



May 2026



Attending Graduates:
Travis West, Chris Johnson, Brandon Henderson,
Cory Messerschmidt (Photo Credit: Karla West)

Graduate Spotlight: Chris Johnson (MAPS 2026)

Reflecting on his time earning a MAPS degree at GBTS, Chris says: "Through my studies and interactions with others at GBTS, God has humbled me time and again at how little I know, how glorious and vast His work in the church really is, and how important it is to learn the truth of God's word among His people. Though I am a theological outlier (being a Presbyterian), the warmth and hospitality of . . .
(Cont. p. 3, *Chris*)



Chris & Lindsey Johnson

Graduation 2026

**Congratulations to our 2026
GBTS graduating class**

Certificate of Ministry
Daniel Scott Graves

Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies
Nathaniel John DeCoste
Troy Christopher Johnson II
Travis Matthew West

Master of Divinity
Brandon Clay Henderson
Cory J. Messerschmidt
James Edgar Pharr III

Graduation

Grace Bible Theological Seminary's 4th Annual Commencement Ceremony brought family and friends together to celebrate seven graduates. Four of the seven graduates (pictured above) were able to travel to Conway to receive their diplomas in person.

Rev. Tommy Walls, GBTS Board Member, opened the service in prayer, followed by the congregation singing *Come, Christians, Join to Sing*. After GBTS Board Member Rev. Danny Thursby recounted the seminary's history, Dr. Ryan Bush, Associate Professor of Missions, read 1 Timothy 4:11-16. In his Presidential Address, Dr. Jeff Johnson directly challenged the graduates from 1 Timothy 4:11-16.

Dr. Jeff Moore, Director of Admissions & Enrollment and Assistant Professor of New Testament, presented each graduate to Rev. Preston Kelso, Academic Dean, to receive their diplomas.

The ceremony concluded with the congregation exalting Christ by singing *All Hail the Power of Jesus Name* and Rev. Rob Davis, Dean of Students, praying for the graduates and pronouncing the benediction.

After the ceremony, GBTS hosted a reception at the seminary for the graduates, their families and friends, and all guests.

Our GBTS family gives thanks to God for all our donors and supporters who have prayed for these men and their families throughout their years of study.



Dr. Jeff Moore, Director of Admissions & Enrollment, prepares to present the graduates.

GBTS Core Value #3

Prioritizing the Church

Thesis Statement

GBTS assists churches in training the next generation of missionaries, church planters, and pastors under the authority of a local church.

Affirmations

Christ Jesus works in this world through his church. Christ builds his church through his Spirit working through the ministry and outreach of the church. As the head of the church, Christ has entrusted his Word to the church. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). (*Cont., p. 3, "Prioritizing"*)

Church-based.

Pastor-focused.

Missions-minded.

Chris (cont.)

... my Reformed Baptist brothers have led to lifelong friendships with both students and faculty and a great appreciation for God's work in their own segment of the Church."

Chris's advice for men considering studying at GBTS: "If you are a Reformed Baptist looking for a solid theological education, you can hardly do better than GBTS. The faculty of GBTS are among the most godly men I know, and faithful pastors, all. If you are (like me) from another theological perspective, you won't find more welcoming brothers among whom to study, and I can guarantee you will still be thoroughly built up in the faith."

After graduation, Chris intends to continue serving in his local church under the mentorship of his pastor as he continues to prepare for future ministry.

Upcoming Events

June 2-4: Summer Intensive: "Man and Sin" with Dr. Brian Borgman

June 5-6: Head & Heart Conference, *Knowing the Spirit*, featuring Drs. Joel Beeke and Brian Borgman.

October 1-2: GBTS will host the Annual Meeting of our accrediting body, the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries (ARTS).



Prioritizing (cont.)

It is through the administration of the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit that the church carries out its mission and brings glory to Christ (Matt 28:19-20, Eph 3:21). And a vital component of the church's mission is to train faithful men for the ministry of the Word for the growth and perpetuity of the church around the world (2 Tim 2:2). Therefore, we heartily affirm that it is the local church's responsibility to train the next generation of church leaders. We also affirm that before someone is qualified to lead a local church spiritually, they must learn and master what it means to be a submissive and active member of a local church. (Cont. on p. 4)

How Can You Support GBTS?

Pray

- For our students to grow in their love for Christ as they pursue their academic studies
- For students and faculty beginning the summer semester
- For our graduates pursuing new ministry opportunities
- For our preparations for the upcoming Head & Heart Conference and all attendees
- For our efforts to build strong relationships with future students and supporters

Visit

- We love when GBTS supporters visit our campus
- Let us know when your next trip brings you through central Arkansas
- It will be our joy to meet you and give you a tour

Give

- Partner with us in training and equipping future pastors and missionaries
- Help us develop faithful, godly, and strong servants of Christ
- Your support makes theological education accessible

Contact Us

info@gbtseminary.org



Graduates, Faculty, Board, & Students

Prioritizing (cont.)

Purpose & Implementation

To maintain the centrality of the local church in pastoral training, GBTS operates under the authority of the board of directors, which consists of the elders of Grace Bible Church, Conway, Arkansas. Moreover, GBTS will only accept students who are committed churchmen who have been affirmed and continue to be overseen by the elders of their local churches. We require our students to maintain an active church membership that consists of practical service to its membership. Recognizing that God has chosen to build his kingdom through his church, we strive to keep the church at the center of all we do.

Church-based.

Pastor-focused.

Missions-minded.