

23 March 2017

Dear Friends,

Over recent years an increasing number of reformed ministers and others have shared a common vision to see a conservative, evangelical and reformed Theological Seminary established here in the UK (see notes over the page). These descriptive terms and principles are vitally important, so that men, called by God into the ministry, might be prepared and equipped to preach and lead our churches in Biblical ways. At this present time, we believe that a Seminary based on these principles is very much needed.

When the Grove House Project commenced in Salisbury, we began to discern that the Lord was answering prayers and fulfilling hopes for the establishment of such a Seminary. In addition to meeting the car parking requirements and providing more space for Church activities, the property known as 'Grove House' - a two-storey Victorian villa (now fully restored) - had obvious potential to accommodate a future Seminary and, together with our convenient geographical location in Salisbury, seemed to confirm that, through the Lord's good hand, our vision was being turned into a reality.

I am writing to let you know that a Steering Group of like-minded men has been appointed to oversee the establishment of a Seminary including funding, publicity, and the curriculum itself. Our intention is to provide a comprehensive course for men who evidence a clear call of God for full-time ministry, starting in September 2017. In all of this, we recognise our complete dependence on God.

In addition to prayer-support, we would appreciate knowing if you are aware of any men who are currently exercised regarding full-time ministry, for whom the proposed Seminary might provide real, spiritual and practical help.

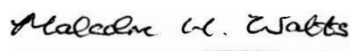
If you can help us with the financing of this venture we would be deeply grateful. A separate bank account will be opened in due course, but at present funds are being held by Emmanuel Church on behalf of the Seminary. Details of how to make donations can be found in the attached leaflet.

We intend to make further information available on a regular basis.

Thank you for whatever support you may feel able to give. Our prayer and hope is that God, in His grace, will richly bless this venture of faith, to His own greater glory, and to the increased spiritual strength and prosperity of His Church.

With my warm Christian greetings,

Yours through free and distinguishing grace,



Malcolm H. Watts

On behalf of the Steering Committee: Roland Burrows, Christopher Buss, Richard Clarke, Simon Green, Dewi Higham, David Kay, Pooyan Mehrshahi, Neil Pfeiffer, John Saunders, John Thackway.

## **Distinctives and Emphases: A Seminary *Conservative, Evangelical and Reformed* –**

*Conservative*, in the sense of holding and teaching Biblical doctrine, worship, and practice: and therefore, adhering to Holy Scripture as the infallible and inerrant Word of God; maintaining reverent and structured worship and only such as is prescribed in Scripture; and cultivating holiness of heart and life after the image and likeness of God.

*Evangelical*, in the sense of maintaining the Biblical Gospel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as Representative and Surety, fulfilled all righteousness on the behalf of sinners: appearing in the holiness of his human nature; perfectly obeying every precept of the Moral Law as summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments; and rendering full satisfaction for sin – the breach of that Law – by His sufferings unto death; and, thereby, providing a full and free salvation received only by faith in Christ;

*Reformed*, in the sense of recognising the Holy Scriptures as God's Word written, without error or fault in all its teaching, the only complete, sufficient and authoritative Rule for Faith and Practice, and therefore the means by which the Church should be reformed and restored to its apostolic and primitive form. This will include Confessional Christianity: acknowledgment of the truths set forth in the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), and showing the greatest respect for the two other 17<sup>th</sup> Century Confessions upon which it was based, and with which it was so much in agreement – the Westminster Confession (1647) and the Savoy Declaration (1658). Teaching in the Seminary will reflect the Biblical doctrine of these Confessions. Central to the Scripture's revelation and the Confessions' theology is the doctrine of sovereign, free and distinguishing grace, often and commonly identified as Evangelical Calvinism, which doctrine neither eliminates nor excludes the presentation of Christ to sinners and the overtures of mercy to them, through the preaching of the Gospel. This truth will also be believed and taught.

Our vision also includes the conviction and resolve that such a Seminary should only use in teaching the Authorised (King James) Version which is still the most accurate and faithful translation of God's Word in the English Language, the underlying Texts being the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts, the authentic and preserved Texts of Holy Scripture.

Furthermore, it has been thought imperative that there should be strong emphasis on experimental Christianity, that, through the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Truth may be known and felt in the hearts of God's people. Thereby the spirit of true devotion should be cultivated, expressing itself in consecrated service to God.

We also believe that, in the Seminary's teaching, special prominence should be given to the subject of true Holy Spirit revival – God visiting His people and granting them an overwhelming sense of His presence, power, and favour. The present state of the Church shows that revival is desperately needed; and only revival will deal effectively with spiritual declension and deadness, restoring to our souls the inestimable blessing of vital, living Christianity. Those who are to minister in God's Church must be taught the true nature of revival, that it should be sought in prayer and confidently expected, until such times as once again His glory dwells in our land.