

## Guidelines

A Teaching Church is a fellowship of believers that adopts an intentional strategy to be a learning organization. A central aspect of this commitment will be a ministry partnership with B.H. Carroll Theological Institute to provide formal theological education and informal training for Christian leaders. Teaching will be conducted face-to face by mentor-teachers living in the area of the Teaching Church, and by interactive connection with other teachers in the Institute network. Mentor-teachers at the Teaching Church will be academically qualified in their disciplines to teach at their respective levels; they will be elected as Resident Fellows of the Institute. Preferably, the pastor of the church and/or other staff members will be Resident Fellows.

Most students will live in the vicinity of the Teaching Church. No residential housing will be maintained or provided by the Teaching Church or the Institute. Students enrolled in classes at the Teaching Church may also participate in online courses or classes offered at other Teaching Churches.

### A Statement of Theological Education

Through Teaching Churches the Institute will offer courses of study in theological education. The curriculum will be competency-based with learning outcomes designed to integrate the Christian values, understandings, and skills, needed for effective ministry in today's world. The learning experiences and study programs will relate to four Learning Clusters:

- Scripture and Witness. Reliance upon the Scripture as the Word of God and the indispensable role of biblical truth for faith and ministry; communication of the message of the Bible centered in the proclaimed gospel, addressed in relevant terms to contemporary culture and reflected in the tasks of preaching, teaching, and witness.
- Faith and Heritage. The historic formulations and confessions of the Christian faith, the impact of philosophical and ethical traditions with Christian truth, the history of Christianity and the distinctive role of Baptists in shaping faith and practice.
- Ministry and Formation. Essential ministries of character and leadership that nurture faith in Christ, build and develop churches, meet human needs at every level, and transform situations to God's purposes; principles, methods, and resources for equipping teachers and leaders and for the development of educational programs in congregation and denomination.
- Worship and Mission. Practice and forms of public and private worship, music in the Christian experience, the church's mission in a global context, and the formative disciplines of Christian character and devotion.

### Characteristics and Commitments of a Teaching Church

- Vitality and Vision. A Teaching Church demonstrates spiritual vitality and potential for growth. It has a vision for theological education that promotes the spiritual health and well-being of the church. A Teaching Church features a missionary focus that goes beyond the church itself and is willing to encourage and invest resources to develop church leaders throughout the area. Teaching Churches are model churches whose methods, practices, and results show other churches in the area how to do effective ministry; they share an understanding of the nature and mission of the church from a systems perspective.
- Facilities and Equipment. A Teaching Church will have adequate room space, furniture, and equipment (audio and video) to support the teaching objectives of classes offered. As needed, the Church should have the potential to provide and maintain the technology necessary for interfacing with the Carroll ministry training nexus.

- Support and Resources. A Teaching Church will provide sufficient office and secretarial support to sustain the educational objectives. This will include a coordinator and access during teaching periods to necessary office equipment. Each Teaching Church is also encouraged to provide an annual gift or take an annual offering to help meet the costs of the Institute and to make theological education available in global settings.

- Facilitators and Mentors. A Teaching Church will provide lay leaders who will help mentor and facilitate the training received by students. Members of churches that have students training at Carroll will serve as facilitators and mentors to help guide and assess students, giving feedback as to the effectiveness of students in various ministries. The entire Teaching Church is a teaching organism that develops and equips Christians for diverse local and global ministries.

- Students. Many students will undoubtedly be members of the Teaching Church, but student enrollment is not limited to those in the Teaching Church. Teaching Churches will be committed to helping sister churches develop spiritual leaders. Among the student body will be those seeking lay theological training as well as those seeking professional and advanced ministry education. The Teaching Church will foster a setting that welcomes and encourages all students who attend.

- Church Commitment. The primary relationship between Carroll Institute and a Teaching Church is between the Institute and the congregation, not between the Institute and the pastor or staff. Ideally, when academically qualified, the pastor and other staff members of a Teaching Church will be Resident Fellows of the Institute. However, this is not essential for the continuing ministry of the Teaching Church; other qualified persons in the vicinity may be Resident Fellows of the Institute. It is the church itself, not the pastor alone, which makes the commitment to provide theological education and training.

#### Responsibilities and Commitments of the B. H. Carroll Theological Institute

- Curriculum. The curriculum will be developed and administered by Carroll Institute in collaboration with Resident Fellows and in view of assessed needs in each Teaching Church. Carroll Institute will work with teaching churches to provide training for the specific needs of each church. The Teaching Church will be encouraged to integrate part of its discipleship training into the lay leadership training provided by the Institute.

- Faculty (Resident Fellows). Carroll Institute will identify, elect, and supervise all Resident Fellows. Academically qualified pastors, staff members, and members of a given congregation and other churches in the vicinity will be considered. Guidelines for teaching faculty established by accrediting agencies will be strictly followed to assure compliance to standards of accreditation. The Institute will not approve a Resident Fellow without the endorsement of the Teaching Church.

- Administration and Finances. Carroll Institute will determine class schedules and offerings in consultation with the Teaching Church. All syllabi and course materials will be prepared and distributed only by Carroll Institute. All student records and files will be maintained by Carroll Institute. All student fees and faculty compensation will be the responsibility of Carroll Institute. Liability insurance for Carroll's activities related to the Teaching Church will be arranged by the Institute.

#### Accreditation

Carroll Institute has initiated procedural steps with those boards and associations that certify and accredit schools of higher education: the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), and the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). Certification by the state of Texas is one of the prerequisites to apply for accreditation with the regional and national associations. Having met the standards of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Institute was granted a

Certificate of Authority, effective January 2007, to offer master's and doctoral degrees. In the fall of 2008, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board ceased regulating the activities of degree-granting religious institutions, and Carroll Institute was granted exemption from the THECB on December 3, 2008.

On March 1, 2010, the Carroll Institute was granted "Applicant Status" with the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE). The Association for Biblical Higher Education is a national accrediting association officially recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). ABHE comprises approximately 200 postsecondary institutions throughout North America specializing in biblical ministry formation and professional leadership education. The accrediting process with ABHE is in three stages: Applicant, Candidacy, and Accreditation Status. The Carroll Institute hosted a two-day site visit in the spring of 2010 with a representative of the ABHE Commission on Accreditation who outlined the process for Carroll to attain Candidacy and then full Accreditation Status.

The leaders of the Carroll Theological Institute have over 300 years of combined experience in graduate theological education. That experience includes multiple self-studies and accrediting processes along with proficiency in graduate-level teaching, curriculum design, and competency-based education. From the beginning the Institute has demanded high standards of academic work that will meet or exceed all criteria necessary for accreditation. Because peer evaluation and accreditation are essential and valuable to the effective training of ministers, the quality of the faculty, the effectiveness of the curriculum, and the competencies of the graduates must be validated through accreditation by ABHE, ATS, and NASM. Therefore, academic excellence, effectiveness in ministry, and building the kingdom of God will be ultimate goals for every student.

What does accreditation mean and what is the advantage for a student? Accreditation makes the transition easier as students move from one accredited school to another. The regional nature of accreditation allows a receiving school in the same or another state to assess the quality of a sending school and accept the incoming student's credits and academic record. This ease of transfer applies across the nation through reciprocal agreements between the regional accrediting agencies.

An individual school may also evaluate unaccredited course work and transfer such credits into a degree plan. Carroll Institute evaluates all transcripts submitted to determine if a student's previous course work from another institution will be acceptable for transfer.