

The local church is a divine institution ordained by God to be a guardian and custodian of God's truth according to **I Timothy 3:15**, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The church of Jesus Christ was given this great commission and it is to be the instrument in the transmission of truth. It is the church that ordains men to the ministry by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 13:1-4**). If a Bible college is necessary, then it should be under the authority of the church and operate according to **Ephesians 4:8-16**. God gave gifts to the church and the gifts consisted of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. One of the qualifications for pastors is the ability to teach (**I Timothy 3:2**). A pastor is to train his people for the work of the ministry and that would include young preacher boys.

What can a college, miles away, do for a young man called to preach that his pastor and church cannot do? Many of these institutions are not under the direct authority of the local church, and become a separate entity. Remember, Jesus trained the twelve, Moses trained Joshua, Elijah trained Elisha, and Paul trained Timothy and Titus. The Levites trained their own children for ministry, and David and Solomon were great men of wisdom and knowledge, but where were the universities and colleges of their day? How did God's people ever survive without man's institutions? The answer lies in the fact that God ordained families and churches, not universities and colleges. This is God's way and it is the safest and best way.

CONCLUSION

God does call men into the ministry and they need to be trained, but the question is, where are they to receive that training? The church has become less valuable to many as they become loyal to some institution (other than their church) that God did not ordain. Many colleges rob the church of helpers as the young men and women leave to attend a college that is out from under the authority of the home and church. We must rethink this important issue and consider what the Scriptures say. Amen.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."



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*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
Acts 16:31*

The RICHIES

OF GRACE

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"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Bible College

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

II Timothy 2:2

+ Ministerial Training +

There are many Bible colleges, schools, institutions, and seminaries across our land. In our day, great emphasis is placed upon higher education, especially when it comes to ministry. In many circles, degrees have become a qualification for ministry even though many who have a degree are not called to preach. The question is, are seminaries ordained of God? Do the Scriptures address this issue, and what did the Lord Jesus have to say about the subject? Many Bible colleges are an entity unto themselves, and separated from the authority of the local church. There are also multitudes of these institutions that are liberal, corrupt, and in total apostasy, destroying the faith of many who attend them. May God help us in this important study. Amen.

"A school to teach preachers how to pray, as God counts praying, would be more beneficial to true piety, true worship, and true preaching than all theological schools." – E.M. Bounds

This article will address ministerial training from a Biblical point of view. I have kept silent on this issue for nearly twenty-five years in ministry, but now I feel a need to speak about it. Even though I am for the training of men for the ministry, I am concerned with what I see happening in many of the Bible colleges.

The Modern Concept of Bible Colleges

In the day in which we live there is great emphasis placed on higher education and especially in the area of ministry. Bible colleges have become big businesses. Many today believe if a preacher does not have a degree from some institution, he is not qualified to preach. I believe wholeheartedly in the training of men for the ministry (**II Timothy 2:2**), for a novice is not to be in the pulpit (**I Timothy 3:6**). There must be a time of preparation and training, but are degrees necessary for one to be a minister of God? If education is the issue, then what constitutes an education? Is it a degree, the number of hours attended, or the training itself? Obviously, it is the training. There are many who have a degree that are not trained to minister and many who do not have a degree are qualified to preach God's Word. So, education depends upon one's training and not a piece of paper. The proper question to ask a minister to see if he is qualified to preach is not "Do you have a degree," but "Are you called and have you been trained?"

In the King James Bible, the word college is mentioned twice (**II Kings 22:14; II Chronicles 34:22**). Most commentators and translators believe the King James translators made a mistake with this word. I personally believe the translators knew what they were doing and they knew that the meaning of the word college is "higher education." The point I am trying to make is that men who are called into the ministry need special training. The phrase, "sons of the prophets" is used several times in the Old Testament (**II Kings 2:3, 7, 15; 4:1,38; 5:22; II Kings 6:1-7**). These "sons of the prophets" were men of God who had the gift of prophecy, and were being trained for service. According to **II Kings 6:1-7**, they even built a special place to meet as they were being instructed by the prophet Elisha. The students were spiritual "sons of the prophets," as Paul called Timothy his son in the faith (**I Timothy 1:2**). These young prophets were trained by elder prophets to be servants of God. It never mentions them seeking a degree or desiring to be called a doctor. Many great men such as Spurgeon, George Muller, Elijah, and John the Baptist never had a degree, but were well-trained for the ministry. Lester Roloff said, "I had a little formal education, but I got over it."

THE GREATEST EXAMPLE IN SCRIPTURE

The Lord Jesus Christ personally chose, separated and trained twelve apostles (**Mark 3:13-14; 6:7-8, 30-31; Luke 11:1**) for approximately three years. There is no mention of Him going to school or starting a college or university when He came to earth. He walked with His disciples, taught them, slept with them, ate with them, and traveled with them. There is no substitute for one-on-one mentoring.

According to **John 7:15**, the Jews considered Jesus to have been uneducated, "*And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*" Jesus had been teaching in the temple and the Jews sought to kill him. They had marveled at His wisdom and knowledge of the Scriptures, knowing that He had no formal education and had never attended the schools of men. My Savior never had a degree and did not have to defend man's institutions, but was anointed and called to preach God's Word (**Luke 4:18-19**).

In **Acts 4:13**, the apostles whom Jesus trained for three years were called unlearned and ignorant by their enemies also, "*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*" This is how the ungodly viewed them because they viewed their teacher the same way. Please understand, this is exactly what they thought of the wisest man who ever lived, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ. The people also marveled at Peter and John, for they had been with Jesus, Hallelujah! These were ordinary men considered to be uneducated and unprofessional, but were anointed by God to preach. They had not been to the theological seminaries of their day, but astonished the ecclesiastical leaders who despised the Lord in their heart, for God said in **I Corinthians 1:26**, "*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*" According to **verse 29**, "*no flesh should glory in His presence,*" and this is why God cannot use the high and mighty, for they will glorify themselves. I am not in anyway advocating ignorance, for I believe that Peter and John were well-trained by the Master and were educated in the things of God. If you are not convinced of this, please read the two books Peter wrote and the five books of John. Both are filled with wisdom, knowledge, and truth. Amen.

As one author said, "The selection by God is designed to silence the wisdom of men." Besides, most seminaries are cemeteries, where the truth is buried.

The Church's Responsibility of Teaching