

Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College



Long-Term Institutional Improvement Plan *Vision and Goals 2023-2033*

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“The things you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy. 3:2).

MOTTO

Theological education that transforms.

VISION

In this age of world confusion and perplexity there is an ever-increasing need for leaders with a burning zeal for the Lord, a steady hand and sound mind, leaders with hope for the future, with knowledge of the plan and purpose of God and His unchanging grace, leaders who will uncompromisingly stand for the faith and confidently declare the Lord’s answer to individual, ecclesiastical, national and international problems. The call for Baptist ministers of faith and conviction is insistent, and this is the hour for advance, as far as the Seminary is concerned. We have a message for the hour.

MISSION

The Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College is an English-speaking theological institution which exists for the preparing, equipping, and training of people for Christian gospel ministries, with emphasis on pastoral training in the Calvinistic Baptist tradition, and to provide such people with relevant and meaningful teaching in order to minister effectively and competently in this present secular age.



STRATEGIES

I. TRAINING OF PASTORS

In general, Toronto Baptist Seminary seeks to equip male and female students by enriching their knowledge of Scripture, offering them a robust apologetic to meet the challenges of a “post-Christian” society, and sharpening their spiritual gifts.

The training of men for the pastoral ministry, nevertheless, remains TBS’ primary task. Both the world and the Church require men burning with unquenchable zeal for God’s glory and the salvation of souls. Nicolas Kurtaneck chillingly observes, “There is an acute crisis of preaching today.” Ostensibly, seminary graduates today are armed with a vast array of skills, but relatively few exclaim with the apostle Paul, “Necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16). The failure of many evangelical seminaries to prioritize the preaching of God’s Word in their curricula may explain, in part, the spiritual inertia that seemingly afflicts many of our churches.

II. EMPHASIZING BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

TBS places heavy emphasis on biblical scholarship. While one cannot realistically expect the pastor to master every field of theological enquiry, he should be well instructed in the material of the Bible. In this regard, the seminary labours to impart to students considerable exegetical, theological, and pastoral skills. All this is intended to complement their spiritual development.

In order to prepare students academically and spiritually, the following areas take precedence in the seminary’s curriculum: Systematic Theology, New Testament Theology, Old Testament Theology, Biblical Languages, Church History, Practical Theology, and Evangelical Spirituality.

III. PROVIDING A HEALTHY SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE

TBS recognizes that a healthy spiritual atmosphere plays a central role in the spiritual development of its students. The time spent in seminary provides ample opportunities for spiritual growth. Through godly examples, worship, study, and communal interaction, students usually manifest growth in the fruit of the Spirit and a greater appreciation for the high-calling of Christian service. We encourage students to consider all their activities, including their academic pursuits, as an act of worship to God.

IV. WORKING CLOSELY WITH LOCAL CHURCHES

In keeping with one of its founding principles, the seminary commits itself to forge strong ties with local churches. While TBS functions as an independent charitable institution, the Board of Trustees that governs the Seminary comprises mainly pastors from local Churches. This is desirable since the enterprise of theological

training cannot be conducted in isolation from the local Church. Theology must be done for the Church. Thus, theological training remains a joint venture between TBS and local Churches. Like-minded Churches are essential since they identify and set aside those called to ministry, provide mentorship opportunities for students to acquire practical experience in Christian service, hold the seminary accountable, and assist it financially and materially.

V. RECRUITING AND MAINTAINING A QUALIFIED FACULTY

As part of its commitment to Christian education, TBS continually strives to recruit and maintain a qualified faculty so that students will have access to quality theological training. As a policy, TBS employs professors with sound academic qualifications and pastoral experience. Ideally, professors should be academicians and pastors; but above all, they are to be godly men and women. With these qualifications, they are best able to model scholarship and Christian discipleship to future Church leaders.

VI. MAKING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AVAILABLE AT AN AFFORDABLE COST

TBS also makes every effort to keep theological education at the most affordable price possible. The cost of securing qualified professors, maintaining facilities, and other associated requirements, render theological training an expensive undertaking. However, the Board of Trustees, views it as disadvantageous for seminary graduates to enter ministry saddled with huge sums, often borrowed from student aid. The pressure of debt repayment can easily divert attention from one's true calling. As a result, we believe that offering theological training at the most reasonable cost encourages our graduates to enter the ministry with the right focus which in the end glorifies Christ.

VII. TAKING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION TO CHURCH LEADERS AND PASTORS

Given the reality that many Christians who desire theological training cannot enroll in a full-time program with the seminary, we offer theological courses through a variety of means: extension (off-site) programs, Internet courses, and modular training. Through these vehicles, the seminary avails pastors, elders, deacons, and Church members with an array of tools to serve more effectively in the kingdom of God.



VISION AND GOALS 2023-2033

I. ONLINE EDUCATION

By God's grace, the IT infrastructure of the seminary has been upgraded and a full-time IT staff is hired. The IT staff also undertakes the tasks of producing online courses and developing online platforms for distance education. Not neglecting the importance of in-person teaching, TBS sees the huge need for Reformed theological education both locally and globally

The Elders and Deacons Program is designed to provide training to deacons and elders currently serving in churches within Canada. Many of them cannot take the time to come to seminary full-time, and so a short, less demanding program is required to provide them with the essential tools with which to fulfill their roles in the church. A certificate program consisting of eight courses has been devised. Each course takes eight weeks to complete and is made up of three 30-minute lectures per week, one assignment per week, and one final essay. Our goal is to begin recording the courses in May 2024 and complete the recording of all the courses by December 2024. The lecture videos will be edited during the fall so that the program will be available by January 2025.

The TBS Global Campus is intended to support indigenous churches in other countries to equip and train pastors with quality theological education so that they would be competent in pastoral ministries. TBS has established a partnership with two church networks in southern India and one network in Italy. These networks will operate as TBS satellites to facilitate the teaching-learning process. The program will be operated on a modular basis with the main means of instruction being online/electronic courses taught live or through recorded lectures, translated/dubbed into local languages. In-person teaching will occur as the circumstances warrant. TBS will initially offer a two-year diploma in theology program. Eight courses will be taught over a two-year period. Each course will last six weeks in duration. Classes will be conducted weekly for four months. Course recording for the Glocal Campus started in May 2024. Lord willing, the diploma program in India and Italy will be launched in January 2025.

II. FUNDRAISING AND PROMOTION

Maintaining the operations of the seminary and establishing extensions of theological education require substantial resources. TBS continually seeks funding from various sources, including local churches and TBS partners. The Board of Trustees encourages expanding the donor base to put the seminary in their wills. Significant amounts of money have come in as legacies in the past. In addition, TBS plans to reach out to more churches (*not necessarily Baptist, but baptistic*) in order to build community and friendships with larger groups.

Toronto Baptist Seminary is well known and highly regarded in the Reformed circles in Canada as well as in the USA and some other countries. In the postmodern world of the information age, it is much more challenging for a conservative seminary to hold its tradition and conviction without compromise in promoting the school in larger realms. TBS plans to boldly promote the Seminary by increasing its public awareness in admission, public communication, alumni connection, and partnership with churches and Christian organizations.

III. FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Board of Trustees considers carefully retaining and recruiting godly faculty. Over the next decade, TBS will likely experience turnover—anticipate retirements and new hires to take on new responsibilities. The need was stressed for a diversified faculty, especially female faculty. By God’s grace, three adjunct professors have been interviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2024. They are preparing to record online courses for the Global Campus project and teach online courses for TBS satellites in 2025. Within five years, some of the major courses will be taught by new faculty members.

IV. GOVERNANCE AND ACADEMIC STANDING

By God’s grace, Toronto Baptist Seminary has been operating and serving the Christian community within and outside of Canada for almost a century. There are plenty of precious experiences and insights as to how a Baptist seminary should reach its highest calling in theological training. Nevertheless, there are still certain aspects of the seminary’s operations where the working policies and procedures are not formalized or codified. The Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees has been busy enacting regulations since 2022 in areas such as Board of Trustees Manuel, Institutional Personnel Manuel, Institutional Policies and Procedure Manuel, etc. TBS shall continually revise and improve the existing written policies and procedures contained in the academic catalogue, the Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook as well as other documents. The Seminary needs to develop a governance structure in order to operate according to best practices.

V. ADVANCED PROGRAMS

To further the mission of Toronto Baptist Seminary and to assist the Christian church by providing pastors with an opportunity to continue their education and develop their gifts as spiritual shepherds with teaching and leadership responsibilities, TBS applies for the Doctor of Ministry (*D.Min.*) program for the consent from the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (*PEQAB*) of Ontario government since 2020. It has been an onerous task yet with blessings and encouragement from the Lord. An Organization Review was submitted to PEQAB in April 2020 and various supplemental documents were provided as required over the past four years. The seminary has decided to hire a professional consultant to

help with this endeavour. The consultant has been reviewing the application and will offer advice and services for the application. Should the Organization Review pass all PEQAB's standards, the Program Review will be submitted in January 2025.

The Senate of the Seminary considers developing specialized programs in worship, counselling, apologetics, and missions. Each program will be a stream with a concentration in specialization in two major degree programs (*Bachelor of Theology and Master of Divinity*). The concentration would be the equivalent of an enhanced minor, with about 20% of a student's credits being specific to the specialized stream. If such specialized programs are well accepted, study centres will also be established in different areas.

VI. THEOLOGICAL PUBLICATION

In the past, the Gospel Witness, a quarterly publication of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, has been used as a platform for theological articles of TBS faculty members. Due to the nature of the Gospel Witness as the mouthpiece of Jarvis's pulpit, it is limited to promoting the results of the theological research of the Seminary professors and students. A high-standard theological journal will provide the Seminary with a healthy atmosphere for academic research. Praise the Lord, a capable editor has been in charge of this vital work since November 2023. TBS strives to utilize this theological publication to promote academic research to a higher level in the following five years.

VII. ONLINE THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

TBS faculty and students greatly benefit from access to online theological resources such as ATLA (*American Theological Library Association*), DTL (*Digital Theological Library*), and Galaxie (*Galaxie Theological Journals*). It is recognized that online theological resources become more and more important to seminaries in the digital age. TBS is willing to explore and invest in quality online theological resources to promote teaching and learning effectiveness, especially for distance education.



TO GOD BE THE GLORY