

Faith Pulpit

An Idea of a Seminary

And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2

Where is the pastor who has not some time dreamed, “If I were to start a seminary—?” Where is the teacher who has not gazed at the same vision?

We begin at the end: what is the product we need? Men of God? Flaming preachers? Capable pastors? Heroic missionaries? All of the above? One prof put it this way: Our goal is to produce Christian leaders who are Bible expositors. To define a school’s objective, it is hard to improve on that statement. In fact, why not run with it?

Where then do we carry it? “Bible expositors” implies graduates who love the Bible as the very Word of God and who live and die by its plain literal sense. Then to hold an inspired Bible and to take it literally leads to a systematic theology on which faithful but independent minds will come to a high degree of accord.

Then what?

I. Spiritual Life

Men have wondered if there is any way to fuse the old Bible school fervor with graduate level academics. We have to believe that determined leaders can do just that. We venerate the Apostle Paul as the Biblical exponent of salvation by grace through faith. Surely his example shows how one man can combine a developed mind with a heart burning in adoration of Christ.

We believe that a Bible expositor should live close to his knees and meet God in the morning quiet time. He should walk by faith and not by sight. He should bear the fruit of the Spirit, even when he is

under stress. He should keep low before God and forgive his fellow workers.

II. Integrity

We long to see men and women of honesty, whose lives show public and private evidence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We grieve over orthodox leaders we cannot trust, men with high ethical systems but from whom we would not want to buy a used car. Or the legendary divinity student who loved the Word so much that he taped every chapel message—on the recorder he had stolen.

We believe that in a community of praying scholars it should be possible to encourage the sort of character that will put no block in the way of leading someone to Christ.

III. Service

The right product of a seminary is a Christian leader, and this person is a servant of the Most High. We believe that seminary is the right preparation for the pastor just as it is right for the church-planting missionary. Since service includes the basin and the towel, the Christian leader is not too proud to use them, to dirty his hands when necessary. Even if much of his service is at his desk, service is his life goal.

A seminary is not a local church. A graduate classroom is not going to give much practical experience in leading a soul to Christ. We expect the local church to provide that setting. On the other hand, few churches equip themselves to impart the languages, the history and the understandings we expect in a leader. Church and seminary should work together.

The seminary still trains servants, even if it does not provide much of the hands-on experience we all want to see. We expect its products to dedicate themselves to lifelong service, and so to express their love for Christ. We expect them to be men of enterprise, capable of making things happen.

IV. Scholarship

We entrust our knowledge to faithful men (2 Timothy 2:2), and faithfulness is a basis of Biblical scholarship. Seminaries historically have committed themselves to diligence in study, and one has only to page through his reference books to see the evidence of this sort of diligence. We expect it in the preachers we listen to. We believe in a working acquaintance with the Biblical languages. We also believe that an expositor should be able to do research and be confident that what he learns is valid.

At the same time we disavow pride of intellect, the spiritual grave of so many graduate schools. We hold that a Bible expositor should be able to think in complexities and preach in simplicities. We do not judge the book; we humbly accept the Book's judgment of us.

V. Preaching

We believe that spiritual vitality will express itself in vital preaching. If a seminary is doing its task, its graduates should proclaim Biblical truth with both doctrinal precision and flaming conviction.

Homiletics then will be not so much a methods course as the academic attempt to focus a life and an education into that moment when from a platform a preacher speaks God's claims to men. Whatever sort of ministry they end up in, the graduates should be Christian leaders who are Bible expositors.

Recent literature on Christian education seems to make seminary a matter of knowledge, skills, and lifestyle. We question this. Knowledge, yes, if we include acquaintance with God. Skills, possibly, if we can class evangelizing, church planting, wise counseling, and ardent preaching as skills. But to regard honesty, love and courage as elements in a person's lifestyle is to diminish these virtues to the level of sales resistance and liking for Frisbee. We would rather think in terms of producing men of God, Christian leaders who are bible expositors.

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Dr. Robert Delnay (Th.D., Grace Theological Seminary) was a distinguished theologian, educator, and author whose ministry spanned over seven decades. A graduate of Wheaton College, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Grace Theological Seminary, Dr. Delnay served in numerous leadership and teaching roles, including at Faith Baptist Bible College, where he was a beloved professor known for his commitment to expository preaching and biblical scholarship.

A prolific author, he wrote several books and articles, leaving a lasting legacy of theological insight and pastoral wisdom. Dr. Delnay's deep love for God's Word and his dedication to training the next generation of Christian leaders impacted countless students and ministries worldwide. He went home to be with Christ in 2023.