

Truett Theological Seminary marks 25 years

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WACO—Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary returned to its birthplace for the school's 25th annual convocation, as speakers reflected on the seminary's past and considered its future.

Students, alumni, faculty and guests gathered for the convocation at First Baptist Church in Waco, home to Truett Seminary its first five years.

Linda Livingstone, president of Baylor University, noted this year's convocation holds special significance for her family, since her daughter Shelby now is a first-year student at Truett Seminary.



Baylor University President Linda Livingstone brings greetings at the 25th annual Truett Theological Seminary convocation at First Baptist Church in Waco. (Photo / Ken Camp)

Citing Romans 12:2 from the New Testament, Livingstone hailed the seminary as “a place where minds are renewed and lives are transformed.”

The seminary traces its beginnings to 1990 when Baylor University’s board of trustees reserved the name “George W. Truett Theological Seminary” with the Texas Secretary of State, to 1991 when the seminary was chartered and to 1994 when it began offering classes on the second floor of the B.H. Carroll Educational Building at First Baptist.

‘Rekindle the gift’

William D. Shiell, president and professor of pastoral theology and preaching at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lisle, Ill., was among the first 50 students in Truett Seminary’s inaugural class. Shiell delivered the convocation address on “what Truett means to Baylor, Baptists and beyond.”

Reflecting on the Apostle Paul’s admonition in 2 Timothy 1:6-7, Shiell encouraged entering students at Truett Seminary to “rekindle the gift” someone recognized in them, perhaps before they even recognized their own calling to Christian ministry.

Just as Paul laid hands on his protégé Timothy, a variety of people—grandparents, parents, pastors, friends and mentors—touched the lives of every person called to ministry, Shiell asserted.

Prepare for ‘push-back and challenges’

Challenging each minister-in-training to look at his or her hands, he insisted they will be “filled with all kinds of responsibilities.”

Keeping that in mind, he asserted Truett in its next 25 years will need to continue to be a seminary—taken from the Latin word for

“seedbed”—where ministers are rooted in “sound teaching.”

But he added it also will need to be a “spiritual gymnasium” and “boot camp” where ministers are prepared for the rigorous demands of serving God in positions of spiritual leadership.

“Expect push-back and challenges,” he said.

However, he reminded the seminarians of Paul’s words to Timothy: “God did not give us the spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.”

At a luncheon following the convocation, Dean Todd Still unveiled portraits of three former Truett Seminary faculty—founding professors A.J. “Chip” Conyers, who died in 2004, and Ruth Ann Foster, who died in 2006; and William C. “Bill” Treadwell, an early associate professor of Christian education, leadership and administration, who died in 2002.

Brian Brewer, a student in Truett Seminary’s inaugural class and now professor of Christian theology, paid tribute to Conyers. Lai Ling Ngan, recently retired professor of Christian Scriptures, offered remembrances of her colleague, Foster. Steve Wells, a student in Truett’s inaugural class and pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston, presented memories of Treadwell.