friendship with each other and a love for our Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary." That is an encouraging and representative sentiment for which we are grateful.

Under the leadership of Glenn Watson, the Association of Ministry Guidance Professionals (AMGP) annual meeting will be hosted on our campus on August 1-3, 2018. The theme of the meeting will borrow from our school vision, "Training Leaders for Tough Places." Glenn has enlisted several on our faculty, including myself, to do sessions that will help not only stimulate some good discussion for this group, but also give them a good picture of our school, our denomination, and our ministry context.

It is confirmed that early in our fall 2018 semester we will welcome Dr. Chuck Lawless to be our speaker for Spiritual Emphasis Week (SEW). He is vice president for spiritual formation and ministry centers and professor of evangelism and missions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. The special SEW chapel services will run from September 11-14.

We are excited to have Danny Akin, the president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, in Wake Forest, North Carolina, already scheduled as our commencement speaker for our 2019 graduation ceremony. There are an encouraging number of linkages developing between our schools.

Important Updates

At the end of February Sabine Koster tendered her resignation. After 20 years of ministry in our school, and 12 years as our Director of Finance and Administration she will be profoundly missed. Over so many years God has used Sabine to influence the culture of our learning community toward meeting the challenge of training God-called leaders for tough places. It is not possible to rehearse the countless ways she was invested in our school. She has been a strategic part of the President's Administrative Team (PAT), and has embraced her role in helping us achieve our ends. She has been undaunted by challenges, and undeterred in calling for faith. Her smile and laughter are hallmarks of the Business Office. I am blessed for having had the opportunity to minister with her for more than a decade.

The search for a new Director of Finance and Administration concluded on April 17, 2018 with the hiring of Lynn Mincheva. 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 (the Calgary Bulgarian Society, for instance, and her home church of Westview Baptist in Calgary). She has a bachelor degree in accounting and is working toward an accounting (CPA) designation, with anticipated completion in September 2018. Lynn began working in our school on May 1, working alongside Sabine through May 25 before assuming full responsibility for the Business Office.

Since November 2017 I have been working toward getting John Charping and his family to Canada to serve as member of our faculty. During the fall, I travelled to Richmond, Virginia to meet with the Charping family, and was pleased to bring back a recommendation to our faculty and then trustees to invite John to join our work at the CSBS&C. By the end of 2017 it became clear that leaders within the International Missions Board (IMB) were not enthusiastic about supporting a relocation/reassignment for the family. By the end of January 2018, they made that position explicit. In response, we started to work on a proposal for John that would result in him being independently hired by our school. The proposal that we made to him in late February (about which I feel very comfortable and confident) was based on a collaborated agreement between the Canadian National Baptist Convention and our school. We anticipate welcoming the Charpings to our campus by the end of June 2018.

Progress continues to be made toward the development of a RV storage park. Onkar Dhaliwal remains the primary representative of Hill Country RV Storage to the Town of Cochrane. A development permit application was submitted in October 2017. While there is legitimate reason to expect physical preparation and development of the lot to begin this summer, there are hurdles still needing to be cleared with the town.

A major project for the summer will be the revision of the CSBS&C Master Plan. Far from amending or updating mere portions of the document, I believe an almost complete overhaul is in order. 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 I reflect on my 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 honoured 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.