

“A priceless heritage”:

A history of
Heritage College *and* Seminary
in three essays

Michael A.G. Haykin *and*
Jonathan N. Cleland



BLESS THY WORD

Bless Thy Word, O Lord we pray;
Make it real to us this day.
Set our hearts with love afire,
Kindled, burning with desire
That we may the Saviour see
In His power and majesty:
Hear His voice in every line
And the glory all be Thine.

As we meet with one accord,
Eyes of faith upon the Lord,
Rest on us; Thy Spirit seal;
Fill us with a holy zeal.
Set us free from every sin;
Reign supreme, yea reign within.
Lord of life we crown Thee now,
King of Kings before Thee bow;
Evermore to sing Thy praise,
Live for Thee through endless days.

Paul Holliday

To the faculty, staff, students, and board members of
Central Baptist Seminary (1949–1993),
London Baptist Bible College & Seminary (1976–1993),
and Heritage College & Seminary (1993–2023).

*“A priceless heritage”: A history of Heritage College
and Seminary in three essays*

Michael A.G. Haykin and Jonathan N. Cleland

© 2023 Heritage Seminary Press,
Heritage College and Seminary
175 Holiday Inn Drive
Cambridge, ON
Canada
N3C 3T2.

eBook: 978-1-77484-142-6
Paperback: 978-1-77484-141-9

Contents

	Foreword	11
1	“Great is Thy faithfulness”: A history of Central Baptist Seminary, 1949-1993	15
2	“Truth aflame”: A history of London Baptist Bible College and Seminary, 1976–1993	61
3	“An enterprise of faith”: A history of Heritage Baptist College and Theological Seminary, 1993–2023	93



Foreword

This book came about in part as the result of a phone call that Michael had with Jon in the fall of 2022. They had just finished writing the history of West Highland Baptist Church in Hamilton, Ontario, and as they concluded that book, Jon asked Michael if there was any plan to write the history of Heritage, for the thirtieth anniversary of its founding was just around the corner in 2023. Twelve months later, they are thankful to God and his grace in allowing them to pen this project together. Michael wrote the initial draft of Chapter 1 and Jon drew up the first drafts of Chapters 2 and 3. Michael then edited Chapters 2 and 3 fairly extensively and Jon did the same for Chapter 1. The three essays are thus very much a joint project.

Michael and Jon are thankful for a number of people without whose aid this book would not have been possible. Over the past thirty years, Michael has had interviews or conversations with a good number of people whose insight into the history of Central has

FOREWORD

been important for the writing of Chapter 1. He is deeply grateful to Edith McCredie, Hal MacBain, Charlie Tipp, Bob Holmes, Sid Kerr, Ted Angrove—all of whom are now with the Lord—as well as Marina Coldwell, Jack Hannah, Richard Long, Richard Mitchell, and Rene McCaugherty Simpson for answering his questions and providing needed perspectives. Marina Coldwell's personal archive of material relating to the history of Central, London, and Heritage has been absolutely invaluable. Without those resources that she had preserved, it would have been extremely challenging indeed to have written the history of Central. Those resources are now in the Archives of Heritage College and Seminary, Cambridge, Ontario.

Informal conversations that Jon had with Dave Barker, Stan Fowler, and Mike Anderson about the history of London and Heritage were a vital foundation for Chapters 2 and 3. He is also thankful to Gerry and Liz Benn, Marvin Brubacher, Theresa Beach, Sylvia Chin, and Rick Reed, for being willing to be interviewed and answer various questions. A big thank-you also to Dave Barker, Marvin Brubacher, Gerry and Liz Benn, Mike Anderson, Theresa Beach, and Laura Cleland for their comments on the initial drafts of Chapters 2 and 3. Heather Okrafka, Carolyn Burgess, Shawn Goble, and Steve Jones provided invaluable details about Heritage and the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.

Finally, both Michael and Jon are deeply grateful to those students who contributed their testimonies and stories to these historical essays.

Without being hagiographical, the authors have sought to be gracious and historically accurate in their treatment of the histories of Central, London, and Heritage. Our three essays are a highly selective narrative, but one, we believe, that presents the theological identities of, and traces the major events of, all three schools. These are stories

FOREWORD

that needed to be written, and we hope that this book records a slice of Canadian church history that both glorifies the Triune God and edifies those who read it.

Michael A.G. Haykin & Jonathan N. Cleland
All Saints' Eve/Reformation Day, 2023

1

“Great is Thy faithfulness”: A history of Central Baptist Seminary, 1949-1993

As 1981 drew to a close, Michael Haykin was on the verge of graduating from the University of Toronto and Wycliffe College with his doctorate in theology and was seeking a teaching position. One of his mentors at Wycliffe College, Prof. Oliver O'Donovan, had kindly written on his behalf to a number of institutions in the United Kingdom, among which was Regent's Park College, a Baptist school in the University of Oxford. He had also had an interview with the Catholic historian Michael M. Sheehan at St. Michael's College for a post-doctoral fellowship at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. And in this mix of quite different possibilities for his future was a two-hour interview at Central Baptist Seminary on Thursday, January 7, 1982. The school was then housed in a three-storey building at the end of Jonesville Crescent in Toronto, a short street that ran at a jaunty angle south of Eglinton Avenue.

Haykin had been invited to this interview with the academic dean

of Central Baptist Seminary, Ted Barton, and the chairman of the board, Jack Hannah, to see if he might be a good fit for the faculty. Little did he know that his life for much of the next four decades would be bound up with this theological school. He had heard in December of 1981 of the death of Jack Scott, the chancellor of Central, and had asked Bruce Woods, his pastor at Stanley Avenue Baptist Church in Hamilton, if he thought there might be an opening at Central. He, in turn, had contacted Ted Barton and arranged for the interview. Haykin had no idea that Jack Scott, whom he remembered hearing once at a Stanley Avenue men's retreat at the Guelph Bible Conference Centre, was not a fulltime teacher at the school. And thus, his death did not automatically result in an opening at the school. Yet, this tiny link with Jack Scott connected Haykin to the very origins of the school in the early months of 1949, for Scott was the founding president of Central Baptist Seminary.

Founding a new school

When Jack Scott thought about the early days of this school, the idea that came most readily to his mind were the words of Jesus about his cousin, John the Baptist: he was “a burning and a shining light” (John 5:35, KJV). So was Central, Scott said in December of 1950: “God has ignited in Central Baptist Seminary a burning and shining light.” What this meant, he went on to explain, was “a consuming passion” among the students “to make Christ known to every creature in this generation. The whole Seminary breathes this atmosphere. It is the constant concern of our united prayer life.”¹ Evangelism, Christ-centredness, united prayer—these motifs also bring to mind the opening scenes of the Book of Acts and the apostolic revival at Pentecost

1 *Bulletin of Central Baptist Seminary* 1, no.1 (December 1950): 1.

CHAPTER ONE



Jack Scott

recorded there.

And yet, the ancient church's experience of Pentecost was not without controversy. Similarly, the founding of Central Baptist Seminary had not been free from serious contention. The immediate cause of the school's emergence was a split within the faculty and students of Toronto Baptist Seminary. This seminary, then, as now, was located next door to Jarvis Street Baptist Church, where the pastor at the time was the formidable T. T. Shields.

Shields had played an indispensable role in fighting liberal theology in the theology faculty at McMaster University in the 1920s, part of a larger struggle that historians now call the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which engulfed religious denominations throughout

CHAPTER ONE

the North American continent.² At the height of this controversy in Ontario, Shields had founded Toronto Baptist Seminary and become its first president. Shields had also gone on to lead a body of churches based in Ontario and Quebec known as the Union of Regular Baptist Churches. His leadership throughout the 1930s and 1940s, however, had been fraught with one controversy after another. Finally in 1948 and 1949 there came the straw that broke the back of the proverbial camel: Shields removed the Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary, W. Gordon Brown, from his position and Brown along with Jack Scott and other key Baptist leaders in Ontario—those in the body of churches known as the Union of Regular Baptist Churches—made the difficult but necessary decision to form a new school.

Brown had begun his full-time teaching career at Toronto Baptist Seminary in the fall of 1931. The influence of Shields upon Brown, by the latter's own admission, was enormous.³ Brown served faithfully both as a teacher and dean at Toronto Baptist Seminary until the division between him and Shields in 1948. Personality and temperament undoubtedly played major roles in this conflict between Shields and Brown, but at the heart of the split was also a vital difference of perspective about the nature of the seminary. Shields was averse to allowing students from another association of Baptist churches,

- 2 For the life and ministry of T. T. Shields, see especially Leslie K. Tarr, *Shields of Canada: T. T. Shields (1873–1955)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967); *idem*, “Another Perspective on T. T. Shields and Fundamentalism” in *Baptists in Canada: Search for Identity Amidst Diversity*, ed. Jarold K. Zeman (Burlington, ON: G.R. Welch Co., Ltd., 1980), pp. 209–224; Arnold Dallimore, “T. T. Shields,” *Reformation Today* 86 (July–August 1985): pp. 7–10; G. A. Rawlyk, “A. L. McCrimmon, H. P. Whidden, T. T. Shields, Christian Education, and McMaster University” in *Canadian Baptists and Christian Higher Education*, ed. G. A. Rawlyk (Kingston, ON; Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), pp. 31–62; Doug A. Adams, “The War of the Worlds: The Militant Fundamentalism of Dr. Thomas Todhunter Shields and the Paradox of Modernity” (PhD thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2015).
- 3 See Kenneth E. Hall, “Dr. W. Gordon Brown: a biography” (Unpublished essay, prepared as a paper for Church History III, taught by Charles Tipp, 1965), p. 32. This essay is housed in the Archives of Heritage College and Seminary, Cambridge, ON. The details regarding Brown in the rest of this paragraph are also taken from this source.

namely, the Fellowship of Independent Baptist Churches, into Toronto Baptist Seminary, while Brown “deliberately cultivated” links with the Fellowship and her ministers, and wanted their students in the school.⁴

A majority of the teachers and around 50 of the 75 students at the Seminary sided with Brown and formed, in January 1949, what would become Central Baptist Seminary.⁵ Brown was the new school’s first dean, a position he held till 1973, and Jack Scott, as noted, was the first president. At the time, Scott was also the pastor of Forward Baptist Church in Toronto.⁶

W. Gordon Brown

Without a doubt, Brown was the prime figure shaping Central Baptist Seminary for the first twenty-five years or so of its existence. He was born in 1904 in the village of Brownsville, near Tillsonburg in southern Ontario, a village that was named after his great-grandfather Brinton Paine Brown (1797–1883). Brinton Brown was the son of a Captain Benajah Brown (d.1805), who was a United Empire Loyalist.⁷ In 1830 Brinton Brown was ordained as a New Connexion Methodist minister and eleven years later he moved to what is now Brownsville and soon organized a Methodist church in the village.⁸ A

4 Hall, “Dr. W. Gordon Brown,” pp. 37–38. See also the superb analysis of this split by Paul R. Wilson, “Torn Asunder: T. T. Shields, W. Gordon Brown, and the Schisms at Toronto Baptist Seminary and Within the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, 1948–1949,” *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 19 (2017–2018): pp. 34–80.

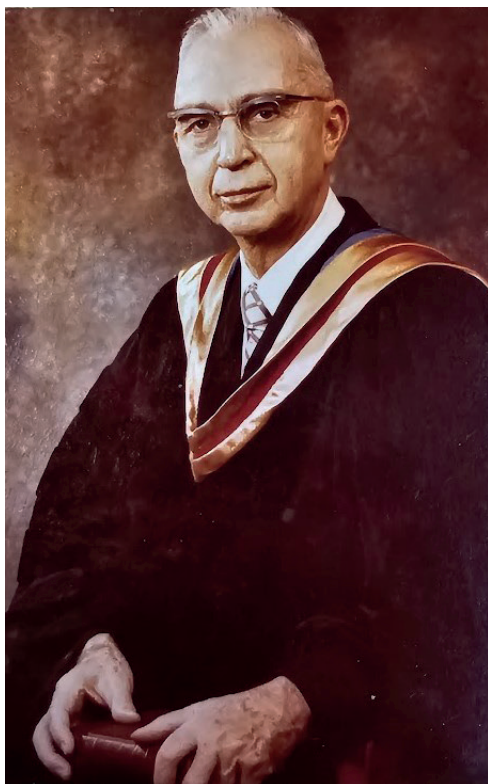
5 The school was initially called the Canadian Baptist Seminary.

6 For the life of Scott, see Arnold Dallimore, *Only One Life: The Story of Dr. Jack Scott* (Hamilton, ON: Image Publishing, 1984). For his ministry at Forward Baptist Church, see Michael A. G. Haykin, Baiyu Andrew Song, and Paul Andrew Grey Gillespie, “Behold, the Lamb of God”: *A centennial history of Forward Baptist Church, Toronto, 1919–2019* (Toronto, ON: Forward Baptist Church, 2019), pp. 56–79.

7 For a brief life of Brinton Paine Brown, see Anonymous, *Short Sketch of the Life of Brinton Paine Brown of Brownsville—Ontario* (Tillsonburg, ON: Liberal Book Press, 1904).

8 Pace “Dr. W. Gordon Brown: a biography” in *The History of Central Baptist Seminary*, ed. Gary W.

CHAPTER ONE



W. Gordon Brown

Baptist congregation was planted in the village in 1880 and Brinton Paine Brown's grandson, William James Hay Brown (1875-1935), briefly served as its minister in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁹

W. Gordon Brown was baptized by his father in 1913, a few years after his conversion. Following his studies at Humberside Collegiate

McHale (Gormley, ON: Central Baptist Seminary, 1993), [p. 9], who identifies Brinton Brown as "a Baptist pastor."

9 For a brief life of W. J. H. Brown, see [W. Gordon Brown,] *"To Testify ... the Grace of God": In Memoriam W.J.H. Brown* [(Toronto, ON: Toronto Baptist Seminary, 1935)].

