

Rochester seminary president to retire: G. Thomas Halbrooks

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The president of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in Rochester, New York, plans to retire next year from the American Baptist-related seminary amid signs that the school's downsizing may help it regain financial stability.

G. Thomas Halbrooks, 64, will leave next July after five years as president and professor of church history, allowing his successor to carry out a five-year plan for a balanced budget and growth by 2009. The *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* reported in May that the school's deficit had neared \$700,000 in the last academic year.

The faculty has shrunk to eight persons, but Halbrooks said the reduction was entirely by attrition rather than layoffs. "We have doubled our enrollment and our annual giving," he said. Seminary board chair Nancy Abrams Gaess praised Halbrooks's guidance in what she described as "one of the most tumultuous periods in our history."

Halbrooks, though ordained in the mid-1960s to pastor an American Baptist church, was involved mostly in Southern Baptist institutions, teaching church history at SBC-related Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina from 1978 to 1991.

As the Southern Baptist leadership grew increasingly fundamentalist, he became a member of the moderate Alliance of Baptists in 1987 and helped organize the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. In 1991 Halbrooks became dean of the new Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Virginia, and the next year he went to Rochester.