

INC CORNERSTONE BIBLE INSTITUTE

CONTEXT

by James P. Steel

An Open Letter from Jim Steel - former CBI President.

Dear Friend,

May I toss a few clichés your way? May I have “permission to speak freely,” to “talk turkey,” and to “get down to brass tacks?” In the minds of many, Bible institutes are a clichéd way of doing the Lord’s work. We need you to help us stem the tide of ignorance regarding Bible institutes. Listed below are five short statements which define the essence of what a Bible institute is:

Missions is at the heart of the Bible institute’s passion.

Bible institutes see a far larger percentage of their graduates enter missions than any other system of Christian education. We also see the largest percentages of men enter rural and under-funded pastorates. As valuable as other educational models are, the only thing institutes do is prepare men and women for full-time ministry and for lay ministries in home churches, and most importantly, missions. Missions is what defines our passion. No educational institution places more emphases on missions than the institute.

Immersion is at the heart of the Bible institute’s educational philosophy.

No one can field full-time ser-

vants, fully immersed in the Word of God, and tested in hands-on-ministries, as quickly and efficiently as the Bible institute. Men and women who begin their educational process by immersing themselves in the Word and in ministry will always have time later to expand their pursuits in liberal arts as desired.

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ment for their investment.*

However, students who miss out on the dynamics of biblical immersion are often consigned to years of less productive ministry before they gain what they have lost. Immersion is the key to producing powerful servants of Christ. Bible institutes are Bible boot-camps.

Productivity is the proof of the Bible institute’s curriculum.

While Bible colleges and Bible institutes should never be seen competing with each other, the myth remains: Bible institutes are persistently charac-

terized as Bible colleges in knee pants. Although institutes are no match in secular pursuits, the opposite is easily evidenced in spiritual pursuits. Wisdom dictates that a prospective medical doctor be trained by a practicing one. The wisdom behind institute training is evidenced as the servant of Christ is taught, for the most part, by seasoned veterans in ministry, men of God who have served on the fields of the world and in the pulpits of the nation. Our students are Timothy’s, taught by the kinds of Paul’s who have themselves been in the trenches. The end result is that the student tastes the realities of ministry both directly and vicariously. He enters the field with his eyes wide open and, once engaged, has great staying power because he has been prepared for the task just as Paul prepared Timothy.

Urgency and efficiency drive the Bible institute’s methodology. Because the institute offers no frills and its instructors are supported by faith, we can field missionaries and pastors at a total three-year cost of less than \$12,000, including room and board, in contrast to other forms of Christian educational systems which require at least \$50,000 in the four years between matriculation and diploma. This means

our graduates carry no student loans and can humbly accept low paying rural pastorates. Graduates leave our school as servants, not as professionals needing reimbursement for their investment.

Ignorance is the Bible institute's worst enemy. Even though most Bible institutes are the result of cooperative efforts among local churches, the fact remains that most local churches themselves fail to see the missionary nature of the institute and its strategic value. When a church (or individual) supports the Bible institute, its faculty, or its students:

- It supports students who are already ministering, and who are focused only on ministry.
- It helps the body of Christ field missionaries and pastors in the most efficient way known to most churches.
- It helps fill the ranks of pastors and missionaries, now leaving fields at dramatic rates.
- It helps fill the pulpits of rural America, which simply cannot afford highly paid, highly indebted pastors.
- It aligns itself in the most biblical way with the Paul-Timothy biblical model of education.
- It supports the veteran pastors and missionaries who instruct our students so that they can carry on their ministries into the next generation.

Bible institutes are not in the business of educating men and women for secular careers. We are a cooperative effort of local churches, pastors, and

We are a cooperative effort of local churches, pastors, and Christian servants who are passionate about training and fielding another generation of Christian servants.

Christian servants who are passionate about training and fielding another generation of Christian servants. We desperately need the respect and prayerful support of God's people. We do not expect those who reason with the world to understand our values, but we thank our God daily for the faithful band of supporters he has raised up around our staff and students. You can help us by graciously teaching others about the urgent necessity to strengthen existing institutes and raise up scores of new ones in these days of grave departure from the Word of God.

Will you pray for Cornerstone and similar efforts for Christ around the world?

If you will pardon the final cliché, "Thank you so much for your prayerful consideration of these matters!" understand that we do deeply appreciate your prayerful support of Cornerstone.

Sincerely in Christ,

James Steel
Academic Dean



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In Context is designed to encourage our readers to take a closer look at important biblical themes. Guest articles also appear from time to time as pastors and other friends of CBI share insights which are in keeping with our Bible-centered focus. Your comments and suggestions for article or format changes are welcome!

Approval and Immigration Statement
Cornerstone Bible Institute is approved by the South Dakota State Approval Agency for training veterans and other eligible persons under Veterans Administration provisions. Some dependents of veterans and some survivors of deceased veterans, as well as veterans themselves, may qualify for VA educational assistance. Cornerstone Bible Institute is also approved by the United States Department of Justice, Immigration, and Naturalization Service for the training of foreign non-immigrant students. Both of the above programs consider Cornerstone in the NCD (non-college degree) programs, and therefore work with us on the same basis as a vocational school. Foreign students come under the M-1 status of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. For further information contact our registrar, Mr. Marsden Peterson.

This newsletter is from Cornerstone Bible Institute, P.O. Box 1158, Hot Springs, SD 57747; (605) 745-6878.

Cornerstone Bible Institute Board of Directors: J. Joseph Charles, Richard Hall, Steve Johnson, Virgil Johnson, Bryan Jones, Jon LeBar, Dan Miller, and James Steel.