CHAPTER FIVE

THE METROPOLITAN CHRISTIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE
OF ADVANTAGE COLLEGE

Introduction

The Metropolitan Christian Bible Institute\(^1\) of Advantage College is birth of a vision raised up for the specific pursuit of addressing the Christian training and theological educational essentials of faithful men and women. Both the need for trained Christian leaders and opportunities for serving Christ are greater today than ever before. MCBI is dedicated to the task of equipping the servants of Christ for the work of the ministry. As a result of being properly equipped, the servant of God will be able to equip those with whom he serves with a vision for a lost and perishing world.

Looking down through the pages of history, the study of God's Word has been an immeasurable factor in shaping the Christian community. The study of God's Word may be called the backbone of the Christian faith as it has been relevant for all ages, all times, and all dispensations. Christians have always desired increased biblical knowledge, but never before has the challenge been so great. Informed, committed church members are needed to communicate the Gospel to today's world, an increasingly sophisticated and often unreceptive world. It seeks to equip them for service in the reaping of the harvest. As born again Christians confront a changing and challenging world with good news of the gospel of our Lord Christ Jesus, it becomes increasingly clear that our un-preparedness is of a great liberty much more than we care to admit. The need for an institute such as MCBI is imperative.

The goal is to bring college level Biblical training to the local church as a tool for equipping Christians in the ministry. The atmosphere is a quest for more knowledge and greater

\(^1\) Also known as MCBI
understanding. The question we are faced with is "How can the church make a significant impact on our highly secularized society?" If the church is to continue to exist as an effective force for Christ, we must deal realistically with contemporary questions as we respond with emphasis on the teaching ministry. Teaching is indispensable because Christianity is an historical religion. MCBI’s faith is based on the saving acts of God among His people. The only way to sift through the sixty-six sacred books containing these acts is by a continuous and competent process of instruction. Whatever else MCBI do to bring about the spiritual renaissance, education must be a part of the answer. For these reasons, the MCBI was brought to fruition.

The present program at MCBI is a backward glance with profound gratitude and a forward look with keen anticipation. With a balanced emphasis between biblical and theological subjects, general education requirements, and a major area of concentration, the student's entire college education will be functional and practical. From the lay person who wants a two-year basic Christian education to the student who wants to prepare for a career in the local church or a Bible institute, MCBI is a curriculum to satisfy that need. It is MCBI’s intent to seek to encourage pastors, ministers, missionaries, deacons, deaconesses, Sunday school teachers, lay persons alike to take advantage of this opportunity to study and better equip themselves for the task ahead.

In the providence of God, it is fair to say that MCBI has been one of the most significant ministries in the 51-year history of the Edgemont Church of God. It has afforded many believers, some of whom have identified with the church for a number of years, the kind of important insights to which they had not previously been exposed. It has been extremely gratifying to hear the testimonials of people who have expressed their deep appreciation for the learning opportunities they have been given at MCBI.
LAUNCH OF THE METROPOLITAN CHRISTIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

In July of 2002, during a Church of God State Credentials Camp Meeting, in Decatur, Illinois, the licensed ministers were assembled to discuss their annual progress in both Christian training and theological education at their local Churches as well as in their communities. Listening, observing and meditating on the responses of the ministers, especially those from the East St. Louis area, the Lord led me to establish a theological and Christian training ministry, the Metropolitan Christian Bible Institute located inside the Edgemont Church of God, East St. Louis, Illinois. Not one candidate had enrolled or successfully completed a college level course in Christian training or theological education. The author believes every Christian has been gifted differently, and not all have the capacity for example, to be brilliant defender of the faith. Nevertheless, a Bible institute can be one vehicle that churches may use to inform and equip to one degree or another, those people whom God has place under their care.

The Value of a Bible Institute

The vision of the pastor at MCBI was to bring theological education and Christian training to people who are unable to attend a centralized higher education institution. But, more profoundly, while the pastor admire and endorse the efforts of traditional Bible Colleges and Seminaries, the pastor is to be deeply committed to the concept of training people within the walls of their own local church, and to the provision of excellent teaching material and study options for Christians everywhere. The pastor’s intent is to treat the entire local church environment as part of our educational activity: its worship, its witness, its fellowship, its

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2 See Sproul, Gerstner and Lindsley, 16
teaching; its ministry – are all reckoned to be part of the training process of equipping men and women to serve Christ.

- The pastor’s function is to add a theological and academic resource that few churches can viably provide, while leaving the practical training in ministry to local leadership.

- Underlying the way in which the pastor will present material, and the kinds of assessment will employ, there will be an educational philosophy based upon the following principles.

  o Christian education must stand upon a strong theological foundation (cp. the injunctions and warnings about "sound doctrine" in 1 Timothy 1:10; 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:3; 2 Peter 2:1-3; Jeremiah 6:16; 1 Corinthians 3:10-13; etc.).

  o Students must be brought to know God, not just to learn about Him, and the curriculum must be consciously structured to achieve that excellent end. The goal must be not just to impart knowledge, but rather to teach principles of sound interpretation, showing people how to do their own research, and how to apply truth to life. A final goal is the activation of men and women into effective Christian service, in any environment to which he or she may be called to minister.

**Notable Features of the Metropolitan Christian Bible Institute**

The apostle Paul, in commissioning Timothy into the ministry, reminded him of the importance of increased knowledge or continuous study of an advancing age and callous generation. So in 2 Timothy 2:15, he tells him, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a
workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Never is a statement more applicable to the needs of contemporary Christianity than this one is today. All born-again Christians are welcomed to attend MCBI under a pastor’s guidance and recommendation. Each student must be in good standings with their home church and congregation. MCBI will operated as an independent, nondenominational Bible Institute designed to meet the needs of busy men and women; individuals needing to increase their knowledge of theological and Christian training, or just laypersons inspiring to study the Word of God. The objective is to enhance Christian leaders by providing a sound balanced, Biblical and Christ-centered curriculum with an academic atmosphere that will encourage students to develop skills of inquiry, realistic spirituality and critical thinking for lifelong learning.

Another concept in the institution's approach to educating and training is that of making theological education and Christian training available and affordable to all serious minded believers, regardless of prior educational exposure or financial ability. It is the belief that those who are believers have a place in ministry somewhere and deserve the opportunity for a theological education and Christian training enabling them to affect their contribution to and in the cause of Christ. As the world advances in science and technology and more and more of our children are taught to be more environmental-friendly than God-friendly, the task of spreading the Gospel message with positive results is bound to become more difficult. It is the intention of MCBI to seek to encourage students to take advantage of this opportunity to study and better equip themselves for the task of Christian knowledge in the 21st Century.

One of the areas in which to make a difference is in the training of men and women to become productive in the supportive roles they play in the building up of their local assembly. Those who serve as leaders of the various ministries and those who aspire to serve can find the
education and training they need to help them accomplish their goal(s) at MCBI. As pastors, ministers, deacons, deaconess, Sunday school teachers, etc., we have often made the mistake of ignoring the educating and training needs of those who serve within our congregation, but the age in which we now live requires that we distance ourselves from this practice.

**Designed Curriculum Material**

Connected with course offerings is the important matter of course curriculum or teaching material. Along these lines, there are really only two options one has when it comes to the utilization of teaching material, and that is to create your own or use what is available. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. One of the advantages to using already prepared material is that it saves a great deal of time and work for the instructor. On the other hand, producing one’s own curriculum can provide greater flexibility in the classroom as well as greater familiarity with the subject. Fortunately, there is good pre-designed material available for many courses for those wishing to use it. Consequently, instructors who are pressed for time and just cannot prepare their own notes are not left without any alternatives. There is certainly nothing wrong with, at times, using pre-prepared material or with, at times, declining to do so or with giving an instructor the opportunity to exercise either option. In fact, in certain circumstances that may be the only way out. What is important, ultimately, is that the class be a meaningful class.

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3 The Evangelical Training Association has excellent teaching curriculum on a wide variety of subjects. Of course, certain classes that may be offered at an institute may have no pre-designed material, which would require instructors to formulate their own.
Metropolitan Christian Bible Institute and Advantage College integrate Evangelical Training Association Material

Never before has “Taking the College to the Church” been a more appropriate slogan. Churches can now establish church-based schools and be affiliated with Advantage College as part of the new educational delivery system. This new delivery system doesn’t mean that we have done away with the old. Changing times call for changing methods. “To live is to change; to be perfect is to have changed often” a new model of equipping the saints is emerging. Advantage College incorporates these new methodologies as part of its cutting approach to ministry training. In the past, bible colleges and seminaries have been the major instruction for ministerial training. All training was done in isolation, with little or no contact with the local church. According to research fifty percent of the graduates have left the ministry within ten years or less, while those trained in the local church are still in the ministry.

Another shift is from the academic mentality to the practical, equipping aspects of ministry. Call, character and competencies are stressed in that priority. The Holy Spirit is the primary teacher and equipper. Academics are not sacrificed or neglected. Personal character and spiritual formulation along with professional skill formation receive 80% of the emphasis of the curricula are on academics and 20% on the spiritual and hands-on skills. Accountability is to the academics rather than on an accrediting agency that make academics the top priority. Graduates are expected to be leaders. Leadership qualities, character, modeling and mentoring are the new emphasis. Non-formal, informal and formal mentoring and teaching opportunities

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4 Advantage College 2005-2006 Catalogue

5 Stewardship in the Home, John Henry Newman, April 2009

are all combined at MCBI. Therefore, new educational delivery systems are part of the Advantage College with collaboration with MCBI features. The training material used in the Metropolitan Christian Bible Institute of Advantage College is the print based independent material of Evangelical Training Association.  

**Designed Practical courses – Associate, Bachelor and Master Degrees**  

Thus far in its seven year history MCBI has added Bachelor of Practical Degree courses and Master of Practical Degree courses offered in two year blocks along with the Associate Degree courses. Those students pursuing degrees met the second Saturday each month for twenty-four months to complete the requirements for graduation. The duration was four hours of lectures, discussions, motivational speakers, student presentations, group study sessions, teaching and exhorting (see Figure 1).

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7 Also known as ETA
ASSOCIATE DEGREE COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DB 110</td>
<td>Old Testament Survey I</td>
<td>Don Cleveland Norman</td>
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<tr>
<td>DB 120</td>
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<td>DB 125</td>
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<tr>
<td>CL 130</td>
<td>You &amp; Your Bible: An Introduction to the Word</td>
<td>R. Laird Harris</td>
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<td>CL 240</td>
<td>Exploring The Basics of the Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>DD 145</td>
<td>The Triune God</td>
<td>Clarence H. Benson</td>
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<tr>
<td>DD 120</td>
<td>Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity</td>
<td>Gary C. Newton</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP 110</td>
<td>Beyond Reasonable Doubt</td>
<td>Robert J. Morgan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EV 115</td>
<td>Christian Ethnics In A Postmodern World</td>
<td>James P. Eckman</td>
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<td>DD 225</td>
<td>Spiritual Gifts</td>
<td>B. E. Underwood</td>
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<tr>
<td>CL 115</td>
<td>Understanding People: Ministry to All Stages of Life</td>
<td>Cheryl Fawcett</td>
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<td>EV 110</td>
<td>Your Ministry of Evangelism</td>
<td>Elmer I. Towns</td>
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<td>CG 110</td>
<td>Church Growth</td>
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<td>Christian Service Practicum</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSP 2</td>
<td>Understanding Music and Worship</td>
<td>Vernon Whaley</td>
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The Bachelor of Practical Theology degree program provides intensive studies in Bible and theology with an emphasis on the functional use and practical application of those truths. In general, these emphases are known as practical theology. In two years, MCBI provides minimum course work in the following areas after completing the Associate Degree courses (see Figure 2):
## BACHELOR DEGREE COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Track 1</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Track 2</th>
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<tr>
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<td>The Making of Leader</td>
<td>LEAD 300</td>
<td>The Making of a Leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAD 335</td>
<td>Understanding Destiny</td>
<td>LEAD 335</td>
<td>Understanding Destiny</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAD 340</td>
<td>Leadership Priorities</td>
<td>LEAD 340</td>
<td>Leadership Priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAD 325</td>
<td>Worship Leadership</td>
<td>LEAD 325</td>
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<td>EM 320</td>
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<td>EM 320</td>
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<tr>
<td>EM 300</td>
<td>Marriage and Family</td>
<td>EM 310</td>
<td>Prayer: Hearing God's Voice</td>
</tr>
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<td>EM 330</td>
<td>Communication Principles</td>
<td>EM 315</td>
<td>Spiritual Warfare &amp; Intercession</td>
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<td>EM 440</td>
<td>Caring Ministry in the Church</td>
<td>EM 200</td>
<td>Principles of Bible Study</td>
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<td>EM 455</td>
<td>Church Administration</td>
<td>TH 340</td>
<td>Christians Beliefs I</td>
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<td>TH 330</td>
<td>Spiritual Life, Gifts and Fruit</td>
<td>TH 345</td>
<td>Christians Beliefs II</td>
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<td>TH 335</td>
<td>Power Ministry of the Holy Spirit</td>
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<td>TH 440</td>
<td>Contemporary Theological Issues</td>
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<td>CGE 320</td>
<td>Outreach Ministries</td>
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</table>
The Master in Practical Degree in Theology is a degree intended to assist the student with the praxis of ministry in the particular place where they feel called. It is configured to establish the foundations of ministry while allowing further study in the particular field of interest to the student. This program is a two year block. The degree is to be completed after completing both the Associate Degree and Bachelor Degree curriculums (see Figure 3).
MASTER IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

DEGREE DESCRIPTION: Master in Practical Theology is a degree intended to assist the student with the praxis of ministry in the particular place where they feel called. It is configured to establish the foundations of ministry while allowing further study in the particular field of interest to the student.

REQUIREMENTS: Each student is required to take five core classes, two elective classes and conclude requirements with an independent study.

- **Five Core Classes** 20 Units
- **Two Elective Classes** 8 Units
- **Independent Study** 8 Units
- TOTAL REQUIRED 36 Units

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**EM 475 Seminar in Ministry – 4 units**
Various ministry topics are covered in these classes with invited speakers and leaders serving as guest teachers. You will serve as a facilitator teaching at least 2 one-hour lesson to the Associate Degree students and/or Bachelor Degree students.

Textbook: *Various*

**LEAD 300 The Making of a Leader – 4 units**
This course focuses on the principles and processes that God uses to develop a leader.

Textbook: *Becoming a Leader Book*
*Becoming a Leader Workbook*

**LEAD 335 Understanding Destiny – 4 units**
The purposes and destiny of God for leaders are examined as God works within us.

Textbook: *Understanding Your Potential Workbook*
LEAD 340  Leadership Priorities – 4 units
The leader’s scheduling, family responsibilities, personal disciplines, and other responsibilities are all examined so leaders are effective and finish well.

Textbook:  *The Most Important Person on Earth Is the Holy Spirit*

CHURCH LEARNING LABS

The Metropolitan Christian Bible Institute is committed to real life ministry so all practical courses have assignments related to the ministry of a local church supporting a pastoral ministry. All graduate students are to be exposed to the widest possible life-learning ministry situation as to be better equipped for ministry.

CL 510  Leadership Dynamics – 4 units
According to George Barna, the greatest need of the contemporary church is leadership. Most pastors qualify as good teachers and managers, but there is a real need for leadership. This course will assist the student in assessing their own leadership including its strengths and weaknesses. It will assist one in discovering the meaning of servant leadership and spiritual leadership.

Textbook:  *The Principles and Power of Vision – Keys to Achieving Personal and Corporate Destiny*

ELECTIVES

Choose two classes from the following list.

DH 525  Spiritual Awakenings (Revival & Renewal) – 4 units
Through exploring how God sent revival and renewal to His people and Biblical times and throughout the centuries, students will begin to get a sense of recognizing true revival process as it begins and continues occur. They will look at some of the things which factored into the pictured when God send times of refreshing. Through this exploration, the student will be challenged to formulate a personal theology of revival and renewal.

Textbook:  *Fresh Encounter: Experience God in Revival and Spiritual Awakening*

DG 555  Biblical Study Methods – 4 units
It is essential for the Christian student, teacher and pastor to know how to use appropriate Biblical study methods in the preparation of sermons or teaching aids. This class looks at twelve different methodological approaches and gives the
student understanding how to link an appropriate study strategy with the various
tasks of ministry.

DT 535  Women in Ministry – 4 units
This course presents the four primary stances the church has taken toward women in ministry. It will scrutinize each by giving a broad overview of the subject of women in ministry in scripture and then looking at many of the contributions women have made through the centuries in the life of the church. Finally, the student will be required to communicate his/her theology regarding women in ministry.


CL 520  Personality Integration – 4 units
This course seeks to view core issues that normally surface in basic counseling situations. The goal is to discover and implement different ways of addressing issues and help bring the person to a place of healing and wholeness. Overcoming guilt, low-self-esteem and perfectionism are three of the critical subjects dealt within this course.

CL 530  Counseling as Healing – 4 units
Healing is the ultimate goal in any counseling relationship. Healing of memories, incorrect thought patterns, obsessive behavior, spiritual bottleneck and demonic strongholds are a few of the many areas addressed in this course.

MINISTRY PROJECT AND INDEPENDENT STUDY REQUIRED

TH 599  Independent Study – 8 units
The final course of the Masters Study requires the student to identify one subject (pertinent to his/her field of expertise) and write a thesis paper covering all aspects of the chosen subject. This in depth study should include practical information – to address problems, build and initiate a ministry in the particular field regarding his/her study which is necessary in order to expand in his/her arena. Documentation is required. The written information should be formulated from a biblical and theological perspective reflecting all information acquired during preparation study. A minimum of fifteen pages is required and shall be written in standard academic style.
WHY METROPOLITAN CHRISTIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE HAS CHOSEN
EVANGELICAL TRAINING ASSOCIATION AND ADVANTAGE COLLEGE

History of Evangelical Training Association

The Evangelical Training Association was founded in 1930. J. W. Cook presented his master’s thesis, “The Bible Institute Movement,” to the faculty of Northwestern Evangelical Seminary of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Although Bible institutes had been in existence almost 50 years in America and had trained hundreds of ministers and missionaries, Cook was apparently the first to do a formal study of the history, scope and purpose of the Bible institute. Cook’s work was later joined by that of Lenice F. Reed, who wrote her master’s thesis at Wheaton College in 1947 on the same subject. Both of these works helped lay a solid foundation of research for later scholars to build upon.

Since 1947, a number of dissertations and books have been written on the history of the Bible institute movement, most of them, like the works of Cook and Reed, are more descriptive than critical. An exception to this is Virginia Brereton’s _Training God’s Army: The American Bible School 1880-1940_. This work, an adaptation of Brereton’s doctoral thesis at Columbia University, thoroughly documents the history and rationale of the Bible institute movement and is clearly the standard in this uncrowded field. What sets this volume apart is that Brereton writes as a historian outside the evangelical subculture within which the Bible institute movement originated.

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8 Also known as ETA

As someone who has grown up within evangelicalism my vantage point is somewhat different from Brereton’s. However, my intention is to be interpretive in approach rather than merely descriptive or critical. I am concerned about why the Bible institute movement began, why it flourished, and why over the course of many years it evolved into institutions somewhat different than their founders envisioned. Finally, I will seek to answer the question of what an understanding of the history of the Bible institute movement means for the evangelical church today. In other words, what can be learned from the beginnings of the Bible institute movement which can help Christian educators today as they plan the educational forms of the future?

The Foundations of the Bible Institute Movement, 1882-1915

The late 1800′s were times of rapid change throughout the world. The twin developments of industrialization and urbanization brought unparalleled opportunities as well as difficulties. In the midst of societal upheaval in Europe and in the United States, there were signs of genuine spiritual renewal on both sides of the Atlantic. The most popular leader of this “evangelical” movement within the protestant church was an untrained lay preacher named Dwight Lyman Moody. Although not a product of any formal theological education, Moody was a man of vision and a man of the people. His down-to-earth style of preaching drew crowds by the thousands in America as well as Great Britain.

While conducting evangelistic meetings in England in 1873 and again in 1882, D. L. Moody came into contact with the ministry of Dr. H. Grattan Guinness who had founded the East London Institute for Home and Foreign Missions in 1872.¹⁰ This “institute,” also known as the

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Harley House Bible Training Institute, challenged Moody’s thinking about his own involvement in training laymen and laywomen for more effective ministry.

While D. L. Moody dreamed of starting a school of some kind in his adopted home town of Chicago, A. B. Simpson (known today as the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination) was beginning training classes, in Bible and basic ministry skills, for young men and women in New York City. Simpson rented space on the stage of a New York theatre and began his classes in 1882. One year later, Simpson formally organized his school as The Missionary Training College for Home and Foreign Missionaries and Evangelists. The school later moved to Nyack, New York and eventually changed its name to simply Nyack College.

Although he adopted the name “college” for his school, what Simpson had in mind was definitely not a traditional college education by the standards of the late 1800’s. In a magazine article published in July 1883, Simpson detailed his educational vision for the school:

It will not aim to give a scholastic education, but a thorough Scriptural training, and a specific and most careful preparation for practical work. It will receive students of both sexes, and at the close of the terms of study will give a Diploma and Certificate to all graduates….The aim of the Institute will be to qualify consecrated men and women who have not received, and do not wish to receive, a regular scholastic education….The students will be afforded the utmost opportunity for testing and putting into practice the principles they study, by being employed in actual Mission work as leaders of meetings, visitors, etc., in the wide field afforded by a great city.

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11 Ibid, 12.

Simpson’s vision, to be joined by Moody and others, was primarily to train lay people for ministry within the local church at home and abroad.

S. A. Witmer spoke of these beginnings while writing in 1964:

The first Bible schools in America were purposely begun as nonconventional institutions. They came into being in response to Christian compassion for human need and for the practical purpose of implementing the Great Commission. . . . Conventional seminaries fell far short of preparing enough workers for the vast frontiers of human need at home and abroad. Further, the task was far too great to be undertaken by the professional clergy alone. There was an urgent need for many trained laymen.13

This “urgent need” to train laymen and laywomen was at the heartbeat of Moody’s vision to start a school in Chicago. The story is told that one day, early in 1886, someone saw Moody standing, with hat in hand, in the middle of a vacant lot behind the Chicago Avenue Church. When he was asked what he was doing he said, “I am praying that God will give me this land to start a training school”14. A few days later, Moody preached what is now known as the “gap man” sermon when he said:

I believe we have got to have “gap men,”—men who are trained to fill the gap between the common people and the ministers. We are to raise up men and women who will be willing to lay their lives alongside the laboring.15

Moody’s vision was clearly focused on the training of lay people, not professional clergy.

After raising $250,000 in less than a year (a phenomenal achievement), Moody started his school. Dr. James M. Grey, who served as president of Moody Bible Institute from 1904 to 1934 wrote:

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14 Ibid, 12,

The purpose of Mr. Moody was not to establish a school for ministers or pastors. He thought only of lay workers. He had in mind men and women of advanced years who had been denied schooling opportunities in their youth, but who with a knowledge of the Bible, gospel music, and personal work for souls, might be equipped for better service in their churches, and in the slums and destitute places of our great cities.¹⁶

It is clear that the heartbeat of the two primary founders of the Bible institute in North America, Simpson and Moody, was to train laymen and laywomen. There was no conscious attempt to supplant the work of seminaries in the beginning, in fact, many of the leaders of the movement, as well as institute faculty members, were seminary trained. What was unique about the Bible institute was its focus—thorough knowledge of the English Bible coupled with practical experience in hands-on ministry. Lenice Reed wrote:

When the seminaries of the nineteenth century could not supply missionaries for difficult foreign fields, the Bible Institutes were raised up, and during the six decades of their existence they have trained thousands of faithful laborers whose stations now dot the mission fields all over the world. When the churches needed personal workers, Sunday school teachers, and helpers for many humble places in the homeland, the Bible Institutes filled the need and trained the lay Christians for these positions. Even when the Institute faculties were often poorly qualified and when equipment was scant, yet their efforts were blessed and the results more than justified the attempts.¹⁷

Simpson and Moody’s efforts were the beginnings of an avalanche of Bible institutes which were started from 1886 to 1915. In this 30-year period, no less than 32 institutes were formally organized. These schools spanned the geographical as well as theological spectrum. Many of these schools are still in existence today, although now as colleges or seminaries. Well-known modern institutions of higher learning such as Biola University, Northwestern College (MN), Gordon College, Toccoa Falls Bible College, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

¹⁶ Ibid, 1.

were all begun as Bible institutes during this time period. All of these institutions emphasized the need of training lay people for Christian service, although this focus decreased for many of the Bible institutes as the years went on.

An additional reason for the impetus of school founding in the late 1800's and early 1900's was the feeling among many evangelicals that the established seminaries were heading toward spiritual bankruptcy. In addition to what they saw as theological weaknesses was the fact that they saw the existing seminaries as failing horribly at providing men and women with basic ministry skills. In spite of these negative feelings toward the established theological institutions, the leaders of the Bible institute movement did not see the movement as competing with the seminaries. Rather, they saw their work as complementing the seminaries. Virginia Brereton wrote:

With few exceptions, fundamentalists did not as a matter of preference substitute Bible schools for colleges and seminaries. They well knew where academic respectability resided. Had they been able to establish an entire system of regular colleges and seminaries and get them accredited without abandoning their educational and religious requirements, they might well have done so. (Indeed, they did so later.) In general, however, they did not possess the financial resources for an effort on this scale early in the century. The Bible school proved to be a satisfactory educational vehicle for those groups with limited budgets and an urgent desire to instruct the faithful in as brief a time as possible.

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Continued Growth of the Bible Institute Movement, 1916-1929

Between 1916 and 1929, at least 28 Bible institutes were established in the United States. As in the period between 1886 and 1915, these new institutions were not limited to a particular denominational group or geographical area. Some of the older schools, such as Moody Bible Institute and The Missionary Training Institute, experienced solid growth and expansion. While the basic pattern of education was similar from school to school, there was no accreditation or standardization of any of the programs.

By 1930, the Bible institutes, as a group, were characterized by these traits:

1) Wholeheartedly evangelical in basic theology.  
2) The central part of the curriculum was the study of the English Bible.  
3) There was an emphasis on practical Christian service.  
4) There was a strong emphasis on world missions.  
5) There began to be a shift away from training only lay people to training men and women for “full-time Christian service” as pastors or missionaries.

While new schools were being started, some of the more established schools began moving into new ministries such as publishing and the new medium of radio broadcasting. Moody Bible Institute emerged as the leader in both publishing (books and magazines) and media (first in radio and later films). The Bible institute, a concept which started as a dream among a few godly visionaries, was beginning to see its graduates serving local churches all over the world. Bible institutes and their graduates were on the move!

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20 Ibid, 36.  
Standardization of the Bible Institute Movement, 1930-1947

Between 1930 and 1947, 48 new Bible institutes were started. By 1947, well over 100 Bible institutes/Bible colleges were in existence in the United States. Two organizations, which started on opposite ends of this time period, played important roles in the continued development of the Bible institute movement. Evangelical Teacher Training Association (ETTA, today ETA, Evangelical Training Association), founded in 1930 and the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC), founded in 1947, were the two key bodies which served to standardize the Bible institute movement.

Dr. Clarence Benson, head of the Christian education department at Moody Bible Institute, was concerned about the lack of standard courses for the training of lay Bible teachers in evangelical churches and schools. Benson, representing Moody Bible Institute, met with officials from four other schools (Biola, Northwestern, Philadelphia College of Bible and Toronto Bible Institute) to discuss their mutual concerns. ETTA was born as a result of that meeting and was designed to:

…set up standards for the training of Sunday school teachers with a view to giving them preparation comparable to that of public school teachers. The Association was the first and, at the time, the only agency affording Bible institutes means for obtaining some kind of uniformity among themselves. Its work and objectives met with the approval of most institutes as well as of some colleges and some seminaries.

While ETTA was not designed to be an accrediting body, it did set some general educational standards for its member schools. The primary focus of ETTA was the programs of

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Christian education in Bible institutes, Bible colleges, Christian liberal arts colleges and seminaries.

From 1930 to 1947, ETTA’s membership grew from the founding 5 schools to 50. During this same time, ETTA began developing curriculum materials to be utilized in local churches for the purpose of training teachers for ministry in the local church. As to the influence of ETTA, Lenice Reed noted:

> With the founding and rapid success of this new standardizing agency, the Bible Institute movement took a new lease on life. In the fifteen-year period between 1931 and 1946, nearly three times as many new institutes were started as in the previous forty-five years of the movement’s history.²⁴

By 1947, the Bible institute movement had expanded to over 100 schools of various kinds (Reed 1947, 138-146). There was the sense among the leadership of these schools that the time had come for an organization which would serve to standardize the academic programs of member schools. For those schools which were making the transition from being an institute, with an emphasis on training lay people, to a college, with an emphasis on training career pastors and missionaries, such an organization was deemed a necessity. The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges began in 1947 and set immediately to work on a process of evaluation and accreditation to service member schools.

**Institutionalization and Separation in the Bible Institute Movement, 1948-1969**

The founding of the American Association of Bible Colleges marked a key moment in the history of the Bible institute movement. What had begun as a reaction against the established theological training schools and with the avowed purpose of equipping lay people for ministry

was slowly but surely parting company with its roots. The Bible institutes who had become degree-granting colleges began to see their mission more as professional training schools to prepare men and women for full-time Christian service. Bible institutes who sought to maintain the distinctive of the early days of the movement were on the outside looking in as the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges sought to lead the way to academic respectability at the undergraduate level.

This shift in the thinking of the leadership of the leading schools which began as Bible institutes is seen in this quote from William Culbertson, who was at the time president of Moody Bible Institute:

The Bible institute has a genius all its own. It is an undergraduate professional school (emphasis mine). It trains for Christian service with a large emphasis on the practical so far as that training is concerned. By its very nature it attracts students who love the Lord, who want to serve Him and who have a seriousness of purpose. We do not mean that other types of Christian schools do not attract such students, only that by and large the very nature of the course and of the environment tends to bring students thus qualified.  

Culbertson’s quote stands in contrast to what Dr. David R. Breed, a professor at Western Theological Seminary, wrote in an article which was published in July, 1927, in *The Biblical Review Quarterly*:

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The institute developed to meet a demand for Christian training for many who could not have a college education but were worthy candidates for Christian service. It would be a wonderful thing if the practical training for Christian work secured in the institute could be added to the work of the seminaries. In this feature the institute excels. In the vast majority of cases the institutes have remained orthodox in their teachings, which cannot be said of all the seminaries. I think this one thing more than anything else has drawn men away from the seminary to the institute.26

Breed’s statement shows that in 42 years (1927 to 1969) the emphasis of the Bible institute movement turned from training those who “could not have a college education” into a full-fledged program of undergraduate studies leading to a degree. This is not meant to imply that the movement toward accreditation by the Bible institutes-turned-colleges was wrong but simply that it clearly represented a change from its focus on non-degree training for lay adults.

What happened to the traditional Bible institute from 1947 to 1969? Even as the AABC was experiencing growth and receiving long sought for academic recognition, ETTA continued to work with Bible colleges, Christian liberal arts colleges, seminaries and traditional Bible institutes. From 1947 to 1969, the ETTA membership roll grew from 50 schools to over 100, with much of the growth coming in the Bible institute area.

In some cases, denominations began extensive programs of establishing Bible institutes, based on the traditional lay-training model, in local churches around the country. For example, the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, had established 130 such institutes in their denomination

alone by 1965 (Harrison 1978, 6). The history of many of these institutes is difficult to trace because these schools are often not officially affiliated with any group outside of their own denomination. The Southern Baptist Convention also encouraged the development of Bible institutes as it was growing to become the largest protestant denomination in America.

**Continuity, Change and Crisis in the Bible Institute Movement, 1970-1995**

In the last twenty-five years the Bible institute movement has been greatly affected by at least five factors, three negative and two positive. First, the 70’s and 80’s were a time of great economic uncertainty. Thus, schools on the brink of economic disaster were pushed over by a non-discriminating economy. Still others merged with schools in their local area.

Second, the 80’s saw a drop in the number of college-age youth in America as the baby-boom became the baby-bust. With fewer college-age students to go around, student recruitment for evangelical schools of higher education became more intense and thus Bible institutes were often the ones left with a shrinking student body.

The third factor which effected the Bible institute movement was the proliferation of so-called “diploma mills.” This phenomenon, well-documented by author-researcher Steve Levicoff in his book *Name and Frame It* (Institute on Religion and Law), is where an institution grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in return for some type of “academic” work and a sizeable amount of money. These schools are not accredited by a recognized academic body and operate mainly through the mail. This type of school is strongly criticized by those who are offering legitimate work in a correspondence or extension format. The criticisms against the “diploma
“Christian diploma mills” are not usually focused at the *mode* of education employed, but rather that degrees granted by such schools are simply *not equivalent* to those granted by accredited schools.

Unfortunately, these relatively small numbers of schools (who serve mainly for profit to trap the unaware who seek a short-cut to academic respectability) make it more difficult for the Christian schools who offer legitimate programs through extension studies.

In part to counteract the damage done by “Christian diploma mills,” Moody Bible Institute led the way in the establishment of ACCESS (Association of Christian Continuing Education Schools and Seminaries) in 1971. While not an accrediting body, ACCESS does require its institutional members to adhere to a strict code of ethics. Although diploma mills are still operating, ACCESS has served to raise the standards in distance education for the evangelical world.

Fourth and on a positive note, the explosion of the charismatic movement within the evangelical church in the 70′s and 80′s prompted the establishment of a multitude of Bible institutes across the country. In many of these schools, the spirit of the original Bible institute movement was seen as they were non-traditional, designed primarily for lay people, and motivated by a strong zeal to change the world for Christ.

Fifth, there has been in the past twenty-five years an overall resurgence of interest in the traditional Bible institute movement. Currently, ETA has a total of 59 active member schools in its Adult Education Division; 20 of which are outside the United States. All of these schools are non-degree granting institutions who primarily serve lay adults who are training for ministry within the local church. This has been especially true among the black evangelical church in
America. For example, in 1996, ETA reported that almost 25% of its distribution of materials was to predominantly black churches and Bible institutes.

In addition, ETA has developed a “Bible Institute Nurture” program which serves to encourage the establishment of Bible institutes in local churches and within groups of churches across the United States. In the past year, over 35 new Bible institutes have been started. This rebirth of the original purposes of the Bible institute was foreseen by Lenice Reed in 1947 when she wrote:

No changes in the Bible Institutes, such as the development into Bible colleges, will ever cause the disappearance or elimination of the type of school which has served as a community center. Nothing else can take its place with American Christians. With its evening classes, its conferences, its lending library, and its many activities, it has ministered to the general welfare of humble people. There will always be a need for this sort of Institute which serves community interests, even though many of the larger schools may re-organize into colleges.  

**MCBI Chooses Evangelical Training Association**

The history of the Bible institute movement in America is an excellent example of the evangelical church reaching out in an innovative way to meet the educational needs of its times. It is clear that in the beginning of the Bible institute movement, the educational focus was on the training and equipping of lay people. These trained lay people would in turn assist pastors and missionaries both at home and abroad. As the movement grew and schools became more organized and institutionalized, there was a strong desire by many schools to seek formal academic recognition. Schools which often began as training centers for laymen and laywomen

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for service alongside “full-time” Christian workers, eventually turned into four-year colleges designed to train professional ministers and missionaries.

The founding of the ETTA served to give needed continuity to the fledgling Bible institute movement but with the organization of the AABC, academic respectability and acceptance became a high agenda item and real possibility for many such schools. Although some of the Bible institutes clung to their original vision and mission of training lay people for service in the local church, for others this became a low priority item. At the same time Bible institutes were becoming Bible colleges; new institutes sprang up in their place. These new institutions had no plans to become colleges but rather to fulfill the original purpose of the Bible institute concept.

As one looks at the Bible institute movement in America since 1882, it is not hard to see the parallels between that time and the present. Both were times of economic upheaval and dramatic societal change. Both were times when increasingly the cost of a Christian college or seminary education was out of the reach of the average “person in the pew” who wanted to receive more training in Bible and ministry skills. Both were times when evangelicals found themselves as part of a world, and even a Church, that did not appreciate its zeal for seeking to build the kingdom of God through aggressive evangelistic and missionary efforts. Both were times when biblical illiteracy was on the rise and the need for renewal in the Christian education ministries of the church was great. God choose to use the Bible institute movement which started in the 1880’s in a mighty way to prepare several generations of Christian workers for the church in America and around the world. What is God planning to do with and through the Bible institute movement of the 1990’s?
The Church today can profit greatly from the continued health of its established Bible institutes and will see an increase in those spiritual dividends through the birthing of even more such institutes-institutes which are begun in the spirit of those who started the movement over a hundred years ago. In reflecting on his institute ministry, Dr. A. B. Simpson wrote:

This work originated in the felt need for a simple, spiritual, and scriptural method of training for Christian work the large class of persons who desire to become prepared for thorough and efficient service for the Master, without a long, elaborate college course. It aims…to lead its students to simple and deeply spiritual experiences of Christ, and to recognize the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Ghost as the supreme and all-essential qualification and enduement for all Christian ministry; and to give them a thorough instruction in the Word of God, and a practical and experimental training in the various forms of work.28

Evangelical Training Association’s Developing a Dynamic Bible Institute

The author uses the ETA published Developing a Dynamic Bible Institute,29 designed to provide a step-by-step thorough organizational process for developing a Bible Institute:

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1. Letter From the President of ETA
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4. Six Reasons to Start a Bible Institute?
5. Five Things Which Should Be In Place Before You Decide to Start a Bible Institute
6. 12 Foundational Steps to Starting a Bible Institute
7. What Can You DO Now to Start?

Appendices

1. A Brief History of the Bible Institute in America
2. Constitution and Bylaws of Anywhere Bible Institute
3. Bible Institute Survey


4. Sample Bible Institute Mission Statements
5. Sample Bible Institute Registration Form and Transcript
6. ETA Course Descriptions
7. Sample Budgets for a Bible Institute/Budget Worksheets
8. Sample Three-year Curriculum Plan for a bible Institute/Sample Schedule
9. 25 ways to Promote Your Bible Institute
10. Student Evaluation Form
11. Application for the Bible Institute Nurture Program
12. Sample Planning Calendar Checklist for Starting a Bible Institute
13. How to Arrange for an on-site Visit by a Representative of ETA
14. What is Accreditation
15. Equipped to Serve Brochure
16. ETA Teacher Application

The pastor of Edgemont Church of God holds membership with ETA, as a graduate student of Trinity Theological Seminary. This qualifies the pastor the ETA Teaching Diploma with lifetime approval to teach ETA curriculum.

**MCBI Chooses Advantage College**

Advantage College moves from a humble beginning in 1976 as Pacific Coast Bible College, to a renewed vision for the 21st century. Changing times call for changing methods. A new model of “equipping the saints” is emerging. Advantage College incorporates these new methodologies as part of its cutting edge approach to ministry training. Advantage College has made a paradigm with congregations in the “equipping of the saint for the work of the ministry.” Healthy apostolic Churches are rapidly becoming the primary source of ministers, playing an important role in the equipping process. The life and ministry of the church is a “laboratory” where the principles and practices of ministry are hones. Advantage College will partner with churches in rising up and training leaders for this unique time in history. This new delivery
system doesn’t mean that Advantage College has done away with the old however Advantage continues to serve the International Pentecostal Holiness Church in the west as well as sister denominations and fellowships in the body of Christ.

The Advantage College operates as a non-profit organization and is recognized by the Council of Private Post-Secondary and Vocational Education in California. It is a member of the Apostolic Council of Educational Accountability, an organization for church based schools and other institutions. While the Advantage College recognizes the validity of traditional standards of various accrediting associations, the uniqueness for the educational program of Advantage College fits nest outside the design of traditional schools. Most accrediting associations and schools stress academics over practical equipping for ministry however Advantage College stresses the spiritual, the practical and the professional aspects of “equipping” along with a sound biblical academic emphasis.

**Extension Schools of Ministry**

To fulfill its stated purpose, mission and objectives Advantage College, partners with various local churches, conferences and groups of churches in a city or area to rise up and equip leaders. Local church or conference based schools of ministry are dynamically fulfilling the mandate to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry.” Advantage College seeks to serve and assist these churches. It has made available its faculty, curriculum and resources to these Extension Schools so their students can continue and complete their educational goal. Below are differences between traditional education and non-traditional education (see Figure 4)

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30 Also known as IPHC
### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADITIONAL EDUCATION</th>
<th>NON-TRADITIONAL EDUCATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Awards degrees on the basis of time served and credit earned.</td>
<td>1. Awards degrees on the basis of competencies and performance skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bases degree requirements on the medieval formula of some generalized education and some specialized education.</td>
<td>2. Bases degree requirements on an agreement between the student and the faculty, aimed at helping the student achieve his or her career, personal, or professional goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Awards the degree when the student meets certain numerical requirements.</td>
<td>3. Awards the degree when the student’s actual work and learning reach agreed-upon levels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Considers the years from age 18 to 22 as the period when a first degree should be earned.</td>
<td>4. Assumes learning desirable at any age, and those degrees should be available to people of all ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Considers the classroom as the primary source of information and the campus as the center of learning.</td>
<td>5. Sees any part of the world as appropriate for some learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Believes in printed text materials as the principal learning resource.</td>
<td>6. Believes the range of learning resources is limitless, from the daily newspaper to personal interviews; from videocassettes to microcomputers to world travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Faculty must have appropriate credential and degrees.</td>
<td>7. Faculty are judged on competency and personal qualities, in addition to credentials and degrees (take note: a non-traditional faculty must still be academically qualified).</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Credits and degrees are based primarily on mastery of course content.</td>
<td>8. Credits and degrees also take into consideration learning how to learn and the integration of diverse fields of knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Cultivates dependence on authority through prescribed curricula, required campus residence, and required classes.</td>
<td>9. Cultivates self-direction and independence through planned independent study, both on and off campus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Curricula are generally oriented toward traditional disciplines and well-established professions.</td>
<td>10. Curricula reflect the student’s individual needs and goals and are likely to be problem-oriented, issue-oriented, and world-oriented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Aims at producing “finished products” - students who are done with their education and ready for the job market.</td>
<td>11. Aims at producing lifelong learners, capable of responding all through their lives to their own evolving needs and those of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. To adapt the old Chinese saying, gives you a fish and feeds you for a day.</td>
<td>12. Teaches you how to fish, and feeds you for life.</td>
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that people are excited about and that is having an impact. One can be sure that if people are growing in their faith and they are being equipped for Christian service in a significant way, they naturally will be inclined to spread the word.

There is one additional note on advertising that needs to be addressed. No matter how good and creative advertising is, if it is not continually updated it will inevitably grow stale and become useless. For this reason in order to maintain its freshness it must be continually revised.