

The Teacher and the Big Picture

“And the [instructions] which you have heard from me along with many witnesses, transmit and entrust [as a deposit] to reliable and faithful men who will be competent and qualified to teach others also”
(II Timothy 2:2, AMP).

“Go...teach all nations....Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”
(Matthew 28:19-20).

Objectives

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

1. Recite and explain the purpose or vision of the Global Association of Theological Studies.
2. Demonstrate through personal, administrative, and instructional example the motto of GATS which is “Pursuing Ministerial Excellence.”
3. Implement the four objectives of GATS in your Bible school.
4. Develop ministerial experience and expertise in one’s subject matter.
5. Set an example worthy of emulation by students.
6. Establish a personal growth plan and ministry action plan for one’s life.
7. Comment on the type of students needed in the Bible school. Recruit the same.
8. Express how GATS intends developing faculty.
9. Relate how students are like seeds and wet cement.
10. Explain the benefits of a well planned curriculum.
11. List the four primary academic programs in GATS curriculum, and recall the required classroom hours for each.

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12. Outline the curriculum standards or requirements requested by GATS in order to be successfully involved in one of the academic programs.

Introduction

Finding the big picture reminds one of the old story of the six blind men and the elephant depicted in a poem by John Godfrey Saxe. Once upon a time there lived six blind men in a village. One day they were told, “An elephant is in the village today!”

They had no idea what an elephant was. Even though they could not see it, they decided to feel it. Each blind man touched a different part.

“An elephant is like a wall,” said the first man that touched the elephant’s side.

“On no, the elephant is like a rope,” said the second man that touched the tail.

“No, the elephant is like a snake,” said the third man that touched the long, wiggly trunk.

“Excuse me. But, the elephant is like a big fan,” said the fourth man that touched the elephant’s ears.

“It is like a tree,” said the fifth man that touched the elephant’s rough, hard legs.

“Oh, you are all wrong. The elephant is like a spear,” said the sixth man who touched the smooth, sharp tusks.

The six blind men started to argue. It’s like a wall. It’s like a spear. It’s like a rope. They did not agree. The king had been watching and listening. He said, “You only touched part of the elephant. You did not feel the whole animal.”

The men continued disputing. A little girl heard them and said, “Each of you is right, but all of you are wrong” (Saxe).

There are various versions of this story. However, the point remains the same. Each one touched a different part; but only one part. The elephant did have all of the features that each of the blind men said. Each is right, but all were wrong! None were looking at the big picture. In this lesson, our focus is looking at the overall purpose of our Bible schools, our objectives, and how we go about building a great Bible school program.

The Global Association of Theological Studies and its member schools develop and equip men and women to reach their maximum potential in apostolic ministry. Our motto is “Pursuing Ministerial Excellence.” Our comprehensive objectives and statement of purpose (expected results) include:

Preserving the Message. Nurture a faith community and a center of life-long learning to preserve apostolic doctrine for generations to come (II Timothy 2:2; Philippians 3:1; II John 1-2). Equip ministers to continue steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 2:1); and to defend it within their cultural context (Jude 3; I Peter 3:15).

Providing the Methods. Explore the needs of a diverse and ever-changing society, and develop innovative print and non-print training and learning resources that are relevant to our cross-cultural environment.

Producing the Ministry. Prepare Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered, and Spirit-directed students for excellence in Apostolic ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Propagating the Mission. Train and motivate students to possess a vision for, and participation in, global evangelism—preaching and teaching the whole gospel to the whole world (Proverbs 29:18; Luke 24:47). Cultivate leadership development to facilitate, and sustain the harvest the Lord continues to give His Church.

How is the vision of GATS and our member schools achieved? How are objectives met? It is through pursuing ministerial excellence in establishing and maintaining a great Bible school. What are the basics of a great Bible school program? Is it the students? Is it the faculty? Is it the facilities? Or is it the curriculum? Obviously, the best answer (based on our opening story) is that all are needed. We will look briefly at the staff, students, and studies.

Staff with experience and expertise

Instructors should be experts in their courses, combining a balance of knowledge of the course content and on-the-field ministerial experience. Pastoral, church planting, and evangelism courses should be taught by those that are actually involved in the field. Instructors should be examples (to be followed) in the courses they represent. Each instructor should develop expertise in his or her specialized area of instruction and a variety of evaluation tools for each course. Specialized talents should be developed. Provide continuous education opportunities for staff including: Faculty education, books, and courses to develop expertise. Regular staff meetings are needed to promote communication, and growth. Instructors should set an example in holiness, faithful participation in regional and national events, and with national financial policies and requirements. The instructors should demonstrate a strong love for the doctrine, and the Word of God. Set up and develop an instructor’s library. In the unlikely event that a staff member does not show improvement in classroom ministry that staff member should not be asked to teach in the new semester.

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To raise the standard of educational and ministerial excellence, encourage instructors to be engaged in lifelong learning and have a personal growth plan. Instructors should take part in the Ministry Action Plan and project three to five growth goals per year. This is an annual listing of personal and ministerial goals.

An outstanding instructor is a growing instructor. One cannot grow others unless willing to grow one's self. In classes and among staff we must create a "culture of growth." It's the way we do things around here. Involvement with the *Advance Educators Series* (GATS) provides us with eighteen to twenty-four opportunities to grow. Other faculty education courses are planned for the future. Read, read, read and study, study, study. No escape. Be determined to be the best instructor possible. Strive to be an expert in your subject. Continuous education opportunities abound. We only truly help others reach maximum potential when we've attempted to reach it ourselves.

Students eager to learn and grow

Seek out students with aptitude, a genuine call into the ministry, educational qualifications, and a preferred history of active involvement with United Pentecostal Church International. Every school has poor students but they should not set the standards for the school. Students should be encouraged to discover answers on their own, and to write, read, research, and communicate. Provide mentors for our students that supply guidance. Respond to indiscipline quickly. The time a student is in school is the time to work on behavior and attitude problems. Once the student has launched into ministry is too late to correct these things. Develop relationships with the student's family if he/she is married, and provide opportunities for training their spouses. Take an active part in the placement of students within the church in your nation.

The following is taken from a lesson by Randy Adams; used by permission. "His name may be David, John, Kofi, William, or one from a host of names from anywhere around the globe. He has come to the Bible school looking for help. He steps into the classroom representing great potential. He comes, hopefully, having already experienced the full new birth and likely feeling that God has called him to some area of ministry. He no doubt, has aspirations of doing a work for the Lord. He may not know when, where, how or even why, but hopes to find answers to all these questions in Bible school. Can you (Bible school teacher) help him? He is like a seed—complete yet undeveloped; full of untapped and possibly unknown potential.

"His dormant and undiscovered talent may be that of a dynamic and effective evangelist, or that of a wise and compassionate pastor. He may become a Sunday school teacher or the dean of the Bible school. He could have the potential of being the future national leader of the church, or become a missionary to some far away land. One thing is certain; he represents the potential of reaching untold multitudes of lost souls.

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“He has come to Bible school because he needs help. Help that only God-called, Spirit-filled, Holy Ghost anointed, teachers can give. He needs men and women to come into his life that have given themselves to the purpose of God, and prepared themselves for such a challenge.

“In many ways he is like wet cement, waiting for someone to shape his life. He wants to be first of all like Christ, but also wants to preach like Peter, pray like Daniel, prophesy like Isaiah, and win souls like Paul. He needs a teacher to identify his strengths and understand his weaknesses. He needs compassionate counsel; He yearns for a friend; He seeks answers but also wants to express his own ideas.

“He is a Bible school student and he is yours for two years. What will you do with him? What changes will you help bring about in his life? Will you make a difference? Or, will you leave him as he is? What will he learn from you? Will the time and money spent for his Bible School education be a waste or a good investment?

“He is a seed, and seeds are destined for the field and not to be kept in the barn. He desperately needs to fall in good ground, take root, grow and develop, and bring forth much fruit. His family needs this to happen. There is a town somewhere that needs this to happen. An un-evangelized region is waiting for his ministry. Perhaps an entire nation waits in darkness for him to come with the light of truth. Teacher, can you help him?”

The growth of a tree starts with a seed—a promise. Years ago, an American was travelling through a farming area in Russia. It had experienced brutal famine. People were starving. Piles of seed wheat for the next year’s planting stood in the village square. The American asked, “Why don’t you eat the seed wheat?” The Russian host answered, “You never steal from the future!” (Dale, *Seeds for the Future*, 2005, Preface xii). Specifically, our students are seeds for the future. Handle them with care. Preserve them for God’s desired future.

Students don’t arrive in our classrooms as mighty oak trees. They come with willing hearts and pass through a spiritual formation and maturation process. As instructors, we need to be growth-oriented. How do the course objectives fit into the overall curriculum; the route God has planned for this student to reach his maximum potential? The purpose for being here is clear. We’re equipping others for works of service in God’s kingdom (Ephesians 4:12) and in apostolic ministry. Like Robert Dale once said, we’re “sowing seeds of ministry and growing believers toward leadership.” That is the sole purpose behind the Global Association of Theological Studies. It is like a sign I saw, “We build Pentecostal leaders to grow Pentecostal churches.” Spiritual growth is one of our four core values. We value helping people grow!

As teachers we understand that, “The only thing that endures over time is the law of the farm: I must prepare the ground, put in the seed, cultivate it, weed it, water it, then gradually nurture growth and development to full maturity” (Covey, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, 1991, 17). He encourages leaders to “see the oak tree in the acorn and understand the process of helping the acorn become a great oak”

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(35). We are in the agricultural business; planting seeds and helping others grow to their maximum potential.

We will sow seeds, grow believers, and reap the harvest. The Bible school's primary reason for existence is to train and equip workers for the ripened fields (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 9:4). It stands in the gap for a lost world (Ezekiel 22:30). On one side of the divide are those that God calls into the ministry. Waiting on the other side is a ready harvest. We (in Bible school ministry) serve as middlemen guiding workers-in-progress as they cross the bridge.

It is a joy and an overwhelming responsibility to be involved in training workers for the harvest. Training the next generation of leadership in God's kingdom is a great privilege. John Maxwell said, "A leader who reproduces followers limits his success to what his direct, personal influence touches...A leader who produces other leaders multiplies his influence, and he and his people have a future....True success comes only when every generation continues to develop the next generation" *Developing the Leaders Around You* 1995, 197-198). Not only are we involved in the ministry of multiplication—reaching and teaching others—but in passing on the baton of truth and leadership to future generations. Christa McAuliffe said (and I wholeheartedly agree) "I teach, therefore, I touch the future."

Studies geared to changing minds and hearts

A carefully planned curriculum ascertains what the school is trying to accomplish; and determines: (a) why? (b) when? (c) where? (d) who? and (d) how? It ensures that there is a balance between curriculum content and experience; between learning and doing. Truth transforms (John 17:17). D. L. Moody said, "The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives." A good curriculum and comprehensive objectives require careful planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Curriculum comes from a Latin word that means "race course" and shares the same root word as "current" —the flow of water moving in the same direction. A well planned curriculum will enable students to run the race, move in the right direction, and reach their goals. At GATS we are also involved with the pursuit of quality curriculum. In that race there is no finish line. It is a daily quest for continuous improvement. A school armed with a vision, solid objectives, excellent curriculum, quality academic dean or principal, dedicated faculty, and diligent students that explore academic excellence can one day say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:6-7, KJV). They will hear the Master Teacher respond, "Well done!" (Matthew 25:21)."

When GATS references curriculum, it is important to understand what is meant. It provides academic programs on four levels:

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Certificate	Basic Bible Knowledge	150 Classroom Hours	Total of 150 Classroom Hours
Diploma	Ministerial Development 1	600 Classroom Hours	Total of 750 Classroom Hours
Associate Degree	Ministerial Development 2	750 Classroom Hours	Total of 1500 Classroom Hours
Bachelor Degree	Advanced Ministerial Development	1500 Classroom Hours	Total of 3000 Classroom Hours

GATS academic programs are based upon classroom hours rather than credit hours. Completing the required classroom hours can be done at anytime—night, day, weekends, once a month, fulltime, part-time—whatever fits the local needs.

Member schools in one or more of these programs have agreed to teach the required courses (called core curriculum), for a minimum required number of classroom hours, in adherence to attendance and passing grade policies, and follow a predetermined set of course objectives. The selection of a course textbook is at the discretion of the local school. However, GATS provides an academic database of recommended textbooks, for each course, on its web site(s) and are made available on the annual CD/DVD. Textbooks help build a personal library for each potential preacher. Encourage students to make use of the library. Textbooks should be those written by United Pentecostal Church writers, or those of like precious faith, when such a textbook is superior or equal to any found on the subject by any other writer. No courses should be “just read the textbook” (the text is a reference). No teacher should just stand in the front of the class and read the textbook to the student.

We also provide two additional academic programs: distance education, and faculty development. It should be noted that it will be some time before the distance education and bachelor degree programs are functional. All other programs are presently in use. All certificates, degrees, and diplomas for the six types or levels of studies are issued by the Global University of Theological Studies and are issued from our international office in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Member schools merely send the transcripts. Once we ensure the GATS standard has been met, the appropriate certificate is released.

The following adapted story, originally written by John Mbiti, and quoted in *Christianity in Africa* by Kwame Bediako, brings an interesting (yet sad) point. He had learned from all kinds of courses with heavy-duty, Greek names. It was his big day, Bible school graduation. His family and friends excitedly gathered. As his Associate of Arts in Theological Studies degree was being given, you could hear them chanting, “Kofi, Kofi, he’s our man. If anyone can do it, Kofi can!” After graduation, he packed his bags, and quickly departed for his village. At home relatives, friends, and neighbors gladly welcomed him, “Kofi, Kofi, he’s our man. If anyone can do it, Kofi can!” Everyone was so thrilled. Jubilation was the order of the day. In the midst of the celebration, a scream was heard. Kofi caught a glimpse of his sister, wallowing on the ground, and rushed to her. Kofi yelled urgently, “Let’s take her to the hospital.” Those that gathered stared at him in disbelief. No one helped. Finally a schoolboy said, “Sir, the nearest hospital is eighty kilometers away. Someone screamed, “She is demon possessed. Hospitals will not help her.” The village elder added, “You have been studying theology. Now help your sister. She is troubled

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by the spirit of her great aunt.” The crowd echoed, “Come on, Kofi! Kofi, Kofi, he’s our man. If anyone can do it, Kofi can!” But Kofi couldn’t. He turned slowly and went for one of his college textbooks on spiritual warfare. He searched the pages, looking for the needed answers. People continued to shout, “Help your sister! Kofi, Kofi, he’s our man. If anyone can do it, Kofi can!” He shouted back, “My sister is not possessed because my textbook says so.”

The moral of the story is that instructors should strive to balance teaching with practical application and experience; between education and experience; theory and practice. This begins with carefully planning each course, making sure it is geared to maximum impact in the lives of students, and is related to the overall big picture. That is a topic for another lesson.

Conclusion

Our teaching ministry will affect long after we are gone. A Greek proverb says, "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in." Be deliberate at leaving a mark on this planet, to do something that imparts seeds of truth to the next generation, and impacts eternity for our world. Someone once said, "If your vision is for a year, plant wheat; if your vision is for a decade, plant trees; but if your vision is for a lifetime, plant men." And that, dear friends, is our big picture!

Lesson in Review

1. What is the purpose of the Global Association of Theological Studies generally and of your Bible school specifically? _____

2. What are the four objectives of GATS? _____

3. According to the GATS objectives, how do we go about preserving the message? _____

4. How can instructors develop expertise? _____

5. Why is it important for instructors to be good examples? _____

6. How does GATS assist in faculty development? _____

7. Comment on the type of students needed in our Bible schools. _____

8. Identify what is meant by a "Ministry Action Plan." _____

9. Relate or explain how a student is like a seed. _____

10. Relate or explain how a student is like wet cement. _____

11. In which ways are we, as teachers, in the agricultural business? _____

12. What is the Bible school's primary reason for existence? _____

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13. Explain the law of the farm. _____

14. According to John Maxwell, when does true success come? _____

15. According to D. L. Moody, why was the Bible given to us? _____

16. What are the benefits of a well planned curriculum? _____

17. Define or explain "curriculum." _____

18. What are the four primary academic programs provided by GATS? How many classroom hours are ascribed to each? _____

19. What are the GATS requirements or expectations regarding curriculum or academic programs of study? _____

20. Once all requirements are met by students, who issues certificates, diplomas, and degrees? _____
