



Faith Pulpit

Faith Baptist Theological Seminary: Celebrating 25 Years of God's Blessing

In 2011 Faith Baptist Theological Seminary celebrated its 25th anniversary. From its modest beginning in 1986 FBTS has become a leader among fundamental Baptist seminaries. This article recounts the early history of FBTS and examines what distinguishes it from other seminaries. 2011 also marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of the Faith Pulpit. This edition of Faith Pulpit (number 230) gives a comprehensive index of the past 25 years of publication.

The roots of Faith Baptist Theological Seminary go back to 1962 when the college, then known as Omaha Baptist Bible College, added a five-year Bachelor of Theology program to the standard four-year program. The fifth year of study was designed for men who could not attend seminary but wanted to pursue additional course work to better equip them for pastoral or missionary ministries.

Early Seminary Discussions

Faith had many graduates from the Th.B. program, and the additional training met a need for many years. Eventually, however, many pastors desired graduate level training and many churches began to expect a higher level of education for their pastors. Sensing that expectation and desire, President David Nettleton formed a Seminary Committee in the mid-70s to explore the possibility of starting a seminary. Dr. George Houghton, presently an adjunct faculty member of FBTS, was part of those seminary discussions.

Graduate Program

The discussions of the Seminary Committee eventually led the college in 1982 to discontinue the Bachelor of Theology program and offer a graduate level Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies degree under the direction of Dr. Robert Domokos.

The new M.A. program had its first graduates in 1983. That year three men graduated, one of whom was Mark Lounsborough, who now serves as the chair of the Missions and Evangelism Department at Faith. In 1985 the college added two more Master of Arts programs—Biblical Studies and Theological Studies.

Decision to Open the Seminary

The Master of Arts programs met a great need in providing advanced training for pastors and Christian leaders. However, the administration and board of Faith came to the conviction that Iowa needed a fundamental Baptist seminary. To do that, Faith had to add the Master of Divinity program.

Dr. Robert Delnay, the founding dean of the seminary, shared this recollection, “In 1985 we discussed the possibility with Dr. Shipp [Faith’s president] and at some point he told us to discuss it with Dr. David Boylan [the chair of the Academic Committee of the Board]. One noon shortly after that four or five of us drove up to Ames and met Dr. Boylan in the union, where he treated us to lunch and heard us out. When we finished, he said, ‘Well men, as I see it, this is not the time to start a seminary. But it will never be the right time. So let us trust God and go ahead with the project.’”

Based on the growing desire of several faculty members and the encouragement of Dr. Boylan, the Faith board voted in September 1985 to move to a complete seminary program with a Master of Divinity degree starting in the fall of 1987.

In the fall of 1985 and the early part of 1986 the Lord brought another circumstance into the picture that had bearing on the proposed seminary. During those months the boards and administrators of Faith and Denver Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary began merger discussions. Dr. Gordon Shipp, Faith’s president, and Dr. L. Duane Brown, Denver’s president (and father of Dr. Doug Brown, a current FBTS faculty member), led these deliberations. These discussions led to both boards voting in January 1986 to merge the two institutions in the fall of 1986. Since Denver already had a full M.Div. program with students needing to complete their degree, FBTS moved its opening to the fall of 1986, one year ahead of the projected date.

After extensive planning and the merger of the two institutions, Faith Baptist Theological Seminary opened for classes on September 2, 1986. The new seminary offered four degree programs:

- Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies
- Master of Arts in Biblical Studies
- Master of Arts in Theological Studies
- Master of Divinity

The Master of Arts in Religion program was added in 1987 for students who did not have a Bible college background.

First Graduates

That first year 30 men enrolled in the new seminary with 10 of them coming from Denver. In 1987 we had our first M.Div. graduates—four men who had started in Denver and finished at Faith. In 1989 we had our first M.Div. graduates from students who began in the new seminary in 1986. One of them was John Hartog III who would later serve as dean of the seminary.

First Faculty

The Lord was also at work in building the faculty of the new seminary. All the faculty members needed were already serving on the college faculty.

- Dr. Robert Delnay was appointed the seminary dean.
- Dr. Gilbert Braithwaite became the director of the Biblical Studies program.
- Dr. Myron Houghton was appointed the director of the Theological Studies program.
- Dr. Robert Domokos remained on the college faculty but continued as the director of the Pastoral Studies program.

Interestingly, both Dr. Delnay and Dr. Houghton once taught at Denver Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, which strengthened the ties between the two seminaries.

Faith Pulpit

Right from the beginning, in fact, before the beginning, FBTS began publishing the Faith Pulpit to address significant matters of theological and ministerial interest. We published the first issue in January of 1986, eight months before the seminary opened. Dr. Delnay shared this recollection about the first Faith Pulpit. “The board decision must have come on January 14. I seem to remember printing the first edition of Faith Pulpit, and that afternoon passing it out to the board members. I remember Dr. Shipp with a friendly growl saying to me, ‘You boys don’t waste any time, do you?’”

During the last 25 years the Lord has enabled FBTS to train hundreds of pastors and Christian workers and to become a leader among fundamental Baptist seminaries. With this solid record of 25 years, FBTS is prepared to continue offering a high quality graduate education to equip individuals for effective ministry.

What Distinguishes Faith Baptist Theological Seminary?

The 25th anniversary of the FBTS is a good time to look back and identify what has distinguished the seminary for a quarter of a century.

Purpose

FBTS is distinguished by its clearly stated purpose as seen in its mission statement.

The mission of Faith Baptist Theological Seminary is to provide an advanced Biblical, theological, and ministerial education at the graduate level with the goal of preparing Bible expositors to serve effectively in Christian ministry through leadership positions within Baptist fundamentalism.

From its inception the seminary has focused on preparing Bible expositors. That purpose is why Faith requires such a rigorous program of Biblical languages, exegesis, hermeneutics, and preaching. Men who graduate from FBTS with the M.Div. degree are regarded as strong preachers.

Position

The seminary's mission statement plainly identifies the school as a fundamental Baptist seminary. The school's doctrinal statement and other documents (available at faith.edu) further identify FBTS as a traditional dispensational institution, holding a strong position on separation from apostasy, worldliness, and compromise.

Personnel

FBTS is further distinguished by its capable personnel in administrative and faculty positions. Each of the seminary deans has provided outstanding leadership for the school during his tenure.

- Dr. Robert Delnay (1986–1990; 1995–1997)
- Dr. Elvin Mattison (1990–1993)
- Dr. George Houghton (interim dean 1993–1995; 1997)
- Dr. John Hartog III (1998–2005)
- Dr. Ernie Schmidt (2005–

Many fine men have served on the faculty at FBTS. Current resident faculty members are

- Dr. Ernie Schmidt, pastoral studies
- Dr. Myron Houghton, theological studies
- Dr. Doug Brown, New Testament

- Mr. Tim Little, Hebrew language
- Dr. John Hartog II, church planting

Adjunct and visiting faculty members add strength to the resident faculty. Adjunct faculty members include Mr. Don Anderson, Mr. Dan Bjokne, Dr. Paul Hartog, Dr. George Houghton, Dr. Jeff Newman, and Mr. Andy Stearns. Recent visiting faculty members have been Dr. Roy Beacham, Dr. Robert Delnay, Dr. Jack Klem, Dr. Fred Moritz, Mr. Jacob Saylor, Dr. Rick Shrader, and Dr. John Whitcomb.

Publication

In 1986 the seminary began publishing the Faith Pulpit to address significant matters of theological and ministerial interest. The seminary has produced 230 issues since its beginning. Pastors and church leaders tell us they appreciate the Pulpit and file their copies for future reference. You will find all of the issues online at faith.edu/seminary, and you can subscribe to it at faith.edu/resources/publications/faith-pulpit.

Partnership

FBTS's unique partnership with Faith Baptist Bible College strengthens the seminary. Though the college and seminary have separate facilities and faculty, they share the same campus and have the same president and board of directors. This partnership provides continuity of leadership and oversight, adds to the campus life for the seminary students, serves as a source of new students for the seminary, and allows the seminary to use college faculty members as adjunct professors.

Program

While FBTS offers traditional seminary programs and classes, the school has incorporated an extensive program of one-week modules. This arrangement allows individuals to take seminary classes without leaving their ministries and relocating to Ankeny. In the 2011–2012 school year FBTS offered more than 40 modules. Students can earn any of the Master of Arts degrees solely with module classes.

Proven

Faith Baptist Theological Seminary has a proven academic program that has received both national and regional accreditation. We are nationally accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education and regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. FBTS is one of the few seminaries that have received this level of accreditation. Approval from these two agencies, reaffirmed in 2011, gives FBTS the highest and strongest accreditation possible. This accreditation confirms the quality of education each student receives and

allows FBTS students to transfer credits to other institutions for additional graduate work.

Product

The true test of any institution is the product—the men and women who graduate from the school. From the 17 graduates of the class of 2011, six of the men were already serving in pastoral or mission ministries, one left immediately after graduation to pastor a church, and another moved to Minnesota to start a church. One of the Bible colleges in the Midwest has sent two of its faculty members to FBTS for their graduate degrees. In addition, eight of the current FBBC&TS faculty members are graduates of our seminary. Faith has established a reputation for producing men and women who are effective in ministry.

Faith Baptist Theological Seminary is committed to maintaining a fundamental, separatist, Baptist seminary that focuses on preparing Bible expositors. If you are interested in learning more about Faith, please contact us at 1-877-5FBTS.4.U or visit faith.edu/admissions/seminary.

Mr. Don Anderson

[Other Articles](#)

Don Anderson earned degrees from Faith Baptist Bible College (B.A. and Th.B) and Grace Theological Seminary (M.Div. and Th.M.) For 40 years, Don has been involved in church educational ministries as a Sunday School teacher and leader in his local church, as a faculty member at Faith Baptist Bible College, and as a member of the editorial staff of Regular Baptist Press. He currently serves as the Sunday School superintendent of his church and teaches an adult Sunday School class. Don and his wife Elly have two married children and four granddaughters. The Andersons live in northwest suburban Chicago and are active members of First Baptist Church of Arlington Heights, Illinois.