

***Focused Mission,
Flexible Models:***

**Ministry Preparation within the Baptist
General Conference of Canada**

**A Report from the “Celebration 2009”
Survey of BGCC Church Leaders**

**Richard Ang
Bernard Mukwavi
Daryl Busby (Editor)**

Focused Mission; Flexible Models; Ministry Preparation within the Baptist General Conference of Canada

Summary:

Thanks to the extensive research of Dr. Abe Funk, the Baptist General Conference recently discovered that it had quietly entered its second century of providing formal ministry training in Western Canada. The Swedish Baptists¹ first ventured into theological education at Brandon College in Manitoba in 1907.² Although represented by less than two dozen churches in Canada, they aggressively envisioned more; and to that end, they began a Swedish Ministries department at the newly formed Baptist College. Since this first bold initiative, the movement has subsequently established and closed various ministry training models across Western Canada.³ More recently, the BGCC has participated in an innovative, graduate level consortium called ACTS Seminaries. Although the names and locations of these various BGCC institutions have changed over the century, the movement always ensured flexible models alongside unswerving commitment to its mission of training lay people, pastors and mission personnel.

The report begins by highlighting the history of the BGCC in ministry preparation during the last century: Knowing the past shapes the future. Then, since the study also explores the emerging role of non-formal learning in the seminary, the report includes a brief summary of the current educational dialogue on non-formal learning. Finally and most significantly; against these two backdrops, the report gives the findings from the “2009 Celebration Study” on two

¹ This report will often use the more current “BGCC”, but at times will refer to the movement by other more historic names including “Swedish Baptists” and the more generic Baptist General Conference. Technically, the term BGCC does not become official until 1981, but for some consistency, it will be used in the study.

² We are deeply grateful to Dr. Abe Funk for his personal conversations and longstanding acquaintance with the movement; and especially his soon to be published book Our Story: The Faith and adventures of a people known as ‘A People of the Book’. Other primary and secondary sources include: Pioneering in Western Canada: A Story of the Baptists (1939) McLaurin, C.C.; (Calgary: Author self published). Also “A Short History of Swedish Baptists in Canada”, Edwin Erick Brandt p20, BGCC Archives; “the 1960’s in The Ministry of the Baptist General Conference, (Harvest Publications) p.113; “The 1970’s in the Ministry of the Baptist General Conference,” Edited by Donald E. Anderson, (Published by the Board of Trustees, Baptist General Conference.)

major issues: the role of seminary education within the BGCC; and correspondingly, the potential for non-formal opportunities through new initiatives of the seminary in local churches.

The research team concludes the report with several recommendations to shape the future direction of formal education within the movement. While the seminary is deeply grateful for all who have responded to the survey and also the team who assessed the collected data; candidly, the Dean of CBS has written much of the content, and he admits both the strengths and limits of this perspective. However, all responses, both quantitative and qualitative, are available to any interested persons.

At this second century milestone, the following report provides both a celebration of past achievements alongside a preferred vision for the future direction of theological education within the Baptist General Conference of Canada (BGCC). The research team seeks to provide an assessment of the current school, Canadian Baptist Seminary, based upon various survey data collected from 2006 to 2009. In summary, this research advocates: the models remain flexible, but the mission focused.

The BGCC deserves such a study at this juncture. The search for a new seminary president creates a window in which to sense the vision for the next era. Furthermore, recent financial challenges experienced by many seminaries in North America have caused such institutions to re-assess their models. Finally, the beginning of this second century and the celebration of twenty years involvement in ACTS Seminaries also prompt the denomination to explore these questions at this time. What future directions should be explored?

Formal Education within the Baptist General Conference of Canada

The First Twenty:

The twentieth century began with euphoric optimism. Joseph Lister predicted the end of diseases within the century; and among Christian churches, few doubted the vision of a totally evangelized world. The white race took it for granted that they would rule the earth; all of course, with paternalistic grace. The Student Volunteer Movement adopted the audacious watchword, “the evangelization of the world in our generation”; and, the newly formed “*Christian Century*” magazine would chronicle their exploits. The entire developed world lived with such optimism. “*The coming nationality will be essentially a matter of education and economics,*” the famous eleventh edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica announced in 1910.

In that same year, the World Missions Conference of Edinburgh 1910 viewed itself as the staging ground for an unparalleled missionary exploit; and the massive Student Christian Movement would challenge young men and women to give their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Skilled at enlisting young men of ability; and also, endowed with the capacity to win the confidence of men of significance, John R. Mott urged the Edinburgh delegates, “Happy is the minister who can point to honored and useful workers in the home or foreign field whom he has been instrumental in sending thither.”⁴ In his role as chair of the conference, Mott excitedly announced that the great heathen forces that stood antagonistic to Christianity had weakened and the church would reach the world in this century. Christianization of the world merely awaited the funds and personnel to carry out the campaign.⁵

To what extent this global mission fervor impacted the Swedish Baptists is unknown; however, despite their size (less than two dozen churches across western Canada) they evidenced a passion for a training center; and thus, appointed Professor Emil Lundquist to the Swedish Department at Brandon College. He prepared pastors and missionaries for the fledgling movement, a position he held from 1907 until 1915. The relatively new Brandon College (opened in 1898) welcomed the relationship with the Swedish Baptists; as well as a similar

⁴ Mott, John R. 1909. The Future Leadership of our Church (New York: YMCA) p,iv

⁵ Mott, John R. 1904. The Pastor and Modern Missions: A Plea for Leadership in World Evangelization (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions) p, 14f.

partnership with the German Baptists (1909). Originally called “Prairie College” and located in the remote “Rapid City”, Manitoba, the school soon moved to the more urban Brandon, Manitoba; and by 1902, 108 men and 38 women had enrolled (McLaurin, 1939). By 1910, twenty students enrolled in the Scandinavian department, spending their summers on mission projects. In 1915, Professor C.H. Lager, a graduate of Bethel Seminary and an Old Testament specialist, was appointed to the Scandinavian department where he demonstrated a deep love for the local church.

Brandon College reflected the larger story of theological education in the Canadian scene during that era. In 1867, there were fifteen theological colleges in Canada, quite a remarkable number for such a small population. Of the fifteen, eleven were “clearly evangelical”; and for much of the Victorian era, evangelical convictions permeated the churches and theological education (Rawlyk 1996). When birthed, Brandon College reflected these values; however, by the second decade of the twentieth century, virtually every seminary or theological college had been infected with European liberal theology that stressed a form of postmillennial optimism (Rawlyk 1996, 259). Brandon College fell under its influence.

When this newly embraced “modernism” finally reached the halls of Brandon College, a theological controversy emerged that led numerous churches to withdraw from the convention and cease their financial support of the institution. While the various Baptist movements sought to maintain an amiable partnership; the emerging liberal theology, the decimating effects of the First World War on young adults⁶, and the ever present financial challenges led to the demise of the Baptist partnership. By 1938, formal Baptist denominational relationship with Brandon had ended and the institution came under the jurisdiction of the University of Manitoba. However, during the almost twenty years of partnership (1907-1925) many Swedish Baptist students enrolled in this department and over thirty entered the Christian ministry (Funk 2009).

The Second Twenty:

When “liberal” theology reached Brandon College and the parallel need emerged for a school closer to its new churches in Alberta, the Swedish Baptists moved their training center to Alberta, under the leadership of Missionary statesman, Ole Larson, himself a graduate of both

⁶ Over 60,000 Canadians soldiers died in the so called “Great War”.

Brandon College (1908-1912) and Bethel Seminary (1914-1916). Wetaskawin, Alberta was chosen as the most central location for such a venture where Alberta Baptist Bible Academy (ABBA) opened with ten students in 1925 (Funk 2009). Although classes initially ran for six weeks in the winter, later success prompted the decision to extend classes to sixteen weeks in 1935. Like many enrollees of these Bible institutes, students came either from a completed high school education; or, more often, with only partially completed public school education. Practical Christian service played a central role in the learning experience. Students went out visiting door to door, held street meetings, Gospel team ministry to churches, and vacation Bible schools throughout Alberta (Funk 2009).

ABBA illustrated a larger phenomenon in Western Canada: the Bible institute and college movement. The complete absence of evangelical seminaries or liberal arts colleges in western Canada until 1960 left these Bible colleges and institutes as the sole post-secondary educational option for those wanting to prepare for church ministry (McKinney 1985). Furthermore, there seemed an insipid mistrust of academic learning, fueled in part by the liberal theological heresy of Brandon College and other similar institutions. Guenther (2001, 6-10) noted that during the first half of the twentieth century, Western Canada had more Bible colleges and schools than any other region in the world. However, his extensive research contrasted the enthusiastic launch of 106 new such schools between 1909 and 1960, with the subsequent closure of 62 of these same schools during that period. Baptists started thirteen institutions, but later closed nine.

ABBA was one such institution. Despite having good impact during its early days, after twenty years of operations, the rural location coupled with the obvious “competition” from other similar institutions prompted the BGCC to pursue other educational options. Since the North American Baptist Conference had started a Bible School called Christian Training Institute (CTI) in Edmonton (circa 1945), plans were made to work out an affiliation agreement between ABBA and the North American Baptists. The energetic and passionate Ethel Ruff was appointed by the BGC as a full time faculty member, a position she held for two years, 1946-1948. Leonard Turnquist followed her and taught for another two years, 1948-1950; and was replaced himself by Rev. Oliver Ohsberg, who had just graduated from Bethel Seminary. Ohsberg taught classes and represented the BGC for one year, 1951 – 1952. In a report to BGC in 1949, Reverend L. Turnquist, a BGC teacher, gave a positive report, stating that eleven BGC students had been enrolled at CTI, that it was a growing school, with new construction and that the ABBA library

was being integrated. A good relationship existed between CTI and ABBA (Funk 2009). The current research has some potential in accessing current interest in this unaccredited approach to learning. Such institutions have fewer entrance requirements, but also tend to have smaller enrolments from any one denominational group.

The Third “Twenty”

The relationship with the North American Baptists faltered in 1952 and the Baptist General Conference began looking yet again for another model in which to fulfill its educational mission. This next chapter connects the BGC with Vancouver Bible Institute. The school had already started in 1918, as part of the unique Bible college movement in western Canada. Carlson (1964, 236) explained, “...for some time previous to 1918, some people in Vancouver had been praying for the opening of a China Inland Missions office in the city; and when an evangelist came to Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, the dream became reality.” Rev. Walter Ellis, a graduate of the Anglican Theological College, served for twenty six years as President.

Numbers tell a story. Modeled in part after Moody Bible Institute, the small school had modest enrolments ranging from sixty in 1925 to a high of 105 in 1950; although numbers dropped to a perilous low of twenty eight in 1942 (Guenther 2001, 289). In 1955, only one student registered for the Fall. However, other more delightful notations record that between 1918 and 1960: 31 graduates were in missions, 10 in “secretarial work”, 16 in “home missions”, 2 were pastors and 19 were pastors wives (where did they find their husbands?); and 82 were categorized as “housewives” while another 116 worked in secular business.” (Carlson 1964, 237). In total there were 312 graduates during those 42 years and another 279 who attended for at least one year. The numbers show that most graduates were lay leaders in their local churches.

As part of the unique Bible school movement in Western Canada, the school faced several ongoing challenges. The launch of several denominational schools (e.g. BLTS in Calgary) and the rising costs prompted the school to look for a buyer. At a meeting of the Columbia Conference, the Baptist General Conference took over operations of Vancouver Bible Institute in 1956; and, Rev LeRoy Gager served as its Principal. In less than three months, Gager had to recruit students, organize a faculty, form the staff, work out the course plans and

strengthen a library; and yet, under his enthusiastic leadership VBI reestablished itself, growing to a student body of 58 by 1960.

Optimism finally reigned; in fact the school moved to a spacious fifty-five acre site in Surrey. The groundbreaking ceremony was held Sunday afternoon, March 13, 1966; and by October of the same year, the School occupied the new Administration-Academic building at 15100 – 66A Avenue. The school was governed primarily by leaders from the BGC-US and funding came from both Canadian and US congregations and donors. In 1973 the College became an associate member of the American Association of Bible Colleges and a full member in 1975 with a respectable enrolment of 125 students. Optimism for the school was high and support for it was growing in Canada and the Northwestern United States. Two degrees, the Bachelor of Theology (BTH) and the Bachelor of Religious Education (BRE) provided the templates for the studies (Funk 2009).

Funk (2009) summarized the end of the story and the controversial close of VBC. The Baptist General Conference struggled with how to govern the school alongside its other US based academic institutions, listing such obstacles as an American organization owning property in Canada, the effect that VBC may have on the accreditation on its other institutions, and the increased work load on the Board of Education. In 1978, after another twenty year model, the BGC closed operations of its western Canada training centre. The decision created waves of conflict, especially among BGC churches in Canada; however, in the midst of its demise, some voices of a future vision quietly gave hope of a future in seminary education. A month after the fateful decision to close the school, Vancouver Bible College celebrated its Diamond Jubilee with more than 400 guests from Western Canada and as far away as Florida, Illinois and Oregon.

In the final report on November 1, 1980, Chairman, Lorne Carlson offered some foreshadowed interest in seminary education. “A summary of the findings has been prepared by Dr. Ivan Fahs of Planning Consultants, Rochester, Minnesota:

- 1. There is a good climate in the BGC churches for a seminary program. Most pastors, laymen and potential students are favorable to this kind of training.*
- 2. The number of students planning on seminary in the next four years is minimal and does not merit the development of a seminary at this time. This was one of the most decisive factors.*

3. *Timing is a problem. Until there is an organizational structure under which a seminary could be developed, it seems inappropriate to begin.*⁷

The Fourth Twenty

A decade past before the BGCC launched its next model of formal education in Western Canada. The newly created Baptist General Conference of Canada (BGCC; birthed 1982) became a founding member in 1988 of an innovative approach to graduate theological education in Canada called the Association of Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS Seminaries). Built loosely upon the model of Toronto School of Theology, “ACTS” began its first year of graduate school offerings on the campus of Trinity Western University; and eventually grew to become one of the largest evangelical seminaries in Canada, and a unique denominationally based operation.

The early days of discussion with ACTS Seminaries did include some doubts, alongside the enthusiasm. Canadian Baptist Seminary (CBS) Steering Committee minutes noted, “what recourse do we have in the face of unfavorable treatment from the TWU Academic Council?” These doubts ran alongside optimism that discerned, *“this arrangement gives us immediate accreditation standards, something other schools are working hard to achieve”*⁸ Other structural questions were noted such as *the process for hiring professors and the balance between scholarship and practitioner training and facilities*. While duly noting these questions and potential, and with the assurance of support from churches, especially on the prairies, the Regents moved that CBS start on July 1, 1998 with a budget of \$72,000 and a first set of classes as part of ACTS in Fall 1988. Barrie Palfreyman was appointed as Interim Administrator and eventually became President of CBS some time later.

The three original partners eventually became six, and have more recently settled into a five denominational partner operation, along with several affiliates such as Wycliffe Bible Translators. While fifty percent of the students come from the partnering denominations, others come from a wide range of other movements. Once again, the BGCC finds itself in a partnership, with both the benefits and challenges this presents.

⁷ Funk 2009,

⁸ Minutes of the CBS Steering Committee, Edmonton, Alberta (January 19, 1988). CBS Archival Files

The Association of Theological Schools took note of this unique, Canadian partnership⁹. When ACTS began in 1988, ATS noted about a dozen such arrangements across North America. Now, twenty years later, and especially in the current financial challenges of seminary education, ATS has estimated that over thirty such consortiums exist in theological education. Consortiums have both strengths and challenges. The economies of shared operational costs are a highlight. Furthermore, students have noted the unique learning experience of dialogue with others evangelical leaders from similar denominations. However, some would argue that the arrangement infringes on autonomy.

ACTS Seminaries has now graduated over 1,000 men and women; about 200 of these from CBS. Dozens of graduates from CBS serve BGCC churches; in fact graduates of other ACTS Seminaries partners also serve BGCC churches across Western Canada.

Summary:

The history of the church records many models for preparing ministry leaders. From the “schools of the prophets”, to the “three years in Arabia” experienced by Paul, from the monasteries of the middle ages and Oxford College of England; and from the many Bible schools of western Canada to the graduate seminaries of North America, the church has always taken seriously its task to equip pastors. Models change, but mission remains focused.

In this rich history, the Baptist General Conference churches in Canada have demonstrated a tenacious adaptability to models of theological education in Western Canada. While the general pattern of “every twenty years” may be more coincidental than strategic, the current twentieth anniversary of the launch of Canadian Baptist Seminary does provide a significant window in which to assess the future of theological education in this movement.¹⁰ In addition to this juncture, the economic downturn of North America has caused many seminaries to reassess their direction. The size of the movement has required that the BGCC seek out creative partnerships during the last century; and while these have been pursued for economic

⁹ Heppe, Linda: “Let Not Theology Put Asunder” *In Trust Journal* : Summer 2004. Available now at www.intrust.org

¹⁰ Studies of Formal institutions in Western Canada would discern similar patterns. The bible school movement led the way during the early part of the twentieth century, followed by the Bible college, accreditation movement, beginning in the early 1960’s. Graduate level seminaries began in 1968, but really flourished with the start of numerous evangelical seminaries in the 1970’s. ACTS Seminaries, featured in this report, is actually a late comer to the scene, having started in 1988.

reasons, their impact does need to be discerned. Since the current ACTS partnership is one more such economically driven partnership, the research sought to discern the attitudes of BGCC pastoral and lay leaders to such partnerships. Furthermore, the nature of the movement has nudged it to embrace training opportunities for both lay people and pastors; a vision that is not without its challenges. Again, the study will gain some reaction to this joint learning mission.

The reality is: theological education, at least in Western Canada, has historically faced economic challenges that require flexible models and daring visionary leaders. The scattered population and the sheer vastness of the Western Canadian landscape force all denominations to remain creative. Even after the terminus of Guenther's study (i.e. 1960), more such institutions have closed their doors. At each stage of the specific BGCC story, key leaders served as the "vision champion".

Furthermore, while it has not been documented, a suspicion of formal education seems to exist within the movement and the broader Evangelical community of Western Canada. Do these perceived suspicions still linger? The current survey and research asks several questions surrounding these themes: what level of support exists within the BGCC for theological education? Also, what level of satisfaction does the BGCC have for the current relationship with ACTS Seminaries and the quality of the graduates from this institution?

Non-formal Learning

Since the movement is calling for a stronger seminary presence in non-formal schooling, the current research also explored the role of non-formal learning as part of the vision for CBS, a potential new chapter alongside the seminary. The concept has been called by various names: "grassroots education"; "lay training: "seminary lite" and other such descriptors. Whatever term is chosen, we summarize the dialogue in current literature on formal and non-formal learning.

Non-formal learning is different. However, distinctions between the two modes should be viewed more as "tendencies" rather than distinct categories; in fact, the two categories soften in the environs of good theological education. When formal education takes seriously the need for equipping the entire people of God, the seminary embraces some of the strengths found in non-formal learning. Non-formal learning, however, needs to guard against the temptation to become a "lite" form of cognitive, formal education; or even, a pragmatic, skill based learning mode which overlooks the urgent need for accredited education. In a recent consultation at Chicago

(Ward Consultation 2005), about seventy-five representatives from seminaries and Bible colleges around the Globe sensed that a softening of the distinctions between non-formal and formal has emerged within the last few years with a growing appreciation for non-formal learning, especially in developing countries. The classic example of “swimming lessons” illustrates this principle. Under which of the two categories would we best place swimming lessons? The reality is that this particular learning experience has traces of both.

This “*softening of the categories*” concurs with current literature. “*It is difficult to make a clear distinction between formal and informal learning as there is often a crossover between the two*”. (McGivney, V. 1999) Another consultation, funded by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), reached similar conclusions.¹ That consultation reported, “*There is often considerable overlap, but also considerable disagreement, concerning the differences...there are somewhere in the region of 20 different but overlapping factors, used by one or more writers, to help draw up the relevant boundaries.*”

Which form is superior? For many decades, some have assumed “Formal” as the superior model; and yet, beginning with the Scribner and Cole publication (1973), the tide began to turn. Their central argument countered most of the claims for the superiority of formal learning and actually asserted the superiority of the non-formal. Non-formal learning has a long history; as well as the ability to address significant social issues with adeptness and this is best seen in the local church. David Haney, in his book *The Idea of the Laity*, writes, “Those committed to Christ's Church and to its renewal in our time are also committed to a basic premise: that renewal will come only as we successfully activate the laity. The activation and deployment of the vast lay forces is priority business for the Church today simply because they are intrinsic to authentic Christianity.”¹ Lay mobilization becomes vital in church growth. The study, then also probed what place does non-formal learning have in the future of CBS.

We summarize here several continuums that move between formal and non-formal, because they are explored in the survey of the BGCC. **First**, formal education has an accredited degree as the outcome; and while non-formal does allow for some form of “certification”, this feature remains primarily within the domain of formal education. Several items seek to explore the desire of the BGCC for “recognition of achievement”. **Second**, non-formal tends to focus upon the applied and practical; and again, while this also appears in good formal education, this

trait is especially found within the domain of non-formal. **Third**, formal education has traditionally been the place in which students are assessed through “reading and response” activities, often attached to a grade. **Finally**, children and young adults have historically been the primary target audience for formal education; and since some voices have urged the seminary to give attention to the young adults of the movement, we note here this feature.

The literature also advocates:

- Formal and non-formal must collaborate rather than compete with each other. Neither one is superior. The history of Western Canada illustrates repeatedly that both models have succeeded and failed in this setting.
- Good formal education gives credibility to non-formal education; while good non-formal makes the benefits of formal accessible to a broader audience. Non-formal provides a place where people can “taste seminary” before considering the, admittedly, more demanding format.
- Both models must integrate with life and ministry, as much as possible. Theory isolated from application limits the student’s ability to truly learn.
- This third point leads to the next: both models must provide mentoring, which is itself an entirely distinctive model of learning-informal. We learn best in the context of community and relationships.
- Adult learning must be viewed as lifelong, personal; and above all disciplined. Good ministry learning is itself a spiritual discipline.
- Effective non-formal has a clearly defined target group; and the brave willingness to step into the highly competitive world of Non-formal options.

Research Design and Collection Procedures:

We now turn to the current survey and its results. While reading statistics is comparable to perusing a phone book, we seek to hear the “holy conversation” of the BGCC leaders through these numbers and comments. The researchers are deeply grateful to those many people who took time to participate.

This is a descriptive design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative input. During the period of April to May 2009, a team of three people designed the instrument to be distributed across the BGCC. The desired population included “pastors, denominational leaders and significant lay leaders within the movement”. Estimates placed this entire group in the range of about 450-500 people. When the instrument received final input from the seminary President and various denominational leaders, the Primary Investigator uploaded the instrument to the surveymonkey.com website and distributed Canada Post mailings, emails and personal invitations to people from this desired population group. Others assisted in encouraging participation from potential respondents. Finally, during the national conference of the BGCC, hard copies of the instrument were made available to interested participants.

The sample is modest, but reflective (n=90) primarily of Alberta and British Columbia, but with reasonable input from other regions of the Denomination. Researchers had envisioned a sample ranging from 100-150, to enable some comparisons between regions and groups. While the response from Saskatchewan and Manitoba should be considered too small to draw significant distinctive implications, the research findings will draw attention to the responses of these two provinces. Assuming the size of the potential population as noted above (i.e. 450-500 pastoral and lay leaders), **the overall response total represents approximately 20%** of the desired population, a reasonable sample. Furthermore, the sample represents a reasonable balance between pastors or associate pastors (43%) and lay-leaders (48%) as well as denominational and seminary respondents (9%). The researchers did express disappointment with the low response from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Eastern Canada.

The quantitative data was simply downloaded from the surveymonkey.com site and implemented into the study (see various Tables for these results). However, the qualitative data went through a more rigorous assessment. Four coders, three from outside the seminary, processed the written responses and worked together to combine their findings into one

summary report, the findings of which are imbedded in the results that follow. A special thanks to those who assisted in the coding and assessment of the written responses. The survey had two sections: one on the assessment of the current model called CBS; and the second section probed the possibility of non-formal as part of the seminary’s mandate.

Summary of Seminary Findings:

To what extent does the BGCC endorse Seminary education? Before exploring any specific assessment of Canadian Baptist Seminary, the study wanted to probe the overall support for any formal, pastoral training. To put this into an historical setting, the study prodded, “*To what extent did the original commitment of the Swedish Baptists to formal education still exist in the BGCC?*”

Table One			
Seminary level education is a vital part of preparing ministry leaders.			
1: disagree (D)	2.4%	2	
2: Perhaps Agree (PA)	19.3%	16	
3: Agree (A);	28.9%	24	
4: Strongly Agree (SA)	49.4%	41	

Although no documentation exists to support the hypothesis, the researchers have long sensed some suspicion among some BGCC personnel towards formal education, especially graduate schools. Therefore, the study pointedly asked about this attitude. The sample actually offered a strong endorsement for the need of theological education among pastors of the BGCC; and although some from the prairies registered less support for seminary education, almost **fifty percent of the sample chose “strongly agree”** to the item “*seminary education is vital for preparing pastors*”. In total, **77% either agreed or strongly agreed** with this statement (**Means score=4.29, the highest overall means scores in the study**)¹¹ Respondents seemed to understand that the term, “seminary” refers to graduate education as noted in some of the written responses. These comments included, “...*must have graduate level training*”

¹¹ The researchers noted that many of the items resulted in higher Standard Deviations (SD); often in the range of .80 to 1.0. Since an SD in the range of .3 to .6 would demonstrate strong agreement in the group, these higher numbers do draw attention to a wider range of opinions on some matters. However, even the higher SD’s had some variations that are noted here. No further analysis was made to assess “normalcy rates”.

and another referred to partnering with “...other evangelical graduate seminaries”. One added, “undergraduate training is not sufficient”.¹²

Canadian Baptist Seminary graduates:

The study also focused attention to the current institution, Canadian Baptist Seminary. Do CBS graduates serve BGCC churches effectively? Twenty-five percent responded “Strongly Agree” (SA) and another 46% “agreed” (A). With a means of 3.89, this is slightly lower, perhaps statistically significant, than a similar study conducted in 2006 (means=4.02)¹³. A sad reality is that several CBS grads have fallen into moral failures and their stories may have shaped the response. However, written comments from respondents may also hold the clue for this lower response.

Table Two:			
CBS graduates serve BGCC churches and missions very well.			
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	
1: Strongly disagree (SD)	2.4%	2	
2: disagree (D)	3.6%	3	
3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	22.6%	19	
4: Agree (A);	46.4%	39	
5: Strongly Agree (SA)	25.0%	21	

Nine people wrote that either they did not know a CBS graduate; or that their church is not currently served by one. Most of these comments came from the prairie region where CBS has fewer graduates serving. Personal comments from Alberta gave credibility to this assumption: “I actually don't know any grads”; “Have seen very few graduates in our churches.” “We have never seen anyone from CBS.”; “Not sure of involvement within BGCC”. “I am not aware of any graduates in BGC churches”.

However, for those familiar with graduates, the attitude was captured by one person, “We have the evidence to prove it. The grads are a well trained, loyal and effective”.

¹² See Appendix One and Two for actual charts.

¹³ The 2006 study included 102 respondents with data collected at the BGCC national conference. Twenty six percent of respondents were from Saskatchewan and Manitoba, almost seventy percent from Alberta and B.C. and the remainder from Eastern Canada.

Satisfaction with the ACTS Seminaries arrangement:

Closely connected to this last item, the study also probed to what extent the movement is satisfied with the current ACTS Seminaries arrangement. The twentieth year of operation allows the BGCC a window through which to assess the effectiveness of this model. Overall, **51% chose Strongly Agree (SA)** in response to the statement “ACTS Seminaries provides an excellent place to equip BGCC leaders”; and another 24% chose A (**combined 75% agree; Means score=4.23**). **In B.C. the S.A. actually reached 74%** (n=29) and in Alberta (n=37) **38% chose SA**. However, 3.6% of the entire sample disagreed to some extent (SD=.94). The survey suggests strong support for the partnership with ACTS Seminaries.

Table Three	ACTS Seminaries provides an excellent place to equip BGCC leaders.		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	1.2%	1
	2: disagree (D)	2.4%	2
	3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	20.5%	17
	4: Agree (A);	24.1%	20
	5: Strongly Agree (SA)	51.8%	43

Written comments added color to this affirmation. Of the twenty eight recorded, nine respondents actually used the word “*kingdom*” or some similar concept to affirm the value of the ACTS partnership; and while a few expressed concern about the possible limited “Baptist” emphasis, most comments were positive. One responded, “*Important that our leaders 'see the other side' - important to be 'Baptist' but also to be aware of distinctive of all denominations*”.

Another commented, “*This is probably the best way in which the BGCC, with our limited size, can leverage into providing top quality education - by partnering and pooling resources*”. Finally, another added, “*It is good to have input from all the seminaries as this is what the real world is all about. Getting together and working towards the Kingdom*”

Some respondents had concerns about the perceived cost of ACTS partnership, the west coast location and the perceived lack of Baptist identity in the Consortium. One person added, “*...too much administration at ACTS. Too many cooks spoil the broth*”. However, one person simply stated, “*it does not get any cheaper!*” Concern about the location (three comments), lack of accessibility to lay people and few BGCC students were also noted in this item.

Should CBS continue within ACTS Seminaries? **Thirty-two percent chose SA** while **29% chose “Agree”** for a combined total of **61%**. The **32% SA** is noticeably lower than the **51% SA** response to the current satisfaction level with the consortium (61%, compared to a combined **76% “SA” and “A”** for the current satisfaction level with ACTS Seminaries). In summary, respondents still support the ACTS partnership, but about 11% either disagree or have some level of angst. **The results do suggest that lay people are more supportive than pastors** (almost twice as many lay people chose either “Strongly Agree” or “agree” as did pastors) even though the “n” for each group was similar in size.

Table Four	CBS must continue to participate as a full member within ACTS Seminaries.		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	2.4%	2
	2: disagree (D)	11.0%	9
	3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	24.4%	20
	4: Agree (A);	29.3%	24
	5: Strongly Agree (SA)	32.9%	27

Again written responses added commentary to this response. Many commented on the financial concerns and a few on the perceived lack of “Baptist” distinctive within the Consortium. Of the twenty-three written comments, ten affirmed the efficient business model. Somewhat ironically, these “efficiency” comments contrasted with others who expressed concern about the expensiveness of the model and the inability of the smaller BGCC to afford the costs. Three people wondered why BGCC needs a seminary at all.

Support for and partnering with other Evangelical seminaries:

The researchers hypothesized, with good reason, that leaders within the BGCC support other evangelical seminaries in Canada. Therefore, the study included the item, “... *other seminaries serve the movement just as well as CBS?*” This probed the deep commitment to interdenominational schools that has shaped much of Western Canada for decades. Briercrest, Providence and Taylor have long provided pastors and church leaders for many denominations, especially in their respective geographical regions. While appreciative of the role these seminaries play in the various regions of Canada; ACTS Seminaries, nonetheless, claims a structural and missional connection to a defined group of evangelical denominations; and furthermore, the consortium seeks to allow for equal voice at governance and academic levels.

Table Five	Other Canadian evangelical seminaries equip our leaders just as well as CBS		
2: disagree (D)	2.5%	2	
3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	37.0%	30	
4: Agree (A);	39.5%	32	
5: Strongly Agree (SA)	21.0%	17	

Here, the provincial numbers are worth noting. Overall, **21% chose SA** and another 39% chose A=Agree, for a combined total of **60%**. Do other seminaries serve as well? The answer is nuanced when considering two regions (**BC: SA 7%; ALTA: SA 25%**). These results mirrored a BGCC study conducted in 2006. (**2006; means=3.79; 2009 means=3.76**). In essence, support exists for other seminaries, but it would appear this is regionally influenced. This item also generated considerable written response.

“We are too small an organization to have our own seminary. There are sufficient schools to train students.

“More effective to make arrangements with a seminary to teach Baptist distinctives, if deemed important.

“If BGC churches feel a need for their own seminary they would support the seminary.”

A related item asked about pursuing partnerships with other seminaries. At the time of this publication, the seminary has opened informal conversations with at least two other likeminded institutions. However, the survey results suggest that there is little interest in pursuing partnerships with other seminaries, even Baptist (**SA 9.6%; and A 16%**).¹⁴ In fact, similar numbers opposed (**8.4% Strongly Disagree.; 18.1% D**) the idea of new partnerships. A wide range of opinions exists here, with some small support for pursuing partnership with Taylor (noted in the written comments). One wonders if both the historical relationship with NAB and the current ongoing uncertainty in the Taylor Seminary would even lower the support further.¹⁵ However, the current instability of Taylor may warrant creative partnerships.

¹⁴ With a means score of 3.01; this received one of the lowest averages of all the items, but the higher SD (1.04) also suggested the movement has some considerable difference of opinion.

¹⁵ At the time of this research, the future of Taylor remains in doubt. While the college has closed, some uncertainty remains about the seminary as well. Under “recommendations”, the researchers will take this issue under consideration.

Table six	CBS should seriously explore a merger with another Baptist seminary		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	7.6%	6
2: disagree (D)	17.7%	14	
3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	48.1%	38	
4: Agree (A);	16.5%	13	
5: Strongly Agree (SA)	10.1%	8	

Written comments gave explanations for either pursuing partnerships or avoiding such efforts. Several spoke supportively of Taylor, others with Briercrest. And yet, several simply commented, *“If we cannot make it with ACTS Seminaries, why try another new arrangement?”*

In essence, the BGCC leaders, as represented in this study, seem divided on the matter of partnering elsewhere.

Future Direction for CBS

Several items studied the future vision for CBS. With the twentieth year of partnership in ACTS and with the apparent “pattern” of revising training models on average every two decades in the BGCC, the survey probed the statement, *“BGCC should continue to have its own seminary”*. Overall, **21% chose SA; and another 34% chose Agree “A”**, for a combined total of **56%** favoring the denominational seminary. However, 17% chose either Strongly Disagree or Disagree (SD and D). Seven pastors chose “disagree” and four lay people chose “disagree”.

Table Seven	The BGCC must continue to have its own graduate level seminary.		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	2.4%	2
2: disagree (D)	13.4%	11	
3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	29.3%	24	
4: Agree (A);	34.1%	28	
5: Strongly Agree (SA)	20.7%	17	

The overall lower means score (**3.59 along with the SD of 1.05**) also add to the reality that this issue stirs discussion. Some had intense passion. One person simply wrote, *“Whatever we do don't let it die!!!”* However, another respondent believed, *“we don't at present have our own”. The BGC component of ACTS is very minimal.*” Another added, *“We do not have a*

large denomination... the number of students attending BGC is very low...The new reality of churches hiring from within has also impacted the educational direction for many churches.”

Again, home province shaped these findings. Alberta respondents (total n=37) responded with **19% SA and 32% A**. This combined total of **51%** is lower than British Columbia (n=29) where **34% chose S.A. and 34% A** for a B.C. combined total of **68%** agreement. While Saskatchewan and Manitoba had a combined n=14, too small for percentage consideration, it should be noted that only one respondent chose S.A. from those provinces. While the means score (**3.59**) is **statistically higher than the 2006 score (means 3.1)**, the responses still reflect a wide range of opinions. However, the increase in the means score may suggest that support for a denominational seminary may be on the rise.

Table Eight	CBS must continue to participate as a full member within ACTS Seminaries.		
	: Strongly disagree (SD)	2.4%	2
	2: disagree (D)	11.0%	9
	3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	24.4%	20
	4: Agree (A);	29.3%	24
	5: Strongly Agree (SA)	32.9%	27

Money is a good indicator of passion. Therefore, the study sought to probe the commitment to the Canadian Baptist Seminary by the statement, “BGCC churches and donors should continue their financial support for CBS...” While a more direct statement like, “MY church should support the seminary” may have been more to the point, the study did seek to gain some sense of affirmation through financial commitment. The respondents seemed very supportive with **42% responding with SA and another 37% A**. *The means score of 4.17 was among the highest of all the statements.* A very small percentage (**3.6%**) disagreed. However, in the written responses, several noted that their church does not support CBS and has no intention of doing so in light of its location and lack of graduates to serve the denomination.

The financial statements of CBS support this response: giving from churches has gone from \$54,000 in 2005 to \$79,000 in 2008; equivalent to a sixty percent increase.

Off site and Online Delivery:

Support for offering seminary either online or in other regions was strong with **69% either SA or A** that CBS must offer seminary courses in places other than Langley (**means 4.03**); and furthermore, Online delivery must be an option (**79% either SA or A**) to this direction.

Table Ten	CBS must continue to offer seminary in regions other than Langley (e.g. prairies).		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	1.2%	1
	2: disagree (D)	9.6%	8
	3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	19.3%	16
	4: Agree (A);	33.7%	28
	5: Strongly Agree (SA)	36.1%	30

One final observation deserves note: the role of CBS in preparing leaders for other movements and denominations. Both the 2006 and the 2009 studies explored the support for endorsing this as part of the seminary's mission. As part of the consortium, the seminary is expected to affirm the need for the training of pastors and leaders for the partner denominations. The item was worded, *"In addition to equipping students for the Baptist General Conference, CBS has a vital mission to prepare men and women for other movements."* Frankly, the statement probed the level of "kingdom thinking" within the BGCC. While the **SA response is modest (24.4%) the Agree is 43.9% for a combined total of 78%**. With a means score of **3.84, this is statistically lower than a similar item in 2006 (means=4.2)**. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that the movement seems to endorse its role in actually helping other compatible movements within the evangelical world, alongside the needs of the BGCC.

Relationship between "informed" and "supportive" Summary:

Does information lead to affirmation? In other words, do respondents who claim to be "well informed" have a different opinion from those who have less knowledge of the Canadian Baptist Seminary? Those who claimed to be "well informed" about the seminary (n=19) represent too small a sub sample to draw strong conclusions; however, the responses suggest this group have a more positive attitude toward the seminary than those who claim less knowledge (n=14). Although no attempt was made to calculate "statistical significance";

nonetheless, “well informed about CBS” respondents did score higher percentages on: “*CBS graduates serve well*”; “*other seminaries serve as well*”; “*ACTS is a good place to partner*”; “*BGCC must have its own seminary*”; “*must continue within ACTS*”

Conclusions:

The movement endorses graduate school seminary education; and furthermore, respondents speak much of the value of kingdom partnership as expressed in the ACTS Seminaries consortium. The economics of the arrangement draw positive comments. Also, for those who claim to know a CBS graduate, they feel that these pastors, missionaries and marriage counselors serve well. The cost efficiencies of the consortium are also noted in the respondents. Finally, the seminary needs to pursue online and offsite delivery of courses. At no point do the findings suggest replacing formal education with non-formal.

On the more doubtful side, frequent comments included: lack of knowledge of the seminary, preference for “trans-denominational seminaries, restricted west coast location and lack of graduates to serve the movement. Finally, there seems to be some lack of clarity about the financial model at ACTS Seminaries.

Which items had the highest overall average or “means score”?

Theme	Means	SD
Seminary level education is vital	4.30	.94
ACTS serves us well...	4.02	.94
BGCC churches should financially support CBS	4.17	.89
Online Delivery Essential	4.02	.84
CBS provide non-formal practical training	4.01	.96
Provide education in other sites	3.94	
Urgent need for non-formal	3.91	.92
CBS grads serve churches well	3.89	.89
Other Seminaries serve just as well	3.83	1.09
CBS continue to participate in ACTS	3.79	1.09

Which items triggered strong passion? Strongly Agree (SA) had the highest percentages in:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. ACTS Seminaries ...an excellent place to equip our leaders | 51.8% |
| 2. Seminary level education is a vital part of preparing ministry leaders. | 49.4% |
| 3. Churches should support the seminary in their budget. | 41.7% |
| 4. CBS must continue to offer seminary training in regions other than Langley (e.g. prairies). | 36% |
| 5. CBS must continue to participate as a full member within ACTS Seminaries. | 32.9% |

Non-formal learning: “Gateways to Seminary”

Non-formal results and summary:

Before moving to the recommendations, we provide here a summary of the second section which probed, “*To what extent do BGCC leaders expect the seminary to enter the broad field of non-formal learning?*” Actually, CBS already does provide such events through pulpit supply, adult classes in local churches, some church board training and participation in the 2020 Summit. While these are occasional and unstructured, the movement seems to be asking for more; thus the study probed these matters as well.

This section started with a broad picture regarding the need for more non-formal learning within the BGCC. Even apart from CBS participation, the study wanted to probe the perceived need for more non-formal in the BGCC. Thus, one item explored the issue broadly, “*There is an urgent need for non-formal learning in the BGCC*” resulting in **28.6% SA and 42.9% A, with a means score of 3.91**. In short, there is a perceived need, but not apparently as strong when compared with other items in the study. We will note this later.

However, with this in mind, the study asked more specifically, “*...CBS must also provide practical lay institute or non-formal training for local churches to assist them with contemporary issues*”, The item received a response of **35% “Strongly Agree” and an additional 42% “Agree” for a combined total of 77%, (means score=4.04)**, one of the highest items in the entire study. This theme generated sixty written responses overall, drawing attention to the many perspectives on the issue. Generally, respondents supported the

direction, but others wrote of their concerns about the seminary’s ability to provide this, both because of cost and potential diffusion of the seminary human resources.

Table Thirteen	In addition to graduate education, CBS must also provide practical lay institute or nonformal training for local churches to assist them with contemporary issues.		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	1.2%	1
	2: disagree (D)	8.5%	7
	3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	11.0%	9
	4: Agree (A);	42.7%	35
	5: Strongly Agree (SA)	36.6%	30

We insert several written comments:

“Perhaps, but not at the expense of the graduate school operation.”; and another wrote, *“Perhaps CBS isn’t the right vehicle to provide this...”*.

Yet another added, *“There needs to be training, however there are other ways to deliver it other than have the seminary do it, could be local church-based or through the district or national denomination.”*

While one person endorsed the vision, they cautioned, *“Make doubly sure you have the staff and vehicle in place that will not detract from the CBS mandate; and can be competitive with the non-formal market. An ‘only adequate’ product will fade quickly”*.

Most endorsed the vision, thus adding strength to the means score of 4.04 . One person succinctly wrote, *“If you don’t, we’ll get it elsewhere.”* Several spoke specifically about lay leaders within the church; and others called for teacher training. Six specifically noted online delivery; and many called for locally accessible. One respondent even suggested the seminary should pursue undergraduate options as well.

However, several written comments did caution, *“not at the expense of the current mission.”* Yet another added, *“Although CBS’s focus is graduate studies, the nature of today’s culture requires “gateways” to seminary. Workshops, weekend courses delivered locally would introduce leaders to the value of seminary...”*

What people group should the seminary target? The denomination has a history of seeking to target young adults, as do many denominations. This generation represents the future of any movement; therefore the study sought to probe the level of passion for equipping the “twenty-somethings”. With this in mind, one item stated, *“In addition to graduate level learning,*

Canadian Baptist Seminary should focus its ministry upon our young adults in the BGCC” produced a Strong agree (SA) of 28.6% and Agree (A) of 36.9% for a combined total of 64%.

While this is positive and duly noted, the comparatively lower means of 3.86 gives the seminary caution in exclusively considering this age group focus. Furthermore, and more significantly, in the open ended response columns where people could add any comment they desired, only one specifically referenced young adults; while many more spoke of “lay-leaders” or “church volunteers”. Two spoke of the 2020 Summit, but there seems little self initiated enthusiasm for focus upon young adults. This specific issue may need further clarity: learning activities need a clearly defined target group. Overall, the advice summarized: Keep it short, accessible and affordable; or as one added, “Make it as accessible and as inexpensive as you possibly can.” Another added, “Non-formal is a gateway to seminary”

Table Fifteen n	In addition to graduate level learning, CBS should focus upon our young adults in the BGCC		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	0.0%	0
	2: disagree (D)	8.8%	7
	3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	25.0%	20
	4: Agree (A);	37.5%	30
	5: Strongly Agree (SA)	28.8%	23

The survey results also caution about focusing upon some form of certification. The sample had little apparent interest in pursuing some certification, one of the features noted in the literature review on formal/non-formal learning. The results (SA 7.4; A 28.4) and even some strong disagreement (SD 3.7; D 25.9) give reason for caution. The response was even more dubious when considering lay-people, the likely target group for such endeavors (out of 39 lay people, only three chose either S.A. or A.) This move towards a more “formal” delivery that provides certification does not seem to have traction.

Table Sixteen	I would eagerly attend non-formal learning that resulted in some form of certificate or recognition		
	1: Strongly disagree (SD)	3.9%	3
	2: disagree (D)	26.0%	20
	3: Perhaps Agree (PA)	35.1%	27
	4: Agree (A);	27.3%	21
	5: Strongly Agree (SA)	7.8%	6

Finally, when asked about the content of the non-formal experience, respondents placed the suggested options in the following ranking:

	Mns.	First	Second	Third
Study of a book or section of the Bible	1.84	21	9	9
Study of a specific, relevant theological issue.	2.20	19	14	10
Equipping Church Boards for better church governance	2.29	10	13	9
Equipping churches to navigate change and conflict	2.38	11	18	16
Training for Small group leaders in our churches	2.45	8	15	11
Exploration of the missional and/or emerging church	2.49	13	7	8
Confident personal evangelism	2.78	3	11	

Summary Conclusions:

Overall, the entire study resulted in these top ten “ranked” responses:

Seminary level education is vital...	4.30
ACTS serves us well...	4.26
BGCC churches should support CBS financially	4.17
“...provide practical lay institute or non-formal training for local churches to assist them with contemporary issues”,	4.04
Online delivery is essential	4.02
Provide education in other sites	3.94
There is an urgent need for non-formal training in BGCC	3.91
CBS students serve the churches well	3.89
CBS must provide non-formal for young adults	3.86
Other seminaries serve as well	3.81
CBS must continue to participate in ACTS	3.79

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The current financial challenges of CBS triggered much dialogue and many emails during the past year. Despite these very real issues, BGCC leaders still expressed strong support for the current partnership with ACTS Seminaries; however, this ongoing relationship may need adjusting. Support for “ongoing partnership”, while ranking in the top ten scored items, is nonetheless lower than current satisfaction. In short, BGCC leaders like the current arrangement, but may want changes. Furthermore, the seminary seems affirmed in its vision to pursue new options like “The Journey”, as well as aggressive online delivery; and perhaps most significantly, intentional movement into the world of non-formal learning.

The Swedish Baptist Churches entered the world of theological education over one hundred years ago; and while the models for delivering these have changed over the century, that commitment remains strong, as evidenced by the current study. As this report goes to press, at least thirty BGCC students have enrolled in either the Langley or Edmonton sites for the Fall 2009 academic year. Granted, the Baptist General Conference remains a comparatively small movement in Canada, with about one hundred congregations stretching from the Maritimes and Quebec to the vast regions of the Western prairies and the West Coast; and yet this number of students is encouraging.

Those who enter the waters of non-formal, dive into a fast flowing river. Many seminars, workshops and institutes exist in this river; therefore, those drawn into this experience must have a clear market and rationale for entering the stream. Furthermore, non-formal rarely provides a “cash cow” for the host organization, unless other products are sold at the event (e.g. WillowCreek admits that most of its profits for the Leadership Summit comes from the sale of products offered to the delegates). The financial benefits are secondary- real, but secondary.

While the respondents strongly advocated new initiatives, the seminary will need to discern what groups receive focused attention. Both heart and history within the BGCC would lead the seminary towards young adults, but lay leaders also seem to be the primary place for focus. Furthermore, there is little perceived interest in “for credit” work¹⁶. They seemed more

¹⁶ The very concept of non-formal that seeks to offer “for credit” illustrates the softness between formal and non-formal. Historically, “for credit” has been a trademark of formal education; as has some form of work assessment. The entire Bible school movement lived on the boundaries between formal and non-formal; and Guenther (2004) chronicled the benefits and risks of this in-between land.

focused upon practical ministry training for lay leaders in the local church, but it must be accessible, affordable and applicable to the local church setting.

Recommendations:

Offering recommendations is akin to eating steak without teeth: great bravado, but tough making progress. However, we present here findings that emerge from the study and urge the various parties to “sink their teeth” into these recommendations:

1. Since the study suggests that both pastors and lay leaders¹⁷ strongly endorse seminary education, **the Baptist General Conference shall affirm the need for well trained pastors, church planters and missionaries for the movement.** While those lacking theological education will be affirmed in the leadership of the movement, they will be viewed more as the exception than the norm. Voices that critique theological education need to be heard, but with discernment.
2. **Respondents drew attention to the low number of CBS graduates serving the churches and mission agencies of the movement.** This is true. However, both the seminary and the movement need to provide a more positive picture of the role that the graduates¹⁸ do play in the movement, at District level and at the local church level.
3. Furthermore, and more strategically; **the denomination and seminary must dialogue on ways to attracts more people into seminary and into ministry.** This problem seems to be evident in other ACTS Seminaries denominations, but CBS can only equip as many leaders as the BGCC sends through its doors. The reality is that the other denominations invest in their emerging leaders with the assumption that they will return to the host movement to serve. While God can and does lead graduates from other seminaries to the BGCC, the movement must be intentional and diligent in raising up its own pastors and mission personnel. The 2020 Summit, originally designed with the vision of challenging young adults

¹⁷ Actually, the results suggest that lay leaders even support the concept with more vigor!

¹⁸ It should be noted that some leaders within the BGCC have graduated from one of the other ACTS Seminaries; and yet serve the BGCC very well.

to consider full time ministry, continues to be a primary place where the movement draws attention to full time ministry. The seminary simply must play an ongoing role in this endeavor.

4. **The study strongly supports the current partnership with ACTS Seminaries,** but also urges several specific action steps as CBS moves forward. Stay within ACTS Seminaries, as costs allow; but with due attention to the following:
 - a. **Strengthen seminary presence on the prairies and elsewhere in Canada (Montreal?)** through online, local course delivery and creative partnerships with other seminaries”. “The Journey” represents an innovative approach to this vision and must be promoted within the movement. With or without the full participation of the ACTS Seminaries, satellite campuses are essential for the BGCC.
 - b. **Clarify for BGCC leaders the economic and governance benefits of the current arrangements and assure them of the growing presence of the BGCC within the consortium.**¹⁹ Partners within the consortium have equal voice in governance, academic programming and mentoring opportunities. When people are well informed, the likelihood is stronger that they will affirm the current relationship. Furthermore, with some of the faculty adjustments currently undertaken at ACTS Seminaries, CBS actually has gained presence within the required curriculum; and this could even be strengthened more, depending upon the person appointed to be the president. The Regents would do well to work closely with the consortium to ensure a good fit between the president and the faculty needs of ACTS Seminaries.
 - c. **Listen attentively to the voices that have concerns,** or even strong opinions, about the current consortia arrangement; and also pay attention

¹⁹ As might be expected, those who agreed with the statement, “I am well informed about CBS” gave higher responses overall in the study.

to the wide range of opinions (as demonstrated in the high Standard Deviations and various written comments) but at the same time, remember that the negative responses in this survey still fall within the “norms” for a group this size (i.e. fifteen percent opposed to any decision or direction).

- d. **Ensure that CBS has meaningful presence in the curriculum;** but also affirm, as the survey suggests, the merits of learning from professors who have other perspectives, yet still within the baptistic, evangelical convictions. The current arrangement at ACTS Seminaries allows the BGCC to have input into each faculty hire; an option not available at any other institutions. In fact, the call for “more Baptist” seems less evident than the call for rubbing shoulders with other evangelical movements.
5. **CBS must move into non-formal learning, but carefully define the rationale and target group.** Also, the study seems to offer caution about structuring the non-formal experiences too tightly.
- a. Beyond the sheer pragmatics of keeping adequate records and ensuring the ability to deliver a set curriculum in a timely manner, the responses from the sample suggest little interest in “certification”.
 - b. However, there is strong interest in ongoing, accessible non-formal learning that meets practical ministry based learning.
 - c. The seminary is cautioned about using the term “Journey” too freely without consulting with the other partners in the Consortium.
 - d. “A taste of Seminary” and other less structured approaches allow the seminary to be flexible based upon local resources.
6. Assess the sources of expertise within the movement, preferably those with doctoral degrees, to employ in the non-formal program. Furthermore, these associate professors provide a “farm team” for future use in the seminary curriculum wherever it is offered.

- a. Give consideration to focusing upon the equipping of church boards or small group leaders, or other clearly defined groups within the local church.
 - b. Among the subject options suggested in the study (and these are not exhaustive) respondents gave priority to study of Biblical books or theological themes; and attention to various church board issues.
7. Pursuing partnerships with other seminaries, even Baptist, had comparatively little traction in the sample. **However, almost in spite of this response, the seminary is pursuing conversations with another regional seminary in Canada**, a dialogue that actually began quietly over three years ago. The entire field of theological education is shifting as smaller seminaries look for partnerships with larger ones; and in this regard, CBS is “ahead of its time”. The benefits of working with a larger institution must be balanced against the risks of lost autonomy. CBS has been urged by various voices to pursue partnerships, but be wary of investing too much energy into conversations with little potential.
8. **Economic concerns were clearly heard in this study.** Granted, the current financial challenge of Canadian Baptist Seminary, and other such seminaries, have raised the awareness of this concern. The Regents are urged to give serious consideration to a major development campaign that not only replaces some of the existing endowment funds, but also envisions a significant endowment fund that would, conceivably, fund a chair within the seminary. These amounts (at a minimum \$500,000) would give a stronger foundation to the seminary and its future vision. Furthermore, these funds could underwrite part of the educational costs incurred by future students through bursary assistance programs.

Bibliography:

Carlson, Gordon (1964) Seventy Five Years History of Columbia Baptist Conference (Seattle: Columbia Baptist Conference Publication)

Ellis, Walter (1988) Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education, ed. George A. Rawlyk (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988),

Funk, Abe (2009) Our Story: The Faith and adventures of a people known as 'A People of the Book' (Edmonton: BGCC Press)

Guenther, Bruce (2001) "Training for Service: the Bible School Movement in Western Canada 1909-1960 (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, Montreal)

----- (2004) "Slithering Down the Plank of Intellectualism? The Canadian Conference of Christian Educators and the Impulse towards Accreditation among Canadian Bible Schools during the 1960s". Historical Studies in Education 2004 (also available on line at <http://library.queensu.ca/ojs/index>. Accessed August 4, 2009).

McKinney, Larry J. (1985). "An Historical Analysis of the Bible College Movement during its Formative Years" (PhD Dissertation, Temple University)

McLaurin, C.C (1939) Pioneering in Western Canada: A Story of the Baptists (Calgary: Author: self published).

McGivney, V. (1999) "Informal learning in the community: a trigger for change and development" (Leicester: NIACE).

Rawlyk, George (1988) "A.L. McCrimmon, H.P. Whiddon, T.T. Shields, Christian Higher Education and McMaster University," in Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education, ed.

_____ (1996) "Canadian Protestant Theological Education" in Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition. (Grand Rapids: Baker).

