

Houston Seminary Opens Next Month

by Bill Yarger

September 3, 2002, will be a significant day for the Christian community in Greater Houston. There won't be fireworks or fanfare or extensive media coverage. On that day Houston Seminary will be born. It will be a quiet, small event. It will begin with a relatively small group of people. It's always been that way. That's the way the Kingdom of God is.

Why Another Seminary?

With scores of seminaries across the United States, why do we need another one?

The first answer is a simple one: grace. In February of this year, eight men met in Dallas to discuss the need for a new seminary. The group included key leaders of the "grace movement": Dr. Charles Ryrie, Mr. Zane Hodges and Dr. Earl Radmacher. We concluded that there is a great need for a new seminary that is committed to a literal interpretation of Scripture, a consistent system of theology and a free grace view of salvation.

The leadership of Houston Seminary believes that grace alone is the basis for salvation. More than that, we believe that God's grace is the key to how we live out the Christian life. It is foundational to how we view God, how we relate to one another and how

we deal with life's circumstances.

The second answer to the question of why we need another seminary is this: Houston Seminary is a different kind of seminary. For hundreds of years, ministry training was closely tied to the local church. Students studied the Scriptures, grew in godly character and developed ministry skills under the supervision of godly pastors. Over the past century ministry training has moved away from the church, often focusing on academics at the expense of cultivating Christ-like character and developing skills for ministry. Houston Seminary will focus in three areas: biblical understanding, spiritual development and ministry skills.

Houston Seminary seeks to bring ministry training back to the church. Here are just a few of the ways we do that:

- Students learn ministry skills from professors who have been pastors and are practitioners in the church.
- Professors focus on practical application to life and ministry.
- Students are assigned a faculty mentor to help them grow in godliness.
- Classes are held on local church campuses to make training more affordable and accessible.

Why Houston?

Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States and yet it has no resident evangelical seminary. We believe the birth of Houston Seminary is vital to the health and growth of the churches of Houston.

In the absence of a resident seminary,

churches are left with one of two alternatives. The first is to settle for leadership that is inadequately trained. The second is to send our brightest and best off to another city for training. This is not only a loss for the churches, it is a struggle for those who have to relocate.

Houston Seminary offers the potential to provide the churches of Houston with hundreds of godly pastors and key leaders who know the Word and know how to do ministry. More than that, Houston Seminary desires to partner with the churches to reach Greater Houston for Christ.

What Does This Mean to Me?

Houston Seminary will have its offices at The Woodlands Christian Academy and will offer teaching sites at the Academy and at Cypress Bible Church.

Fall classes include The Life of Christ, Creative Bible Teaching, and NT Epistles and Prophecy taught by Dr. Kem Oberholtzer (new at FCC); Introduction to Greek taught by Dr. David Anderson; Effective Biblical Counseling, and Living in God's Presence taught by Dr. Bill Yarger; and Principles for Biblical Interpretation taught by Dr. Earl Radmacher.

We hope you will join us for this initial semester at Houston Seminary. One of the unique features of the seminary is that it's possible for you to take classes on an enrichment basis. We invite you to pursue an interest, deepen your understanding, sharpen a skill, follow a dream . . . be a seminary student.

For more information, pick up a brochure at the Information Center of FCC, visit the website at www.houstonseminary.org, or call 936-321-1300.