

Choosing a Bible College

Do you feel called to minister to others? Bible school or seminary training may help.

If you sense a call to minister to others, then you may want to consider institutionalized training. Bible colleges and theological seminaries are designed to prepare individuals for active ministry, but their respective educational approaches differ.

Although seminaries usually offer accredited academic programs in a formal setting, Bible schools typically give students more flexibility in the scope of academic programming and may or may not be accredited. Which alternative is a proper fit for you depends on your specific qualifications and unique academic needs relative to your ministry calling.

These descriptions of available programs will help you decide which course of action makes the most sense for you.

Theological Seminaries

Fuller Theological Seminary () located in Pasadena, California, is the world's largest multid denominational seminary. Fuller provides students with a university-style education in its schools of theology, intercultural studies and psychology. The seminary is widely known for its racial and denominational diversity, with more than 4,300 students from some 70 nations and more than 100 denominations.

At Oral Roberts University () in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the graduate degree program offered by the School of Theology and Missions offers integrated seminary training to prepare students for

holistic Christian ministry with a Pentecostal-charismatic emphasis. The school offers several types of graduate degrees.

Asbury Theological Seminary () based in Wilmore, Kentucky, has a satellite campus located in Orlando, Florida. Most of the school's theology graduates go on to serve as local pastors. However, others seek training for missions, teaching, counseling, and youth and music ministry. Although the school has roots in the United Methodist tradition, it draws students from a variety of denominations, including the Assemblies of God and Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee).

Both of those classical Pentecostal denominations offer graduate-level training. The Church of God Theological Seminary () is located in Cleveland, Tennessee. The school is committed to the Wesleyan Pentecostal interpretation of Christianity and offers a diverse set of graduate degrees, including several master's and doctoral programs.

The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (), located in Springfield, Missouri, serves as the only seminary endorsed by the Assemblies of God for the graduate-level education of ministers. It is one of the world's leading Pentecostal seminaries and has one of the 10 largest Doctor of Ministry programs in the nation. The school offers several fully accredited graduate-level degree programs including its doctoral-level degree program.

Southeastern University () in Lakeland, Florida, under the leadership of dynamic Bible teacher Mark Rutland, is also affiliated with the Assemblies of God. The university offers a master's degree in ministerial leadership through its College of Christian Ministries and Religion and is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges

and Schools.

The King's College and Seminary ([kings](#)) in Van Nuys, California, is the only accredited Pentecostal-charismatic seminary on the West Coast. The school is an outgrowth of the ministry of respected pastor Jack Hayford, whose The Church on the Way is affiliated with the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

Also based in California, Simpson University ([simpson](#)) in Redding offers master's degrees in intercultural studies to prepare students for missions work, and a Master of Ministry degree that is divided into several tracks, including church growth, counseling, and pastoral and youth ministry. It was founded in 1921 and named after Presbyterian minister A. B. Simpson.

Over on the East Coast, the Regent University School of Divinity ([regent.edu](#)) is one of the nation's fastest-growing seminaries and celebrates its 25th anniversary this fall. Headquartered in Virginia Beach, Virginia, with a satellite campus in Washington, D.C., the school offers biblically grounded theological training from a renewal perspective at both the master's and doctoral levels.

For those unable to physically attend a seminary, Grace Bible College and Seminary in Morrisville, North Carolina, offers a doctoral degree in theology through correspondence courses that can be purchased at its Web site, [grace](#) .

Like several other Bible colleges, Indiana Wesleyan University ([indwes.edu](#)) in Marion, Indiana, offers a master's degree in ministry that can be earned through online or traditional

classes. It is operated by the Wesleyan Church.

Also in the Midwest, Spring Arbor University () in Spring Arbor, Michigan, offers a master's degree in spiritual formation and leadership. It was founded in 1873 by leaders of the Free Methodist Church.

Bible Training Centers

In addition to formal degree programs, several ministries offer training centers to prepare men and women for Christian service. Rhema Bible Training Center () is located in the Tulsa, Oklahoma-area and was founded by renowned faith teacher Kenneth E. Hagin in 1974. The training center is an intensive campus-based school designed to train individuals for full-time ministry. Biblical study includes concentration in the areas of youth or children's ministry, evangelism, pastoral care, missions or supportive ministry.

Another Tulsa-area school is Victory Bible Institute (), which is an extension of Victory Christian Center, the megachurch founded and led by Billy Joe and Sharon Daugherty. The institute offers one-, two- and three-year programs designed to train and equip people for ministry stateside and abroad.

Dallas-based Christ for the Nations () was founded in 1970 by the late Gordon Lindsay and his wife, Freda. The school exists to train and equip men and women to minister globally. More than 28,000 students have graduated from the school in the last three decades, and they minister in more than 120 nations of the world.

Space simply does not permit a more extensive list of Bible

training centers and theological seminaries. Visiting each school's Web site is a good next step in the research process, but as with all major decisions, there is no substitute for prayerfully considering which school is the right place to prepare for ministry. Regardless of the institution you attend, trust the Holy Spirit to guide your journey, teach you the truth and help you fulfill your divine destiny.

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