

# **Carroll Institute installs president, administrators**

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**By Marv Knox**

*Editor*

DALLAS—A seminary should create a “theological chain reaction,” Baptist educator Michael Quicke stressed during the inaugural convocation of the B.H. Carroll Theological Institute.

The Carroll Institute, in its second academic year with 400 students, installed its president and three academic administrators in ceremonies held at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas Jan. 9.

Based in Arlington, the Carroll Institute trains students in 15 “teaching churches” scattered across Texas, as well as through interactive lessons taught over the Internet. Plans call for teaching churches elsewhere in the United States and overseas.

This new model for educating ministers flows out of “an extraordinary vision” that blends “loyalty to the best of Baptist distinctives and discernment toward contemporary culture,” said Quicke, professor of preaching and communication at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Ill., and former leader of Spurgeon's College in London, the largest Baptist

seminary in Europe.

The Carroll Institute should keep in mind the Apostle Paul's admonition that Christians should "proclaim (Christ), admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ," he said.

"Teach so that students are transformed, so that they may preach Christ, so that churches are transformed," Quicke commanded, calling the proper education of ministers a "theological chain reaction."

The goal is not "head wisdom," but transformation of the church, he added.

That's what the institute's namesake, legendary Texas Baptist leader B.H. Carroll, strived for, said Russell Dilday, the institute's founding chancellor and former president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, which Carroll founded.

Dilday cited words Carroll penned at the founding of Southwestern Seminary a century ago: "If we ever intend to make Texas Baptists the greatest spiritual force in the world and to be the potential in shaping the destiny of our state and nation, we must provide a home for the right and adequate training of a great host of spiritual leaders. Not to do it is a sin. We may not devolve this responsibility upon others, nor can we safely postpone the work."

"B.H. Carroll pleaded forever for the better education of God's preachers," Dilday said, noting the time is right for such a school as the Carroll Institute.

Dilday cited two primary factors for launching and supporting the institute.

First is "disruption of theological education in the Southern Baptist Convention", he said.

Dilday is a living illustration of that disruption. After fundamentalists gained control of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s, they set out to take over the convention's agencies and institutions. When they gained control of Southwestern Seminary's board of trustees, they fired him in March 1994.

Now, many of the faculty who worked alongside Dilday at Southwestern Seminary—including the four principle leaders of the Carroll Institute and many of its “distinguished fellows”—have left the seminary due to retirement or employment elsewhere. Current Southwestern President Paige Patterson was one of the two principle architects of the fundamentalists' takeover of the convention.

The other reason for launching a nontraditional school like the Carroll Institute is the “call for reform” of American theological education, Dilday added. The primary proclaimer of that call was the Association of Theological Schools, which accredits ministry-training schools in the United States and Canada, he said.

The association has said seminaries need to base their education upon training for practical skills in ministry and to conduct that training through churches, he reported.

Bruce Corley, the institute's founding president, echoed that theme.

“In the 1990s, there was a chorus of voices (in U.S. seminaries) that asked for an essential change in how to do theological education,” Corley said, lamenting, “Relatively little has been implemented.”

Along the way, the average age of a seminary student has risen to 35, while only 15 percent of Baptist ministers are younger than 35, he said. Nearly half of ministers younger than 35 have no formal seminary training, and only 15 percent of Baptist seminary-trained graduates plan to go into local-church ministry, he noted.

“We're on the verge of the dark ages in the pulpit,” Corley warned. “I want the young generation to have the same access to great theological training that I had. ...

“We intend to be a seminary without walls. ... I hope Baptists of like mind will stir ourselves to do something great for Jesus. It is our time.”

During the convocation, the Carroll Institute installed Corley as president and professor of New Testament and Greek. The institute also installed the three other “senior fellows,” who are its academic officers—Stan Moore, professor of worship and mission; Budd Smith, professor of Christian education; and Jim Spivey, professor of Christian heritage.

The institute also installed Dilday as chancellor and presented the first President's Award to Scotty Gray, a former longtime administrator at Southwestern Seminary, who has volunteered his time to developing the institute's academic programs and working to secure accreditation, which is expected from four accrediting agencies, Corely said.

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