

# The Teacher and Bible School

## Going Local

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”  
(Acts 5:42).

### Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Express the role of both the central Bible college and the local training centers.
2. Identify the significance of local training centers using the Old Testament as your point of reference.
3. Explain the cycle of continuous teaching highlighted in the Great Commission.
4. Propose, using Scripture, the importance of teaching and/or training in the New Testament Church.
5. Tell where theological education should begin and end in a Christian's life.
6. Describe the curriculum that should be involved in systematic training at the local level.
7. Recall the basic components of a good adult education program.
8. List factors that make a local training program workable.
9. Relate five locations or scenarios where local training programs can be conducted or incorporated.
10. Name five benefits of a local training program.
11. Name five pitfalls or potential problems that may be encountered in a local training program.
12. State the principles one can learn from II Timothy 2:2.

### Introduction

Over 350 years ago, a boat-load of travelers left Europe and crossed the treacherous Atlantic Ocean. They landed on the northeast coast of America, the new world. They were great visionaries and very courageous people. In the first year that they were there, they established a place for a town. The next year they elected a town government. In the third year the town government planned to build a road five miles westward, into the wilderness. It was exciting. It was visionary. But in the fourth year, the people from the town took their town government to court because they said it was a waste of money to build a road five miles westward into the wilderness.

How sad that people who had the vision to go 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean and endure great hardships to establish a settlement, just a few years later, did not have the vision to go five miles westward out of town. So many people have sacrificed for the kingdom of God. We have made great strides and advancements in Bible school education globally through the Global Association of Theological Studies and other training efforts. But, there is a danger. The danger is for us to have enough vision to come this far, but not enough vision to continue the journey forward. We cannot allow the pioneer spirit in us to say, “We have done enough, we have gone far enough, we have carried our burden in the heat of the day, and this is as far as we go.” We cannot stop now! We are on a journey of taking the word to the world and pursuing ministerial excellence along the way.

C. Peter Wagner in his book, *Church Quake* (pages 234-239) summarizes a crucial trend in training. There is a shift that has taken place, moving theological education from the central location to the local setting. Any local church could potentially have a Bible training center. However, we have often disconnected training from the local church and delegated the task to colleges. We need adult level systematic training programs operating locally in addition to any central Bible school efforts. It is not an either/or scenario, but both. The central college trains men and women for fulltime ministry. The local training center trains men and women for ministry within the local church; and beyond. I stress, once again, that both are essential and welcomed. The good news is that both are provided for with the (GATS) Global Association of Theological Studies curriculum concepts and delivery systems. Local training centers work well when they are an extension or satellite of the central college. They are supervised by the oversight school, teachers are qualified from there, and the central school serves as a resource center.

Note: Referencing local training programs in this lesson implies taking the school to the students and include—but are not limited to—the local church, a group of churches in close proximity, a decentralized or extension Bible school in a region, province, or state within a country. The goal is for training and mobilizing membership. A central Bible college, as used in this lesson, refers to the centralized or national training program. Some refer to this as the resident school or formal theological education with many such programs being fulltime in nature.

If educational programs were likened to medical treatment facilities: major hospitals would be the central Bible college and the clinics would be the extension programs or local training centers. First aid kits would be short courses targeted to a specific audience. All are needed for proper treatment dependent on the size and scope of the need.

With the world population exploding and the supply of trained pastors dwindling in sight of the unmet demand, something must be done to train more disciples in a shorter time period. In congregations around the world we have an abundant labor force that can be mobilized to meet the discipling needs of a ripened harvest. I still maintain that full-time training for pastors, workers and national church leadership are necessary for a solid church in any country but also know that the body of Christ has the potential of “turning the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

From the perspective of those involved in formal education in a central setting we need to guard against being near-sighted; having only a vision for what is right before us. There is also a need to be far-sighted;

always expanding our horizons, and being willing to multiply our expertise, through extending our teaching and talents. To effectively extend we make something available that is not normally within reach of another. Extension schools place theological education within easier grasp of students locally. It extends the arm of training without extracting people from their normal, productive lives. It takes training to the whole body.

### *The Old Testament: Going Local*

In the Old Testament, God's Word and commandments were to be taught within the home. The parent(s) were the teachers and also served as role models (Deuteronomy 6:1, 4-9). A brisk read through the beginning verses of this chapter shows that theological education permeated a multi-faceted and timely approach throughout a child's life. This does not imply that there were no specialized schools of theological learning in the Old Testament. Our emphasis in this lesson is on local training.

"And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah. Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes...to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites...and...priests. And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people" (II Chronicles 17:6-9).

"They took copies of the Book of the Law of the Lord and traveled around through all the towns of Judah, teaching the people. Then the fear of the Lord fell over all the surrounding kingdoms so that none of them wanted to declare war on Jehoshaphat" (II Chronicles 17:9-10, NLT).

Jehoshaphat represented a paradigm shift in the way theological education was done in the kingdom of Judah. He was a good king. He refused idol worship and was bent on destroying it. He sought God and walked in His ways and commandments. It was not enough for him to follow God himself. He looked around and found that his people were ignorant of God's Word. They did not even realize that they were doing evil. Jehoshaphat devised an excellent plan of localized education. He destroyed lies and set his heart at spreading truth. He sent princes, priests, and Levites to make circuit visits of towns with their itinerant ministry. The Book of Law was their textbook. They provided religious instruction to the people. They explained how they could do better, gave them reasons for the religious activities and festivals they practiced, and taught them the difference between good and evil; right and wrong. Everyone in the nation became thoroughly versed and instructed in the ways of God and their duties as followers. They were obedient.

As a result, the kingdom had peace and prosperity. They were so united, and followed such well-founded principles, that no enemy dared to fight against them. The nations around them realized that they had no hope in defeating such people. The fear of God fell on everyone! That happened in the Old Testament. It can happen again.

God's desire has always been that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14, NKJV).

According to Hosea 4:6, God's people were destroyed or ruined because of their lack of knowledge. They didn't know what was right or true. How sad, dangerous and eternally detrimental.

## *The Book of Acts: Going Local*

A brief browse through Acts would easily establish that teaching and training was happening in the New Testament churches. It was understood to be a vital part of the mission. It was not enough to grow in numbers, but there also had to be growth in depth.

The Book of Acts model of education placed great emphasis on teaching throughout the church. In Acts 2:42-47, Luke laid out the apostolic pattern for local church life. Notice what tops the list. Early believers were devoted, committed, and focused on learning the apostle's doctrine. Learning was not relegated to a select few undergoing extensive training in a central location. It was the privilege and responsibility of every member in the body of Christ. "And they kept their attention fixed on the Apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42, BBE). They were to understand it and remain faithful to it without wavering. It was a deposit entrusted to them (2 Timothy 2:2). Teaching multiplied and perpetuated church growth. They steadfastly received the Apostle's teachings and actively spread it like wildfire to others.

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).

"And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all **nor teach in the name of Jesus**" (Acts 4:18).

"Saying, Did not we straitly command you that **ye should not teach** in this name? and, behold, **ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine**, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:28-29). Obviously, they viewed teaching as a divine imperative.

When Paul ministered in a new city, his goal was to establish a training center and a church (Acts 11, 13, 19). God has given a mandate to leaders to train and educate God's people from birth to death (Ephesians 4:11-15). That learning process is systematic and ongoing. When the requirements of the Great Commission were implemented the church grew. "**The Word of God prospered**. The number of disciples in Jerusalem **increased dramatically**. Not least, a great many priests submitted themselves to the faith" (Acts 6:7, MSG). The early apostles kept their priorities in view. "Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and **teaching the word**" (Acts 6:4, NLT).

Let us skip to the last verse of the Book of Acts: "Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered" (Acts 28:31, NASU).

"He spread the message about God's kingdom and taught very boldly about the Lord Jesus Christ. No one stopped him" (Acts 28:31, God's Word).

One is awestruck to note that the Book of Acts closed in much the same way it opened (Acts 1:1; Acts 2:42), with proclaiming or advancing the kingdom, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The

final word or phrase in Acts means unhindered or unstoppable. We preach an unhindered, unstoppable Gospel and teach the unchanging principles and doctrines of the Word of God. When the Word is applied through preaching, teaching, observing, and obeying, genuine church growth is the expected, supernatural result. It literally forces open doors to nations, cities, and hearts. Charles McCartney once said, “A deleted Bible results in a diluted Gospel.” The church marches forward and upward—as long as it marches to the clear, certain sound of unhindered, unpolluted, undiluted truths taught in God’s Word.

It is noteworthy that—in a way—the Book of Acts continues to be written today. New Testament teaching will produce New Testament results. Church growth will happen. But, according to David Sills in *Reaching and Teaching*, “when your church growth outstrips your trained leadership, you are in trouble; weak and dysfunctional churches abound” (Page 24).

### *The Ministry: Going Local*

The ministry works together to perfect the saints and bring them into Christian maturity. This is done “for the training of the saints as servants in the church, for the building up of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12, BBE); “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12, ESV); and “to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ’s body, the church, until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful...fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13, MSG).

The Vision International Education Network in *Seven Reasons Why Every Local Church Should Have a Ministry Training Center* stated, “The lack of leaders within the local church can be traced to the lack of a strategic plan to train leaders, due to faulty models, lack of resources or a wrong paradigm of ministry” (Page 13).

Missionary Nick Sisco puts it a different way: “A lack of training will produce a lack of leaders that will result in a church that is misguided.” As a result, the church will be crippled, sickly, and will fall short of all God planned and expected it to be.

### *Systematic Teaching: Going Local*

Where should theological education begin? Where does it end? As mentioned already, theological education should be designed systematically. It is line upon line, precept upon precept (Isaiah 28:13), from the cradle to the grave. It is lifelong learning. Systematic programs follow a predetermined method or plan and are arranged in an orderly way.

In Acts 11 and 19, leaders taught followers in a methodical manner. It was neither random nor careless. It was thorough. Their approach was planned, on purpose, and with a purpose. When Paul taught in a teaching center for two years (Acts 19:9-10) his aim was establishing believers throughout Asia via the local church (Acts 20:17-38).

A locally based systematic theological education begins with foundational teachings and biblical principles. It builds from there in a logical manner. Vision International Education Network in the book stated above wrote, “What should the components of a good adult education program include? Well, there must be a *Place*, where *People* can be effectively and systematically taught, from a *Systematic*

*Curriculum*, with a focus on change of character....requiring a *Delivery System* of course materials that are cost effective, practical and strong, with *Teachers* who are qualified by experience and education to teach men and women hungry to grow in God” (Page 34)

Systematic teaching trains members in understanding the Apostle’s doctrine (I Timothy 4:6); basic skills in interpreting God’s Word (II Timothy 2:15); mobilizing them for evangelism; and training them how to teach others (II Timothy 2:2; I Timothy 3:2). Systematic programs also target character development (Titus 2:1-10), spiritual maturity (Hebrews 5:12-14), leadership development, teaching how to live a godly lifestyle (Titus 2:11-12), and utilize their talents for advancing the kingdom. It is our duty to equip others for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12) so they will be “competent, equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:17, NIV).

At least five factors need to be in place to make a local training program workable:

Sponsors	Who will support it?
Mission	What is the vision or goals?
Content	What are the subjects, objectives, and curriculum?
People	Who are the students?
Delivery System	How will the instruction be delivered?

Adapted from Russell Kleis in “Program of studies in non-formal education. Study team reports of case studies in non-formal education, pages 7-8, 31).

## ***Delivery Systems: Going Local***

Matthew 28:19-20 and II Timothy 2:2 unquestionably supply the mandate for training. One could speculate where such teaching should be done. Teaching should be done anywhere possible, to anyone possible, and in any way possible. It is for everyone, everywhere, and in every way available. Training, in order to secure the future, should focus on—and encapsulate—teaching the whole church.

Here are some examples of places and times when training can be delivered locally. Keep in mind that cultures vary and what works in one place may not work in another. Additionally, delivery systems are not limited to this relatively short list of options.

1. Adult Sunday school class
2. Meeting Sunday morning before service
3. Meeting Sunday after service
4. Sunday evening lessons
5. Midweek Bible study
6. A Bible school night
7. A Bible school weekend
8. Small Groups
9. Different types of leadership groups: Men, Ladies, Local Leaders, Youth, and Children
10. Short, intensified courses
11. Teaching Revival Week
12. Morning Studies
13. Topical Seminars

14. Distance Education
15. New Convert's Classes
16. Video, DVD, Instruction
17. Podcasts

If the training program was being designed for a provincial, regional, state, or cluster school, the delivery system changes somewhat:

1. Seminars
2. Weekend teaching
3. Periodic week-long or intensified programs
4. Distance Education: correspondence study, reading assignments done in the local church and then occasionally meeting together at the larger school for overview teaching, checkup on assignments, and group discussions.
5. Video, DVD Instruction.
6. Instructor from the central college visiting the location providing periodic supervision and instruction.

### *Benefits of Going Local*

What are some of the benefits of a training center in the local church?

1. People can be effectively trained that would not be able to attend college in a central location. If they cannot go to Bible College, bring the Bible College to them, in their environment.
2. Trains local leaders that are already married, settled with a family, and have a job to support themselves and their ministry. Many cultures tend to respect older, proven people rather than young people that have not been proven in the ministry.
3. Lifelong learning is promoted and becomes a lifestyle as members endeavor to fulfill II Timothy 2:15.
4. Relationships are built between the local church ministry and the saints of God.
5. Members are equipped for active, immediate service in God's kingdom.
6. Training is field-based. Students can immediately put into practice things they have learned. They are serving in real life situations.
7. Systematic training is emphasized and the Word of God is regularly being taught.
8. Most local adult training activities can be streamlined through the training center.
9. Completion of a training program can be required for those being placed in areas of responsibility. This promotes higher quality and a standard of excellence.
10. It provides training for every level of the local church.
11. It is a flexible approach to training which is integrally linked to the local church.
12. It allows for people to be trained without uprooting them to a central location.
13. Training is not only taught by outsiders but local leaders are used as teachers. Vision is cast and strengthened.
14. Meets the felt—and real need—for Bible instruction and leadership development.
15. The teaching is directed to the local setting, fulfills the 2 Timothy 2:2 mandate, and promotes spontaneous expansion of the church.

## Entrusting Truth: Going Local

Paul speaks of the teacher that passes on or entrusts truth to the next generation. Every Christian is a potential link between two or more generations. We not only receive truth from others, we also pass it on to others. In II Timothy 2:2 truth is entrusted to (a) Paul, (b) from Paul to Timothy; (c) from Timothy to faithful men, and (d) from faithful men and women to others. The responsibility to train those that come behind us is inescapable. The question is: are we living up to our responsibility? The principle is clear here: those that have the truth must faithfully entrust or pass it on to others. For truth to be extended into every location there is an unceasing demand and need for trained workers.

If our emphasis is only on training the chosen few in central Bible schools we stand in danger of developing an educated elite and ignoring the ordinary people that sit on the seats in our churches. Theological education that also goes to the local church, allows for us to teach more people. Allan Anderson in his web-based article “The Forgotten Dimension: Education for Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality in Global Perspective” stated, “It is a matter of access—so that everyone, irrespective of physical or social location or other forms of marginalization will have full access to theological education (pg. 158).

A committee studying theological education at Edinburgh 2010, in their paper entitled “Theological Education and Formation, Witnessing to Christ Today” revealed that “There is widespread consensus that every member of the people of God has the right to understand Christian faith and tradition in their fullness and should have access to basic education, faith nurture, and empowerment for mission.” They went on to say in their report, “In some contexts...the term ‘theological education’ is used exclusively for ministry formation....Theological education in a broader understanding...is not the prerogative only of those becoming ordained ministers, but a fundamental right of every Christian adult” (pg. 151).

## Educational Models: Going Local

What programs are available for adult education in the local church? The list that follows is, in no way, an exhaustive listing. These are ones written by the author, or resources that are part of the Foreign Missions Division, or those approved or endorsed by the Global Education Committee.

1. The certificate program of the Global Association of Theological Studies easily lends itself for use locally as well as our central Bible colleges within a nation.
2. Portable Bible Schools International utilizes a curriculum in four levels, covering two hundred lessons, entitled *Acts: God's Training Manual for Today's Church*. (<http://reachingthroughteaching.com>). Each lesson takes approximately one hour to teach. Certificates can be awarded. Literally thousands of people, around the world, have studied this course. They are truly taking the Word to the world.
3. The Global Education Committee has endorsed the training program of the Global College of Ministry (<http://globalcollegeofministry.com>). This entails dozens of miniature courses that can be taught in five to ten hours per subject. Certificates are issued by them and not the Global University of Theological Studies. They are educating, enlightening, and equipping people everywhere.
4. GATS plans to have an online and print-based distance education program in the future. There is also a plan for DVD instruction with their GATS Legacy Series.



5. For new converts' courses, there is a variety of options available. For more information contact us at [GATS@upci.org](mailto:GATS@upci.org). One possibility would be *Path to Righteousness*. We also have others that can easily be sent to you.
6. For evangelism type courses, options abound, but two available from us: *Discover Wonderful Truths*, a Bible course involving seven lessons. *How Do You Measure Up to the Word of God? Is* available in several languages and also can be broken down to lessons and comes with power point presentations.
7. Of course, GATS is always willing to provide recommendations based on specific needs. You provide the need, and we will hopefully provide the teaching resource.

### *Problems and Pitfalls: Going Local*

It would not be fair address a lesson on local training centers without assessing some of the problem areas that may arise in the implementation of a local church training program.

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Finances may be limited in the purchase of books and needed materials.
2. Transportation could be costly or problematic.
3. Motivation and self-discipline are required. Students may begin the education race but quickly fall by the wayside.
4. Shortage of qualified Bible teachers at the local level.
5. Time restraints. The only way to have the time for theological education is to prioritize and make the time.
6. Difficulty in finding class times that would be favorable to everyone.
7. The training materials used are not normally easy for those that are illiterate or who are oral learners.
8. Translation of material into local languages takes time and is a slow process.
9. Lack of availability of incentives for instructional leaders. Teaching is a sacrifice; a sacrifice that not many are willing to make.
10. Non-formal education is not as accepted as formal education.
11. Questions arise and need to be dealt with concerning whether someone completing a local training program is qualified to hold license or become actively involved in pastoring or preaching within the national organization.
12. Difficulty in getting exams to the local setting and returning them (and course grades, records, and student files) to the central location.

Each of these obstacles and hindrances can be overcome with effort, innovation, and hard work.

### *Conclusion*

The Zambesi River, and a host of other rivers around the world, is made up of many streams and tributaries. Most training programs in our nations should operate in much the same way. Various training streams and tributaries, within a nation, come together to form a potent, unobstructed force that makes a powerful impact on the world and is an unstoppable force in advancing the kingdom of God.

*Lesson in Review*

1. According to C. Peter Wagner, what is the crucial trend in training men and women for ministry?

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2. What is the difference between the curriculum emphasis or purpose in a central Bible college and that of a local training center? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What did Jehoshaphat do to effectively train people on a local basis? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What impact did training have on the people in Judah? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Provide scriptural proof that teaching was important in the New Testament church? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What is the purpose of the ministry when it comes to training members? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. According to Vision International Education Network, what are the components of a good adult education program? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. According to Russell Kleis, what are five factors that need to be in place with a local training program? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. List five places where training can be delivered locally. \_\_\_\_\_

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10. What are five benefits of implementing a local training program? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. What are five problem areas or pitfalls when it comes to implementing a local training program?

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12. List five things a systematic local training program should include. \_\_\_\_\_

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