

## THE MIDWEST CENTER FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES—A PROSPECTUS

### **Mission Statement**

Midwest Center for Theological Studies exists to provide ministerial training in the context of the local church. We endeavor to instruct the mind and mold the character of each student by combining informed scholarship with pastoral mentoring. Our vision is to help equip the Church for spreading the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior of the world. To this end MCTS is committed to theological instruction that is God-centered, intensively Christ-focused, law and gospel oriented, confessionally grounded, pastorally concerned, globally minded, carefully positive, and technologically informed.

### **Biblical Foundations**

It is customary to begin a prospectus like this with a few words of introduction. The reader may turn over a few pages and find such introductory matters. The reader's indulgence is begged, however, so that those essential introductions may be grounded in a brief survey of the biblical foundations of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies.

### **The Necessity of Theological Education**

Theology is for everyone. It is something everyone needs. This is because theology is the science of God—the careful and systematic study of what God has revealed about Himself. As such it is and must be of supreme practical importance for everyone. Proverbs 9:10 declares, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And *the knowledge of the Holy One* is understanding.” The “knowledge of the Holy One” is theology, and it constitutes the practical wisdom and understanding which the Book of Proverbs describes as beyond price.

Strictly speaking, then, theological education is a matter that concerns all the people of

God. It is not the exclusive domain of some priestly elite or clerical caste, but a subject of great significance to every member of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:13-15 makes this clear when it says:

... until we *all* attain to the unity of *the faith*, and of *the knowledge of the Son of God*, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ.

The scriptural call for the special, theological education of the teachers of the church must be understood within the context of the importance of the theological education of all the people of God. 2 Timothy 2:2 is the classic example of such a scriptural call. “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” The charge given Timothy in this text does not imply that only faithful men who are able to teach should be entrusted with the great doctrines and truths which Paul preached. The text is not exclusive but intensive. Timothy is to teach especially (though not exclusively) those men who are qualified to give pastoral leadership to the church. Careful, theological education should especially focus on those men qualified to compose the future leadership of the church. If theological education is important for everyone, it is especially important for those charged to pass on carefully and effectively the great deposit of Christian truth to future generations.

### **The Agency of Theological Education**

The previous paragraphs answer the question, “Who should be taught theology?” Here we address the closely related question, “Who should teach theology?” The New Testament gives a direct answer to this question. Christian theology is to be learned in and taught through “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). The meaning of the term, *church*, in 1 Timothy 3:15 is quite specific. It refers to the universal church as it comes to its appointed, visible, and organized expression in local churches like the one Timothy was charged to oversee at Ephesus. “I write,”

says Paul, “so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God ...” (1 Tim. 3:15). In the preceding verses Paul has laid out specific qualifications for the elders and deacons of a local church. In the preceding chapter he has given specific directions about the conducting of its assemblies. It is clearly the church as it has come to expression in an organized, local assembly at Ephesus which is here described as “the pillar and support of the truth.”

When the definite meaning of *church* in this passage is taken seriously, it becomes clear that the theological education of God’s people is to take place within the context of the local church. The native climate in which Christian truth thrives is that of the church. It is the institution of the church (not the traditional Bible college or seminary that functions largely separate from the life of the local church) which is entrusted with the preservation and passing on of Christian truth to future generations. Ideally, there should be no need for the Christian to be sent outside the church for such an education. It is the church that is charged to provide such an education, and it is the church that is best able to do this, because it is the church that is the native climate of and appointed custodian of Christian theology.<sup>1</sup>

Experience shows what this fact would lead us to expect. Where Christian theology has been taught in academic institutions divorced from the life and oversight of local churches, there has been the perpetual tendency for Christian theology to be either distorted into error or distracted into irrelevancy. Outside of its native climate in the church, theological education cannot (normally) thrive or flourish.

A misunderstanding or misapplication of the centrality of the church in theological education must be anticipated here. 1 Timothy 3:15 does not teach that each, individual local church is independently sufficient to be the pillar and support of the truth. As stated above, “the

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<sup>1</sup>These comments are not intended to reflect a lack of appreciation for the great good that has been done through such colleges and seminaries. Nor are they intended to reflect a view of the independence and sufficiency of the local church that is dismissive of the importance and legitimacy of the cooperation and association of local churches. 1 Timothy 3:15 itself is speaking of the local church not in distinction from the universal church, but as the local expression of it.

household of God which is the church of the living God” is not in the first place a reference to the church at Ephesus or any particular local church. It is a reference to the church universal. The Bible, indeed, makes clear that the only appointed, visible expression of the church universal is the church local. Thus, it is certain that theological education is the task and business of local churches. It is not, however, the case that every individual local church is equally capable of prosecuting the task of theological education. No local church (since the spread of the church from the mother church of Jerusalem) has ever existed as an isolated society. Every local church has always existed as a part of the universal church composed of all its sister societies throughout the world. The task of being the pillar and support of the truth is given to particular churches only as the local expressions of the universal church. It is clear, therefore, that this task must be carried on with a clear sense of the inter-dependence of local churches and the need for cooperation between them. As a matter of fact, such cooperation is commonly practiced by local churches. It is illustrated every time one church invites a pastor-teacher from another church to address them on a given theological subject.<sup>2</sup> Thus, this cooperation should and commonly does come to expression in the general, theological education of the whole church.

If, however, the importance of this cooperation is clear with regard to the theological education of the whole church, it is even more evident when the special, theological education of its future leadership is under discussion. It does not take much thought to discern in 2 Timothy 2:2 indications of this principle. The command, “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also,” is given to Timothy. Timothy occupied a peculiar place in two respects which, when carefully considered, solidly underscores the need for local churches to cooperate in the work of theological education.

First, Timothy was the Apostle Paul’s personal representative to the church at Ephesus

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<sup>2</sup>Every proper ministry of the Word of God—no matter how practical or pastoral—is a “theological subject” as I intend this phrase. If it is not “theology” (as properly defined), it has no business being taught in the church.

(1 Tim. 1:3). As such, he occupied a unique place of privilege and responsibility. He had been granted a peculiar exposure to and knowledge of the teaching of the Apostle Paul. This is the plain implication of the phrase, “the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses”. Timothy’s peculiar position and gifts made it especially appropriate for the Apostle Paul to call upon him to take up the theological education of the future leadership of the church. In spite of the fact that Timothy had the unique position of being the personal representative of Paul, there are abiding lessons to be gleaned from this charge to Timothy. In our day as well, providence appoints to some men extraordinary gifts and, therefore, a peculiar responsibility for the special, theological education of the future leadership of the church.

Second, when Timothy was commanded to take heed to this task, he was acting as a leading pastor of the large and strategically located church at Ephesus. It is clear from Acts 20 and 1 Timothy that this church had a numerous and gifted eldership. Is it far-fetched to draw the conclusion that larger churches with sizable and gifted elderships have a special responsibility in this matter?

These considerations demonstrate how serious and important cooperation is between local churches in the special, theological education of their future leadership. Practical considerations might be mentioned which would further strengthen this conclusion. The theological education of pastors is clearly a task which is often, if not usually, undertaken not for the benefit of the training church itself, but for other, existing churches or those yet to be planted. What could make more sense than for such a task to be a matter of cooperation between churches? Furthermore, the theological education of the church’s future leaders involves practical components. Such men need opportunities to exercise their gifts of preaching and teaching. The cooperation of local churches may be essential in this regard. Additionally, such men may require financial support that the training church could not provide (or fully provide) without straining its resources. Here again, the biblical solution is the cooperation of local churches.

Our consideration of the importance of the cooperation of local churches in this matter

has already led us to touch upon the peculiar agents of this theological education. It is plain that the special instruments or agents by which this theological education is to be imparted are the pastor-teachers Christ has given to His church (Eph. 4:11) and especially those pastor-teachers who may have been peculiarly gifted for this task (2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 5:17). This simple and obvious scriptural fact has vast implications!

It means that (normally and with rare exception) the instructors of future pastors should be themselves men of pastoral experience. I had a friend who illustrated this vividly for me:

. . . I worked for a man . . . who was a tree care specialist. The job at times was mundane and routine, but at other times involved real danger and very precarious situations. As I was trained for the job, how thankful I was that the man training me was an expert in the field, not through mere book-learning, but through many years of hands-on experience in all kinds of situations. He knew, and he taught us to know, that in the felling of a massive oak tree, the difference between success and devastating failure could be nothing more than a notch or back-cut improperly placed by a fraction of an inch. He knew his work because he was doing it every day. At times I truly marveled at his wisdom.

If such was the case in learning to care for insensible trees, then how much more so when men are being trained to care for the precious, never-dying souls of men. Even the world would not tolerate the idea of someone being trained in a certain field of endeavor by a man or men who were for all intents and purposes inexperienced in that line of work. How is it that the church has come to tolerate a lesser standard in its holy work than the world would tolerate for the sake of filthy lucre?

Gardiner Spring sums up our conviction on this matter in a simple declaration: “Let the teachers of those who are being educated for the ministry be men of no inconsiderable experience in the pastoral office.”<sup>3</sup>

### **The Content of Theological Education**

In the key passage which has guided our thinking at a number of points in the previous discussion there is also a reference to the content of theological education. 2 Timothy 2:2 refers to “... the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also . . .” The things to be entrusted to faithful

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<sup>3</sup>Gardiner Spring, *Power in the Pulpit* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 202.

men have been the subject of Paul’s concern already in the first chapter of 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy 1:13-14 says, “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*.” “The standard of sound words” and “the treasure which has been entrusted to you” are descriptions of the things that Timothy is to entrust to faithful men. (*Entrust* is the identical Greek word in both 1:14 and 2:2.) As Fairbairn says, “the standard of sound words” refers “to the whole scheme of doctrine and duty taught by the apostle . . .”<sup>4</sup>

With regard to this *scheme of doctrine and duty* Paul emphasizes two things. First, he emphasizes that it is well-attested to be of divine authority. It was heard from Paul—literally—”through many witnesses.”<sup>5</sup> However this difficult prepositional phrase is to be precisely understood, the reference to many witnesses is intended to emphasize the fact that the things heard from the Apostle Paul were well-attested as the truth of God. Second, he emphasizes that it is this very scheme (without addition or subtraction) which is passed on or entrusted to the faithful men. The things which the Apostle taught and which were confirmed by many witnesses as the things of divine revelation—“these things” are to be passed on.

These emphases speak volumes to the situation in which we find ourselves today with regard to theological education. The all-consuming purpose of theological education should be to pass on or entrust to men the well-attested and assured truths of divine revelation. This rebukes a theological education that leaves men with more questions than when they started, rather than entrenching them in and deepening their understanding of the great truths of the Bible. It exposes as hopelessly misguided a theological education that is more interested in passing on church-growth strategies, missiological methodologies, and administrative approaches than entrusting to men the scheme of doctrine and duty taught by the Apostles.

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<sup>4</sup>Patrick Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles* (Minneapolis, MN: James & Klock, 1976), 332.

<sup>5</sup>The Greek has the preposition  $\delta\iota\alpha$ .

Furthermore, it corrects even a conservative, theological education which loses its way by focusing on a thousand technicalities of church history or biblical exegesis for their own sake. Rigorous, academic disciplines are necessary, but must focus constantly on illumining “the treasure” of gospel truth which has been entrusted to the Christian church.

The fact is that the present task of the church in passing on this treasure to future generations is not so straightforward as it was for Timothy. The sacred writings of the Apostles were in the language of Timothy and the church in Ephesus. Today, we are in a situation analogous in some respects to that in which Ezra and the people of God found themselves after the Exile. During the Exile the language and concepts of the law of God had become somewhat unfamiliar to the covenant people. Thus, we read in Nehemiah 8:7-8 that Ezra and the Levites “explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.” Apparently, the task of passing on the truth of God at this stage in redemptive history confronted a difficulty not previously encountered. The Word of God had to be translated into a slightly different language and its unfamiliar concepts had to be explained. The appointed teachers of Israel undertook this responsibility.

What was true in Ezra’s day is even truer in ours. The biblical record of the apostolic scheme of doctrine and duty must be translated into our language and explained. This requires the various disciplines of Exegetical Theology. One who would especially give himself to teaching this scheme must ordinarily and normally learn the major languages of the Bible, Hebrew and Greek. He needs to study the unfamiliar customs and history reflected in the Bible. He needs to study the rules of biblical interpretation related to this unfamiliar grammatical and historical background. He needs to study the historical origin of the books of the Bible. He needs to study in detail the meaning of different representative books of the Old and New Testaments. He needs in biblical theology to study how there was a progressive revelation of God’s Word through all these different books.

There are other factors, unique to our age, necessary to a thorough, theological

education. Since the time of Paul, 20 centuries of church history have passed. The Bible clearly teaches that God in Christ has been at work building His church during those centuries. Christ has given teaching gifts to His church throughout this entire period. Major doctrinal controversies have occurred and heresies have been refuted in those long centuries. Through this process the meaning, applications, and implications of the apostolic scheme of doctrine and duty have been wonderfully clarified. Therefore, no theological curriculum or course of theological study would be complete which did not give the student a detailed acquaintance with what is called Historical Theology or Church History.

Systematic Theology is built upon Exegetical Theology and Historical Theology and is the heart of the theological sciences. Its goal is to take the raw materials of Exegetical Theology and the experienced counsel of Historical Theology and comprehensively present the apostolic scheme of doctrine and duty. The result is to give the theological student a biblical, balanced, systematic, and logical understanding of the major themes of the Bible so that he may “be able to teach others also.”

Practical Theology is the last and culminating of the theological sciences. This science focuses on how the apostolic scheme of doctrine and duty is to be biblically and effectively communicated to the church and through the church to the world. Central to Practical Theology is Pastoral Theology. Special attention is, therefore, given within this discipline to the development of the graces and gifts vital to the Christian ministry.

A thorough theological education in our day must include a thorough acquaintance with all these departments of the theological science: Exegetical Theology, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology. Each of these branches of theology is important to passing on the apostolic scheme of doctrine and duty to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

### **Essential Introductions**

The preceding survey of the biblical foundations of theological education is intended

to provide the explicit framework within which the Midwest Center for Theological Studies is introduced.

In accord with what we have considered, the Midwest Center is a ministry of the Heritage Baptist Church of Owensboro, Kentucky, and under the general oversight of its eldership. It intends to provide theological instruction within the framework of the vibrant life and biblical ministry of that church. Heritage Baptist Church is a Reformed Baptist Church which originated in 1973 when its founding pastor, Ted Christman, was called to minister to a small group of Reformed Christians. God has graciously blessed his labors and those of his fellow pastors so as to establish a loving, dynamic biblical church with a significant impact on the community of Owensboro, sister churches throughout the nation, and missions in various parts of the world. In His kindness, God has blessed the congregation with an eldership possessing a combined pastoral experience of over 80 years in the gospel ministry.

The biblical framework for theological education previously described vindicates the importance of the cooperation and association of local churches. Under the leadership of its pastors, Heritage Baptist Church has sought to maintain a sympathetic and appreciative fellowship with other conservative, gospel ministries in the community and throughout the country—especially ministries that promote the doctrines of grace and Reformed theology. In line with this commitment to broad fellowship, Heritage Baptist Church endeavors to maintain close fellowship with all other churches that are Reformed and Baptist. In order to facilitate these various dimensions of inter-church fellowship and manifest them publicly, Heritage Baptist Church is affiliated with both the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America (ARBCA) and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The biblical foundations surveyed above make clear the importance of the church formally affirming and diligently propagating *the faith once delivered to the saints*. (What 2 Timothy 2:2 calls, “the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses.”) For the attainment of this important goal, Heritage Baptist Church has formally adopted the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith* as the summary of scriptural truth as it is

understood among us. This confession is, though secondary to the Scriptures, the authoritative doctrinal standard for the ministry of the church and the Midwest Center. The adoption of this statement of faith means we unashamedly identify ourselves with that Christian tradition which is both Reformed in its theology and Baptist in its ecclesiology.

What God has done for us at Heritage Baptist Church in His kind providence has served to crystallize (what we hope is) a holy desire to begin the Midwest Center for Theological Studies. It is the humble conviction of the elders of our church that we have been entrusted with a stewardship to impart (with the help of others who may join us) the theological and pastoral wisdom that God in His infinite grace has condescended to grant to us. We sense that we have an obligation to pass on to others those truths that have been such a blessing to Heritage Baptist Church.

### **Ministerial Intentions**

What, then, are the goals of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies? They may be described in terms of their multi-leveled character and their wide breadth.

### **The Multi-leveled Character of These Goals**

The statement of principles with which this prospectus opened makes very clear that theology is the interest of the people of God in general. The goal of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies is not, therefore, simply to provide men who are or aspire to be vocational pastors with the training and education they need competently to fulfill their special calling. Admittedly, new Christians may not be ready to profit from the level of instruction made available through the Midwest Center for Theological Studies. Yet more mature Christians who do not aspire to the Christian ministry may find the instruction of great value. The church stands in need of bi-vocational elders who labor in another vocation and are not supported by the church, competent teachers to assist the eldership, and well-trained Christians who can wisely counsel needy souls. One of the goals of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies is to provide training for such Christian workers.

As its central focus, of course, the goal of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies is to train or educate men for the Christian ministry. The Midwest Center provides a thorough theological education at the academic level normally considered necessary if a man is to labor by way of vocation in the ministry of the Word of God. Thus, later in this prospectus issues and policies related to the recognizing, education, and oversight of such men are explained. The courses of the Midwest Center will be taught at a level necessary and appropriate for the theological education of such men. While other Christians are welcomed to use the courses, the special focus of the Midwest Center is the education of men for the Christian ministry.

### **The Wide Breadth of These Goals**

The biblical foundations for the Midwest Center explained above clarify the importance of cooperation among local churches in the matter of theological education. Because of this, and to maximize the usefulness and edification of the courses offered, we are committed to make them available to other churches, pastors, and students. This is done by way of occasional, concentrated modular courses taught both in Owensboro and elsewhere. It is also accomplished by way of internet broadcasting, video lectures, and correspondence courses. The guidelines under which such courses will be made available are discussed below.

### **Methodological Considerations**

Several distinctives characterize the approach to theological education adopted by the Midwest Center. These distinctives involve the mentoring, courses, faculty, tuition, administration, and relationships of the Midwest Center.

### **Interactive Approach to Pastoral Education**

The Midwest Center is strongly committed to the view that education for the pastorate must involve ongoing, personal interaction between the student and his professors and pastors. To this end we are committed to significant interaction with those students accepted as aspirants to the vocational ministry. We believe this mentoring relationship will make a significant impact

on their spiritual character and pastoral development. We are further committed to providing a breadth of role-modeling experiences that will acquaint such students with the whole range of pastoral responsibilities including participation in elders' meetings, deacons' meetings, pastoral oversight, pastoral counseling, hospital visitation, weddings, and funerals.

### **Eclectic Approach to Courses**

*Eclectic* in this context means *varied*. Courses are taught in the Midwest Center in an eclectic manner. In order to fulfill our broad and multi-leveled goals, various kinds of courses and methods of teaching are utilized.

The Midwest Center is persuaded that the best instruction involves live interaction between the instructor and his students. Though distance-learning may be profitable and in some cases necessary, there is no substitute for the face-to-face interaction of teacher and student that takes place by means of on-site classes. We are committed to providing such instruction for the student. Some courses will follow the more traditional semester-length format. Concentrated modular courses (usually with lectures concentrated into a one week period) are also used. Through these and other means, a significant portion of the Midwest Center's instruction will be received in person (live) from the professors.

In order to minister to off-site students, the Midwest Center is also committed to distance learning. Both recorded and online correspondence courses overseen by the faculty of the Midwest Center may provide a significant segment of such instruction. Plans are also underway to televise interactive lectures to local churches via satellite. This medium will allow ministerial aspirants to remain under the tutelage of the elders of their local church. It will also provide a way whereby men presently in the pastorate may enjoy continuing education without leaving their post of duty.

### **Pastorally Experienced and Academically Qualified Approach to Faculty**

Since our central goal is to train men for the Christian ministry, the regular instructors

of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies will be men who have demonstrated their qualifications for such ministry themselves. The regular faculty of the Midwest Center will be composed, then, only of men with a pastoral heart who have themselves demonstrated the qualifications for the Christian ministry.

The brief survey of the biblical foundations of theological education given above also demonstrated the unique academic situation in which the church finds itself 20 centuries after its founding. That situation ordinarily requires that men who aspire to the vocational ministry receive an extensive education in the various departments of theology and a course of study in a comprehensive theological curriculum. This suggests as well that those engaged to teach such a curriculum must be men of recognized mastery especially in those departments for which they are engaged to teach. Such mastery is commonly associated with the attainment of an advanced academic degree. For these reasons the regular faculty of the Midwest Center will be composed only of men who have attained such an advanced degree—ordinarily a doctorate in some area of theological studies.

Occasionally, under the supervision of the regular faculty, courses may be taught by men who do not fulfill the requirements for regular faculty members. Of course, such men must be deemed by the administration both spiritually and academically qualified to teach such courses. They must exhibit a life that is above reproach in their Christian profession. They must also manifest sufficient mastery of the subjects they are teaching to provide theological instruction at the level offered by the Midwest Center.

### **Balanced Approach to Tuition**

The Bible teaches that the gospel is to be proclaimed without price to all (1 Cor. 9:18). It also teaches that those Christians who receive systematic<sup>6</sup> instruction in the Word of God are

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<sup>6</sup>The root of the participle found in Gal. 6:6 translated *taught*, *κατηχου,μενοφ*, is the source of our English word verb, to catechize, and probably connotes systematic instruction.

to feel a sense of obligation to contribute financially to provide for their teachers (Gal. 6:6). Experience teaches that we do not usually value that which costs us nothing. Experience also seems to teach that theological students are often the least able to contribute financially for the instruction they need. Within these balancing perspectives of the Word of God and common experience, the Midwest Center will request certain fees and tuition for the instruction it provides. It will also maintain a standing policy to consider requests for aid on a case by case basis. Moreover, the Midwest Center is committed to setting before the churches, and especially the home churches of its students, their responsibility to have a vision for the raising up of a faithful and educated gospel ministry. Such a vision, it should go without saying, may involve financial assistance.

### **Ecclesiastical Approach to Administration**

The Midwest Center for Theological Studies is a ministry of Heritage Baptist Church of Owensboro, Kentucky, and utilizes its facilities. Because of these things, it necessarily operates ultimately under the oversight of the elders of that church. Something of the biblical necessity, advantages, and propriety of this organization of the Midwest Center have been made clear in the treatment of biblical foundations mentioned above.

The biblical importance of cooperation between local churches in the matter of theological education has also been stressed. Because of the importance of such cooperation the eldership of Heritage Baptist Church will commit the supervision of the Midwest Center to a Board of Directors. All Board members must hold the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. This Board will assemble at least once each year to hear reports on, set policy for, and consider the state of the school. It will include one pastor of Heritage Baptist Church who is not on the faculty of the Midwest Center. This pastor will serve as its chairman. It will be further composed of the regular faculty member who is serving as chairman of the faculty of the Midwest Center. This person is not to be the same as the chairman of this Board of Directors and will serve as vice-chairman of the Board. The Board of Directors will be composed initially

of at least six other pastors representing six other churches. The subsequent size of the Board will be determined by the Board of Directors itself. Members of the Board of Directors will be chosen by the Board of Directors. The daily operation and administration of the Midwest Center will be committed to the regular faculty of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies. All decisions with regard to the operation of the Midwest Center are subject to the review and approval of the Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final—unless the eldership of Heritage Baptist Church chooses to intervene.

### **Charitable Approach to Relations**

The biblical foundations of the Midwest Center firmly commit us to the centrality of the local church in theological education. As was indicated above, however, the Midwest Center is also built on a solid appreciation of the importance of cooperation with other local churches and the contributions of institutions that do not necessarily share our commitment. For this reason, the Center seeks to cooperate with other institutions of theological education. Wherever possible, we will extend appropriate credit for courses taken in such institutions and share with them in the important work of theological education. We will also seek to commend ourselves and our courses to such institutions, actively seeking the acceptance of courses taken at Midwest Center for Theological Studies. Our desire and goal is that all courses taken at the Midwest Center qualify for Master of Divinity level credit at other seminaries. We are actively seeking to establish relationships with particular schools to assure our students of such credit. Such relationships have been established with Toronto Baptist Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

### **Specific Missions**

#### **Introduction:**

Christians who do not aspire to the vocational ministry are welcome to enroll in MCTS and take courses for credit as *Track Two* students. In order to enroll in the *Track Two*

program the prospective student must interview for acceptance with a faculty committee. Acceptance will be determined on the basis of this interview and is contingent upon the prospective student's demonstrating a credible profession of faith and the requisite intellectual and spiritual maturity. Continuation as a *Track Two* student is subject to the discretion of the faculty and administration of the Midwest Center. The normal fees and tuition for enrollment and courses at the Midwest Center are the responsibility of the *Track Two* student.

Individuals are permitted to audit courses at the discretion of the faculty instructor. An auditor of an entire course is responsible for one-half the normal tuition for the course.

The special mission of the Midwest Center is to minister to men who aspire to the vocational Christian ministry. *Track One* students are those enrolled as aspirants to the vocational ministry. The following paragraphs address the special procedures for the acceptance and care of such students. The fees and tuition requirements for *Track One and Two* students are the same.

### **The Careful Recognition of Aspirants to the Christian Ministry**

The Bible makes clear that some men are so gifted by God that they should labor vocationally as a pastor or minister of the Word of God (1 Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17). The central purpose of the Midwest Center for Theological Studies is to provide a thorough theological education for vocational pastors and aspirants to the vocational Christian ministry (2 Tim. 2:2).

Admission as a *Track One* student to the Midwest Center requires first that the elders of the prospective student's church recommend him as a legitimate aspirant to the vocational ministry. They may do so through a written letter detailing their assessment of his aspirations. The regular faculty of the Midwest Center must then approve the prospective student by means of an interview examining his fitness for enrollment in *Track One* of the Midwest Center.

Admission entitles him not only to take classes for credit on *Track One* in the Midwest Center, but also includes the special, pastoral help and oversight which such an aspirant to the

Christian ministry requires. Several aspects of this special oversight are indicated in the following sections of this prospectus. Of course, this status and the oversight it entails only continue as both the elders of the student and the faculty of the Midwest Center remain able to view the man's aspirations as appropriate and legitimate. In other words, this status continues only as long as they view him as a potential, vocational pastor.

Ordinarily, only men who are at least 21 years of age, hold a Bachelor's Degree, and are members in good standing of evangelical churches shall be eligible for acceptance to the Center. The administration of the Midwest Center reserves the right to waive any or all of these entrance requirements or to decline the application of any man to the Midwest Center at its own discretion.

The requirement that a man's aspirations to the vocational ministry be reviewed and deemed *legitimate and appropriate* is not to be construed to mean that his elders are confident that he is or will be qualified to labor full-time in the gospel ministry. The intent of this language is simply that the elders not view such aspirations as misguided because of some observable and significant deficiency in his Christian life or abilities. No man should be engaged in studies for the gospel ministry when an area of glaring weakness in gift or grace makes it unlikely that he will ever be qualified for the Christian ministry.

Accordingly, acceptance as a *Track One* student in the Midwest Center does not require that a man's gifts or graces be so mature or evident that his church is ready to free him from a secular vocation in order to study on a full-time basis. It is our expectation that many men in their first years of study in the Midwest Center will take classes on a part-time basis. One of the Center's purposes is to assist men who cannot study full-time through modular and correspondence courses and distance learning.

### **The Special Guidance of Such Aspirants**

Students are accepted to *Track One* in the Midwest Center because they aspire to the Christian ministry. Special and concentrated pastoral care is important for the spiritual

development of the aspirant to the ministry and to insure his godly and moral character. Such students require special guidance both in their educational and spiritual development. The faculty of the Midwest Center and the pastors of Heritage Baptist Church are committed to providing such guidance. At least once each year one of the pastors or faculty will meet with each student to review his educational needs and spiritual development with specific reference to the Christian ministry.

### **The Theological Requirements of Such Aspirants**

The Midwest Center is fully committed to the perspective that a thorough, theological education is ordinarily necessary for the vocation of the Christian ministry. Furthermore, even though God may call into the ministry and evidently bless the labors of a man who lacks such a thorough education, it remains the duty of those who would undertake the training of men for the vocation of the Christian ministry to set before such men high requirements of preparation. This should include the standard and goal of completing a thorough, well-rounded theological education. Biblical teaching and the time-tested experience of the church of Christ demonstrate the basic areas of importance for a thorough, theological education. The famous Reformed theologian, Abraham Kuyper, endeavored to describe what is involved in such an education. He called this the “encyclopedia of theology.” The following modification of Kuyper’s organization of the science of theology is included here in order to clarify and emphasize how extensive a full-orbed theological education needs to be in our day and age.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THEOLOGY

I.EXEGETICAL  
THEOLOGY

A.Books of the Bible-  
Isagogics

B.Text of the Bible  
1.Biblical Philology  
2.Textual Criticism  
3.Hermeneutics  
4.Exegesis

C.Contents of the  
Bible  
1.Bib. Archaeology  
2.Bib. History  
3.Bib. Theology

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Object: the Bible as  
such

Aim: biblical  
interpretation

II.HISTORICAL  
THEOLOGY

A.Ecclesiastical or  
Church History  
1.Chronological  
2.Territorial  
3.Denominational  
  
B.Doctrinal History--  
History of Doctrines

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Object: the church in  
historical  
manifestation

Aim: historical  
perspective

III.SYSTEMATIC  
THEOLOGY

A.Apologetics  
  
B.Dogmatics  
1.Prolegomena  
2.Revelation  
3.God  
4.Man  
5.Christ  
6.Holy Spirit  
7.Salvation  
8.Church  
9.Last Things

C.Ethics  
  
D.Polemics  
  
-----  
Object: Christian  
doctrine and dogma

Aim: systematic  
construction

IV.PRACTICAL  
THEOLOGY

A.Homiletics  
  
B.Liturgics  
  
C.Poimenics  
  
D.Catechetics  
  
E.Church Order  
  
F.Missions

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Object: the  
Church as the  
agency for  
propagating the  
Word

Aim: effective  
communication

## **The Academic Standards for Such Aspirants**

No student will be deemed to have successfully completed the work in any course who does not achieve a cumulative grade of 75 or above for his course work. No individual test, project, or paper will be accepted which does not achieve a score of 71 or above. The letter equivalents for the percentile grades assigned are as follows:

A -- 96-100	B- -- 81-84
A- -- 91-95	C+ -- 78-80
B+ -- 88-90	C -- 75-77
B -- 85-87	C- -- 71-74

If a student is unable to complete an assignment by the due date, he is to contact his instructor at his earliest convenience. Late assignments will be penalized by the instructor at his discretion.

## **Course Offerings**

### **A Thorough Theological Curriculum (for Track One Students)**

The following courses are required for completion of Track One and provide the equivalent of the course of studies necessary for a Master of Divinity Degree. This course of studies requires 96 total hours. This is equivalent to 8 semesters of 12 hours each.

#### **Systematic Theology (23) Hours)**

Symbolics 1	1 Hour
Symbolics 2	1 Hour
Symbolics 3	1 Hour
Theological Method and Apologetics	2 Hours
Doctrine of the Word	2 Hours
Doctrine of God	2 Hours
Doctrine of Man	2 Hours

Doctrine of Christ	2 Hours
Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	2 Hours
Doctrine of the Church	2 Hours
Doctrine of Last Things	2 Hours
Ethics	2 Hours
Polemics	2 Hours

**Practical Theology (16 Hours)**

Introduction to Pastoral Theology 1	—2 Hours
Introduction to Pastoral Theology 2	—2 Hours
Pastoral Counseling	—2 Hours
Preaching	—4 Hours
Pastoral Theology Practicum	—2 Hours
Evangelism and Missions	—2 Hours
Biblical Spirituality	—2 Hours

**Historical Theology (15 Hours)**

Survey of Early Church History and Historical Theology	—3 Hours
Survey of Medieval Church History and Historical Theology	—2 Hours
Survey of Reformation Church History and Historical Theology	—2 Hours
Survey of Modern and American Church History and Historical Theology	—2—Hours
Baptist Church History	—2 Hours
Puritans	—2 Hours
Edwards	—2 Hours

**Exegetical Theology (42 Hours)**

*Old Testament Studies—20 Hours*

Introductory Hebrew I—4 Hours  
Introductory Hebrews II—4 Hours  
Intermediate Hebrew—2 Hours  
Introduction to the Old Testament—2 Hours  
Old Testament Exegesis 1—2 Hours  
Old Testament Exegesis 2—2 Hours  
Old Testament Biblical Theology 1—2 Hours  
Old Testament Biblical Theology 2—2 Hours

*New Testament Studies—22 Hours*

Greek Grammar I—4 Hours  
Greek Grammar II—4 Hours  
Intermediate Greek—2 Hours  
New Testament Introduction—2 Hours  
Biblical Hermeneutics—2 Hours  
New Testament Exegesis—2 Hours  
New Testament Exegesis—2 Hours  
New Testament Biblical Theology 1—2 Hours  
New Testament Biblical Theology 2—2 Hours

**A Practical Theological Curriculum (for Track Two Students)**

The following courses are required for completion of Track Two and provide the equivalent of the course of studies necessary for a Master of Arts in Theology Degree. This course of studies requires 48 total hours.

**Systematic Theology (15 Hours)**

\*The student is required to take as a part of these 15 hours Symbolics 1-3. He must choose an additional 12 hours for a total of 15 hours from the other classes in the

Systematics curriculum.

Symbolics 1	1 Hour
Symbolics 2	1 Hour
Symbolics 3	1 Hour
Theological Method and Apologetics	2 Hours
Doctrine of the Word	2 Hours
Doctrine of God	2 Hours
Doctrine of Man	2 Hours
Doctrine of Christ	2 Hours
Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	2 Hour
Doctrine of the Church	2 Hours
Doctrine of Last Things	2 Hours
Ethics	2 Hours
Polemics	2 Hours

**Practical Theology (4 Hours)**

Biblical Spirituality—2 Hours

Biblical Counseling—2 Hours

**Historical Theology (11 Hours)\***

\*The student may choose a total of 11 hours of electives from the following classes.

Survey of Early Church History and Historical Theology—3 Hours

Survey of Medieval Church History and Historical Theology—2 Hours

Survey of Reformation Church History and Historical Theology—2 Hours

Survey of Modern and American Church History and Historical Theology—2 Hours

Baptist Church History—2 Hours

Puritans—2 Hours

Jonathan Edwards—2 Hours

**Exegetical Theology (18 Hours)**

\*The student may choose a total of 18 hours of electives from the following classes. He is required to take Greek Grammar I and II.

*Old Testament Studies*

Introduction to the Old Testament—2 Hours

Old Testament Biblical Theology 1—2 Hours

Old Testament Biblical Theology 2—2 Hours

*New Testament Studies*

Greek Grammar I—4 Hours

Greek Grammar II—4 Hours

New Testament Introduction—2 Hours

Biblical Hermeneutics—2 Hours

New Testament Biblical Theology 1—2 Hours

New Testament Biblical Theology 2—2 Hours

**Course Descriptions**

**For Systematic Theology**

**Symbolics 1-3**—These courses offer a survey of the historical background, original sources, doctrinal content, biblical basis, and contemporary application of the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*.

**Prolegomena to Systematic Theology 1**—This course surveys the issue of theological method, provides an introduction to and defense of systematic theology, and furnishes an historical survey, exegetical approach, and systematic development of Christian apologetics.

**Prolegomena to Systematic Theology 2**—This study includes discussions of the concept and

categories of revelation, the major attributes of Scripture including a defense of inerrancy, and a systematic treatment of the doctrine of the canon. Together PST 1 and 2 provide an introduction to and an epistemological basis for systematic theology.

**The Doctrine of God**--This course focuses provides an historical and exegetical approach to the knowledge, Trinity, nature, and sovereignty of God in light of the many, current debates and questions among evangelicals.

**The Doctrine of Man**--Included here are treatments of creation and providence; the origin, identity, constitution, and free agency of man; man's original relationship with God and integrity before God; the creation ordinances; the Fall; actual, original, and imputed sin; the consequences of sin; and common grace.

**The Doctrine of Christ**--This course treats the plan of salvation; God's covenants as the biblical framework of His person and work; the person of Christ—His deity, incarnation, and messianic office, and the work of Christ—His humiliation and exaltation, His representative obedience, and the atonement.

**The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**—This course enlarges on the deity and personality of the Spirit; the office and work of the Spirit; the coming of the Spirit; and the gifts of the Spirit. Special attention is given to the question of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the continuation of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit today.

**The Doctrine of Salvation**—Included in this course is a discussion of the concept and content of the *ordo salutis* and an overview of the application of salvation in calling and regeneration, repentance and faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance and preservation, assurance, and glorification. Special attention is given to recent controversies relating to the doctrine of justification.

**The Doctrine of the Church**—This course provides a comprehensive overview of the doctrine of the church. It includes discussion of its nature and identity, its origin and institution, its authority and government, its corporate worship, mission, tasks, and ordinances, its relationship

to other divine institutions (the family and the state), and its ultimate goal and destiny.

**The Doctrine of Last Things**—This treatment of eschatology begins with a survey of eschatological thought in the history of the church. The major structural considerations for an understanding of redemptive history, and especially its last phases, are then considered. Finally, special questions related to eschatology are treated including issues related to the gospel age, the imminence of Christ's second coming, the resurrection, and the eternal state.

**Ethics**—This Ethics course begins with a discussion of the prolegomena to and systems of ethics and continues with a consideration of watershed issues in Christian Ethics today. The doctrine of the Lord's day and the issue of women in the church are discussed as displaying the basic contours of a biblical and Reformed approach to ethics and providing a paradigm for approaching other ethical issues.

**Polemics**—Polemics addresses and critiques certain of the most pressing errors of our day. The course begins with a biblical approach to polemics and proceeds to address particular errors in our day. Among the errors addressed are Roman Catholicism, New Perspective Views of Justification, the Charismatic Movement, Theonomy, and Open Theism.

### **For Practical Theology**

**Introduction to Pastoral Theology 1**

**Introduction to Pastoral Theology 2**

**Pastoral Counseling**

**Preaching**

**Pastoral Theology Practicum**

**Evangelism and Missions**

**Biblical Spirituality**

### **For Historical Theology**

**Survey of Early Church History and Historical Theology**

**Survey of Medieval Church History and Historical Theology**

**Survey of Reformation Church History and Historical Theology**

**Survey of Modern and American Church History and Historical Theology**

**Baptist Church History**

**Puritans**

**Jonathan Edwards**

**For Exegetical Theology**

**Old Testament Introduction**—OT Introduction provides an introduction to the books of the Old Testament including their dating, authorship, and major themes. Special attention is given to the defense of those positions to which the doctrine of biblical inerrancy and infallibility commits the evangelical theologian and the exposure of those critical positions which articulate a lack of faith in biblical authority.

**Hebrew Grammar 1 and 2**--These courses are designed to teach the fundamentals of Hebrew grammar and a basic vocabulary. Included is a considerable amount of translation from Hebrew to English.

**Intermediate Hebrew**--The goal of this course is to attain competence in the application of Hebrew syntax to the task of Old Testament exegesis. The method of instruction involves a systematic study of syntax coupled with the translation and exegesis of selected portions of the Hebrew Old Testament.

**Old Testament Biblical Theology 1 and 2**--These courses include an introduction to the discipline of Biblical Theology, a survey of redemptive history from Creation to the Davidic Covenant, with special emphasis on the covenant concept in the Old Testament, and a study of the role of Old Testament prophecy in redemptive history.

**Old Testament Exegesis 1 and 2**—Two courses in Old Testament Exegesis are required in order to acquaint the student with the exegesis of the Old Testament and with how its theology

comes to expression in its literature.

**New Testament Introduction**—NT Introduction provides an introduction to the books of the Old Testament including their dating, authorship, and major themes. Special attention is given to the defense of those positions to which the doctrine of biblical inerrancy and infallibility commits the evangelical theologian and the exposure of those critical positions which articulate a lack of faith in biblical authority.

**Greek Grammar 1 and 2**--Greek 1 and 2 are intended to thoroughly acquaint the student with the essentials of Greek Grammar and to introduce the student to further Greek studies.

**Intermediate Greek**—The goal of this course is to attain comprehension in the application of Greek syntax to the task of New Testament exegesis. The method of instruction involves a systematic study of syntax as well as inductive exercises consisting of the translation and exegesis of portions of the Greek New Testament.

**Hermeneutics**--Hermeneutics is an introduction to the principles of biblical interpretation which grow out of the unique identity of the Bible as a divine-human document. Special attention is given to common hermeneutical fallacies.

**New Testament Biblical Theology 1 and 2**—This is a study of redemptive history in its relation to the establishment of the New Covenant. Special consideration is given to (1) Jesus' identity and public ministry; (2) the features of the New Covenant; (3) the significance of Pentecost, (4) the apostolic gospel, (5) the identity of the church, (6) New Covenant eschatology, and (7) the relationship of the law and gospel in the New Testament.

**New Testament Exegesis 1 and 2**—Two courses in New Testament Exegesis are required in order to acquaint the student with the exegesis of the New Testament and with how its theology comes to expression in its literature.

### **Important Information**

MCTS has written arrangements with accredited seminaries that insure acceptance of

many of our courses by those seminaries. For more information about this contact us.

Information about the Midwest Center for Theological Studies is available through its web site: [www.midwestcenterfortheologicalstudies.org](http://www.midwestcenterfortheologicalstudies.org) and the web site of Heritage Baptist Church: [www.hbcowensboro.org](http://www.hbcowensboro.org). You may also contact the school by calling 270-685-4002.

The address is . . .

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