

SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY IN PLANNING AND DOING THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION ON THE MISSION FIELD

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To Curtis who by his commitment to the Lord's will, his great love for the
Angolan people, and his untiring efforts toward the training of pastors and leaders
has inspired me so much

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PREFACE

Some of the war-related problems such as hard-to-get-to isolated areas, the difficult economic situation, hunger, sickness, even transportation in the cities, and the lack of personnel which we have encountered in the training of Angolan pastors and church leaders for ministry, have caused me to be interested in knowing more about the options available and what others are doing. The above-mentioned factors have also made it necessary to search out ways to better plan for training and how to, at the same time, be objective and flexible to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. In seeking out information available on theological education as it has been and is currently done in different parts of the world, I turned to the printed materials on this subject, most of which were published in the 1970's and early 1980's, to discover the various approaches used and the pros and cons of each approach. This has been an extensive although far from exhaustive study.

There seems to be an on-going debate which focuses on polarizing centralized or fixed theological training as opposed to decentralized training. However, there is often difficulty in deciding which approach to use in a given situation not only because of the academic training or lack of it, but because of

the above-mentioned factors. There are also many variations and/or hybrid approaches. It would sometimes seem that more than one approach could be used at the same time.

This paper also will deal with the story of leadership training in Angola from the early 1970's up to the present time. The author has used her own personal knowledge of and experience in theological/leadership training as well as that of her husband and that of some Angolans who have received training and are currently involved in training others.

I have sought to relate the literature studied with specific factors affecting theological training in Angola to come up with certain conclusions and recommendations which I pray may be useful to others who are, or in the future may be, involved in training pastors and church leaders.

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CHAPTER 1

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL MODELS OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING

There has always been a need for leadership training among God's people. But just what is involved in training pastors and other leaders in our churches? What is leadership? Where do we turn for answers to these questions? This chapter will deal with the Biblical basis and the historical basis for leadership training today.

Leadership Training in the Bible

"In Hebrews 13, . . . leadership is more than knowing and telling: 'Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith' (v. 7). Leadership is a behavior, a lifestyle--that is worthy of being expected; it is even worthy of being emulated. Leadership, in New Testament terms, is reckoned in terms of accountability, not just in terms of authority (Hebrews 13:17). It gets its authority as it has accountability. . . . In reference to leaders of the church, the model of leadership must not be drawn from secular sources: it must be drawn from the Scripture and evaluated in terms of accountability to the Lordship of Christ.

"When leadership is disciplined to the Lordship of Christ, there are different conclusions. . . . A leader is one who ministers; a leader serves through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not in terms of prowess, not in terms of accomplishments or acquired knowledge, but in terms of what God is doing through his or her life. Leadership in the church is servanthood."¹

Jesus and Leadership Training

Jesus did not allow the responsibilities and emotional pressures of everyday activities to hamper His long-range strategy. He realized that for His ministry to continue after He was gone, that He must train key leaders. Much of His time was spent personally nurturing and training the twelve.²

Jesus was different. He did not establish a formal school. Although His teaching had definite content, He claimed that it was directly from God. He did not depend on the authority of a particular school of thought or upon the ordination of a well-known rabbi for its validity. He taught important doctrines but the essence of His doctrine was that His disciples should be committed to Him as a person.³

¹ Lesslie Newbigin, "Theological Education in a World Perspective" in Theological Education by Extension in World Perspective, eds. Harvie M. Conn & Samuel F. Rowen (Farmington, Mich.: Associates of Urbanus, 1982), 30.

² Raymond Rigdon, Resource Guide: Developing Church Leaders through Extension Education (Nashville, Tenn.: Seminary Extension Department, SBC Building, 1978), 19.

³ Ralph R. Covell, "Biblical Models for Successful Teaching" in Discipling Through Theological Education by Extension, ed. Vergil Gerber (Chicago, Ill.: The Moody Press, 1980), 105, 106.

How Jesus taught: 1) Jesus taught by example--not with a formal lecture (e.g. prayer, how to evangelize, to know and use Scripture, to have faith, to be obedient, to love God, to work together in dedication to God's will). 2) Jesus taught His disciples in living situations. His teaching was always relevant because the disciples were involved in the world (e.g. evil spirits: on-the-spot training). 3) Jesus taught His disciples by going from the known to the unknown. He started where they were (e.g. His use of parables about the Kingdom). 4) Jesus personalized His teaching. It was individualized in accordance with the need of the person to whom Jesus was speaking (e.g. the rich young ruler. We should personalize our teaching so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, those whom we teach may be brought face to face with the specific demands of Christ. 5) Jesus trained by evaluating people. . . . If we merely share content with our students and do not take time to know them, understand them, and be with them to the degree that we are able to evaluate them, we are not fully educating them. 6) Jesus taught His disciples by assigning important work to them (e.g. the Great Commission). Nothing will help a student to learn faster or to seek to put his teaching into practice in a better way than to know that his teacher manifests confidence in him.⁴

Paul and Leadership Training

"Teaching was central in the ministry of the apostle Paul. He considered himself a teacher (1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11), and he was careful to urge

⁴Ibid., 107-110.

that ministry upon those for whom he was responsible (1 Timothy 4:11; 6:2; and 2 Timothy 2:2)."⁵

How Paul taught: 1) Paul used various-techniques in his teaching ministry such as teaching or explaining, dispute or discussion (questions and answers), and dialogue (reasoning with feedback). 2) Paul had a specific content to teach, which included doctrine (e.g. the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4) and ethics (e.g. 2 Thessalonians 3:6). His goal was not just to share knowledge but to teach obedience. He often changed the form of his message according to the audience to whom he was speaking, such as in Acts 13, 14, and 17. 3) Paul was particular in his training process (2 Timothy 2:2), selecting men whose call was confirmed by their spiritual gifts. He trained them as apprentices. They traveled with him and observed. He often gave them specific responsibilities to carry out such as visiting churches. He carried books with him which he probably used. 4) Paul made Christ central in the content taught in the church (Ephesians 4:20-24). The end product of his teaching was that the learned might be like Jesus. 5) Paul taught precepts, not specific details. The Corinthian believers came to Paul seeking solutions for their problems. He responded by declaring precepts that could solve current problems and at the same time furnish guidelines for handling future difficulties. He gave them principles from God's Word, encouraged them to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and instructed them to develop their own lives in such a way as to fit the

⁵Ibid., 110.

environment in which they were living. Paul did not present facts as an end in themselves, but as a means to lead the learner to obedience.⁶

Post-New Testament Leadership Training

Apprenticeship Training

The apprenticeship technique of training practiced by Jesus and Paul has probably been used more than is known throughout Christian history. However, it was a practice of the early Puritan churches in America.⁷

Institutional Training

A school of religious thought existed in Alexandria by about 185 A.D. Clement and Origen were well-known teachers of this school.⁸ The School of Asia Minor was developed about 205. Leading teachers were Irenaeus and Hippolytus. The School of North Africa, developed about 225, was led by Tertullian and Cyprian.⁹

"The emergence of scholasticism caused cathedral and monastic schools to flourish in the twelfth century. . . . Although teaching had existed before, the beginning of university organization dates back to the beginning of the thirteenth

⁶ibid., 110-116.

⁷Weldon E. Viertel, A Guide to Decentralized Theological Education, Carib Baptist Publications (El Paso, Tex.: Baptist Spanish Publishing House, 1979), 16.

⁸Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (Edinburgh: Morrison and Gibb Ltd., 1949), 77.

⁹Weldon E. Viertel and William L. Womack, Early and Medieval Christianity, Carib Baptist Publications (El Paso, Tex.: Baptist Spanish Publishing House, 1975), 65.

century" (in Europe).¹⁰ The universities consisted of several different faculties or schools, one of which was theology.

Later, schools of the prophets in America developed into denominational seminaries. "The Dutch Reformed Church founded the first seminary in the United States in 1784."¹¹

Tutorial Training

Tutorial training was carried out in the 4th and 5th centuries by bishops and mature pastors. But in the 5th and 6th centuries, this training was shifted to monasteries under the leadership of monks.¹² Augustine started the first monastery in North Africa as a training school for the clergy.¹³

In-service Training

Methodists prescribed certain texts for students to study on their own and afterwards pass comprehensive exams. Pastors were required to study five hours per day.¹⁴

Kinsler claims that "Down through history the vast majority of pastors and priests in all ecclesiastical traditions were trained in the field or on the job. Even

¹⁰Ibid., 194.

¹¹Wayne C. Weld, A World Directory of Theological Education by Extension (Pasadena, Cal.: William Carey Library, 1973), 8.

¹²Viertel, A Guide to Decentralized Theological Education, 16.

¹³Viertel and Womack, Early and Medieval Christianity, 88.

¹⁴Viertel, A Guide to Decentralized Theological Education, 17.

by 1926, 40 percent of the ministers in the 17 largest denominations in the United States had attended neither college nor seminary. . . ."15

He continues, "The Methodists were able to survive and grow in the frontier situation because they were able to meet in small groups for mutual care and edification under lay leaders. The limited number of Methodist pastors played a crucial role as circuit riders, visiting the lay leaders and their 'classes' over a broad area."16

Personal Study

In any given period of history, many church leaders have likely supplemented their academic theological training with self-study. However, in the early years of American history, Baptists were among those groups in which each pastor was responsible for attaining his own training. Many of the early leaders were "trained in ministry, rather than for ministry."17

Kinsler maintains that "Baptist leaders were even more successful [than Methodist leaders] because each group was independent and did not require an educated preacher at all. Spontaneous preachers, who felt called on God and were selected from their peers, led their congregations and developed their

¹⁵Ross Kinsler, The Extension Movement in Theological Education (Pasadena, Cal.: William Carey Library, 1981), 8.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

talents through the practice of ministry. Often they supported themselves, entirely or in part, through farming or some other employment. . . ."18

Extension Training

Extension training has been used to some degree in various forms for many years.¹⁹ Theological education by extension began for Southern Baptists in the early 1960's in Latin America. Weld says that "the idea has spread from Latin America to every continent in a stunning reversal of the usual flow of influence and structures to the Third World. Even the United States has begun to copy this form of theological education."²⁰ It is offered now on various academic levels but usually focuses more on the spiritual and practical aspects than on the intellectual. This type of training will be treated more fully in other chapters of this paper.

Other Alternative Models of Pastoral/Leadership Training

Other forms of training leaders and pastors have been used at various times. Kinsler says that there are occasions when "each type [of theological education] may . . . be the only or the best way to do theological education."²¹

¹⁸Kinsler, The Extension Movement in Theological Education, 10.

¹⁹Ibid., 18

²⁰Weld, The World Directory of Theological Education by Extension, 1.

²¹Kinsler, The Extension Movement and Theological Education, 35.

Correspondence Courses

Correspondence courses are usually offered to all kinds of people, pastors and workers as well as ordinary members and non-members, often in great numbers. The only contact they normally provide is the printed page, or in some cases cassettes. These courses are often, but not always, very elementary, with a high drop-out rate.²² However, extension courses on the basic level (high school level) and diploma level (college level) are offered by correspondence by our six Southern Baptist seminaries.²³

A Bible correspondence course known as Bible Way Correspondence School was begun by Southern Baptist missionaries in Zambia in October 1964 in order to extend the ministry of the missionaries throughout the country. By 1981, this school had 106,000 students enrolled. This course has extended to other countries in Africa, including Angola and Mozambique. From Angola, the course spread to Portugal on the European continent and to Brazil in Latin America. It has also spread to other countries and other continents as well.²⁴

Brief Institutes

These may vary in length, content, and methodology. Students come together at some central location but are not cut off from their families, jobs,

²²Ibid., 35-36.

²³1994-1995 Catalog of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Vol. 87 (Fort Worth, Tex.), 29.

²⁴Joy Neal, Bible Way Correspondence School Manual, rev. ed., 1982 (Nairobi, Kenya: Baptist Publications House, 1983) 3, 105, 108.

communities, and congregations. Institutes may be practical, theoretical or both. However, they usually provide or sustain no on-going study or application of what is learned, although they may reach a wide selection of church leaders.²⁵

Night Bible Schools

These are commonplace in many countries, especially in the big cities, and reach large numbers of students, many of whom are married, older, and employed, and some of whom serve as leaders of their congregations. Classes may be scheduled 2 to 5 evenings a week, for 2 or 3 hours. Much of the students' limited free time is spent getting to and attending classes, little time is left for independent study. The usual procedure is for the students to listen to the professors' lectures, take notes, and memorize them to give back on exams.²⁶

²⁵Kinsler, The Extension Movement in Theological Education, 36-37.

²⁶Ibid., 37.