

How Should Preachers Be Educated?

Written by Ben Cordes

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And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2

Education is greatly emphasized in our world, today, as it should be. After all, who wants an uneducated world? However, what we are teaching/learning is far more important and should be our greatest concern. Being a minister, I often get questions from every-day acquaintances, such as “where did you receive your education as a minister?” This question may be an uncomfortable one for some ministers to answer, but for me it is easy and gives me great pleasure to reply with “from the Bible”. Now, granted, I have learned many things from many ministers and I have read several theological writings however, the book that I have studied and continue to study on a daily basis is the word of God. It is the foundation on which each minister has instructed me from and the source of the topics which theologians elaborate. If what we are teaching/learning is most important, then the greatest and safest content we could ever learn is found in the Bible.

I know that some people outside of the Primitive Baptists do not take our way of education seriously since we have no formal seminary or great scholarly titles to obtain, but Primitive Baptists are not in the business of pleasing man. Rather, our motivation is to do what is pleasing to God. Paul gave instruction to Timothy to teach other men the same things he had learned. Paul also said “study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Notice, the approval was not to come from man, but from God. I find that men can set standards that God never intended for us to have to achieve in order to preach. These “hoops” can become a hindrance, and

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unfortunately, there have probably been many God-called ministers in the past that have failed to meet the requirements of men and thus, gave-up preaching because of failure in requirements of men. How sad that is.

The type of education the Apostle gave to his student was one of mentor-ship. The curriculum was the word of God. Paul, approved of God to be a preacher to the Gentiles, needed no man-made credentials, even though he had obtained the greatest education a Jew could receive under Gamaliel and was a Pharisee of the law. Paul still counted those things as loss so that he may have fellowship with Christ (Philippians 3:8). What he learned in submission unto Christ was far more valuable to him than what was learned under Gamaliel and was far greater than the title of Pharisee.

So it is with my experience. Having a B.S. in Biology, I definitely count that as an achievement for me. However, many have far greater degrees from far more prestigious universities which are worth far more money than I will ever receive. In the religious world, some preachers have so many abbreviations behind their name that I would need a book on how to define them all. Those things are nice and help to secure a job, but when it comes to discipleship, worship, communion with God and His saints, and preaching and learning from God, all the secular scholarly achievements are so very unimportant. God has never had a need for them in the training up of His preachers. After all, Christ called simple fishermen to preach and baptize the first of His disciples. Let us all understand that whom God calls to preach His word is qualified from that very moment. No degrees required.

I would like to be clear, I do not disapprove of formal education. As I mentioned, I have a degree of my own. I want to encourage education that is sound and truthful. We need education for a solid and functioning society. As for the church, though, let us rest satisfied in the way that Christ has instructed His bride to

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function.

After all, He knows every change that this world will ever experience.

Do we trust Him to have prepared His church with proper instruction through the Bible to face whatever the ages may bring?

I hope we can all give an “amen” to that.

So, ministers, we have the permission and instruction to teach and commit these things unto faithful men who should be able to teach others.

Let us go and teach.