

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A CASE STUDY IN THE MINISTRY OF HAROLD WILLMINGTON: SEVEN MAJOR
CONTRIBUTIONS TO LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

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For the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

A Case Study in the Ministry of Harold Willmington: Seven Major Contributions to Liberty University

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013
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The purpose of this thesis project is to provide a qualitative case study regarding the major contributions of Harold Willmington to Liberty University. The project highlights the significant contributions to discipleship and education of non-traditional adult learners within the Liberty University family. The research questions seek to collect data regarding the degree of satisfaction of Bible education and ministry training of post-graduation alumni. The thesis project analyzes the development of the various Bible Institute programs established at Liberty University and other major contributions made by Harold Willmington from 1972 to the present. A significant amount of data is obtained through personal interviews of primary participants and a survey of post-graduate ministry students. In addition, qualitative analysis developed information from program catalogs, registrar data, digital curriculum resources and other institutional records.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Very few specialized terms or other items of specific nomenclature are used in this paper. A few abbreviations should be noted, however.

IBS refers to Institute of Biblical Studies (not the program established by Ed Hindson in the 90's which is associated with LHBI).

LBI refers to Liberty Bible Institute.

LCBI refers to Local Church Bible Institute program.

LHBI refers to Liberty Home Bible Institute.

OTGH refers to the Old Time Gospel Hour.

TRBI refers to Thomas Road Bible Institute.

WSB refers to Willmington School of the Bible.

All scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The genesis of this thesis project was a discussion with Dr. Elmer Towns, co-founder of Liberty University, who emphasized the need for a study of the ministry and personal contributions to Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University by Dr. Harold Willmington.¹

This author has been personally involved in serving Christ alongside Dr. Harold Willmington for the past twenty-seven years. Thus, there was a strong desire to document and preserve the significant contributions of Dr. Willmington's Bible teaching ministry at Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University. In a general sense, this thesis project aims to preserve Dr. Willmington's legacy of providing Bible training for anyone and everyone who sought to obtain the big picture of the Bible in understandable terms. His is a legacy that deserves recognition and preservation. During nearly three decades of assisting Dr. Willmington to work out the call of God on his life to train adults in formal Bible knowledge and theology the author has observed Dr. Willmington's diligence and enduring heart for that divine call. This Doctor of Ministry thesis project analyzes the ministry of a great man of God whose vision, call, service, and influence concerning the outworking of God's plan for his life at Liberty University are monumental in scope and depth.

¹ Spring, 2011.

The Statement of the Problem

The Bible training ministry of Dr. Harold Willmington as it has been worked out in the arena of Bible Institutes is yet undocumented in detail at Liberty University. A number of university publications mention in a general way the founding of the original Bible Institute at Thomas Road Baptist Church.² A thorough investigation and analysis of Dr. Willmington's ministry contributions remain incomplete. Thus, this effort seeks to fulfill this need in order that his work and influence might be noted, preserved and tapped by interested individuals in gospel ministry.

In simple terms, a legacy is something that is passed from one generation to another: "Your legacy is a collage of your actions, contributions and achievements. Positive or negative, big or small, what you do, give and accomplish defines your legacy. Legacy Planning helps you discover ways to use your time, talent and money to make a lasting impression on those you love and the causes you believe in."³ Author Susan V. Bosak describes the importance of legacy:

A legacy may take many forms – children, grandchildren, a business, an ideal, a book, a community, a home, some piece of ourselves. Our legacy naturally intrigues us. It's perfectly understandable that we would want to know how the world will remember us after we're gone. How many of us will be surprised? How many of us are living our lives so that our legacy reflects all that we truly hold most near and dear? How many of us are living with integrity and courage?⁴

² Liberty University catalogs and various promotional materials are two examples.

³ Plan Your Legacy, <http://www.planyourlegacy.com/> (accessed January 24, 2013).

⁴ Susan V. Bosak, "What Is Legacy?" Legacy³, <http://www.legacyproject.org/guides/whatislegacy.html> (accessed January 24, 2013).

Harold Willmington has lived such a life of courage. His life and ministry deserve to be chronicled by the institution that he served for so many decades. Susan Bosak intimates a wisdom truth that Dr. Willmington has intentionally sought to apply to his life calling:

For both young and old, the power of legacy enables us to live fully in the present. You understand that you are part of a larger community, a community that must remember its history to build its future. There is caring combined with conscience. There is also wisdom to be found in each other – linking action and reflection to deal with complex problems.

Legacy is very much about life and living.⁵

The legacy of Harold Willmington lives on in his multitude of students. He has spent the better part of his life and career in caring for the future of the church of Jesus Christ. He has invested his time, talent, spiritual gifts and resources to that end. This paper in a small way seeks to preserve his efforts in training the people of God in the Word of God. What he has always hoped for and realized is for pastors and lay people to take what he has taught and made available to them in the way of resources and pass it on to others. His contributions are repeatable.

Over the years many individuals responded to God's call to invest a portion of their lives in assisting Dr. Willmington in training the young and the not so young champions⁶ for Christ. These individuals believed in the Institute as an effective vehicle for training men and women for service to Christ in local churches. During his academic tenure Dr. Willmington enjoyed working with his various "teams" as he has sought to impart God's Word to men and women who will pass along this body of scriptural truth to the next generation. These champions deserve to be mentioned and heralded as well.

⁵ Bosak, *What is Legacy?*, n.p.

⁶ "Champions for Christ" is the educational hallmark statement of the founder of Liberty University, Jerry Falwell, Sr.

The Statement of Limitations

The research and investigatory efforts for this thesis project involve several limitations. First, this thesis project does not seek to conduct quantitative research, which involves statistical and numerical data. A quantitative analysis has been employed. Dr. Willmington has established several types of Bible Institutes, gleaned information from past Bible Institute programs. This thesis project does not include an in-depth history of the Bible Institute movement in America as this has been accomplished previously.⁷ Second, the pertinent information concerning the major ministry contributions of Harold Willmington was collected mainly from institutional records, archival documents, personal interviews and a research survey. Third, while Dr. Willmington did teach in Lynchburg Baptist College and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, the scope of this thesis project involves Dr. Willmington's use of the Bible Institute as the training vehicle at Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University.

The Biblical and Theological Basis for the Thesis Project

The Bible is at the center of Christian education and discipleship ministry. Jesus was the Master Teacher of Israel during His earthly ministry. Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews in Jesus' day, acknowledged His rabbinic status as indicated in John 3:1, 2: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said

⁷ Donald Bruce McKay, "An Evaluation of the Windsor Institute for Theological Studies of the Campbell Baptist Church of Windsor, Ontario, Canada" (D. Min., diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 13-18.

unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John 3:1, 2).⁸ Jesus is referred to as “teacher” over forty times in the New Testament.⁹ Christ taught the people about coming to the Father through genuine repentance and faith in His Son, Jesus. He taught ethical and moral principles of living a holy life. He taught through His person, words and works. We have a solid record of many of those lessons in the New Testament corpus. The early church acquired those teachings of Jesus and proclaimed them through the community of faith. An example of this is found in Acts 2:41, 42. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

A parallel passage occurs later in the Acts record.

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And, with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need (Acts 4:32-35).

The church learns from the ways and ministry of the Lord Jesus. He was not part of the religious elite of His day but rather worked to build a new community apart from the old. This new faith community believed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah of Israel and that He was introducing the promised kingdom of God as indicated in John 17:3. Jesus travelled to the cities and villages of Israel to proclaim the truth of the Word of God. This transformative truth was rejected by the religious elites for various reasons but embraced by the apostles and the

⁸ All scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

⁹ *Strong's Concordance*.

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1320&t=KJV> (accessed September 14, 2012).

disciples.¹⁰ The Good News of Jesus Christ has been passed down from the apostles to the next generation of believers and every subsequent generation of believers since. Paul presented the discipleship process in 2 Timothy 2:2. “And the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit you to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Dr. Willmington has sought to participate in the preservation of truth in his ministry of God’s Word. He has fulfilled the divine law of passing on the torch of faith. Jesus Himself set the pace in role-modeling the “teacher of teachers” and trainer of trainers” approach to promulgating His truth to the people.

This thesis project interacts with several biblical and theological disciplines that are related to the information and ministry training offered by the Institute. The various purposes of a Bible training center are to inculcate the core truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, establish foundational doctrines of the faith and develop solid ministry skills and methodologies. Moody Bible Institute is representative of the institutions that have existed for many years in training God’s people. Their purpose statement is, “Moody Bible Institute will teach you how to understand, apply and communicate the truth of God’s Word in today’s world. The goal for students at Moody is both a solid *knowledge* of God’s Word and a profound understanding of the Word. When knowledge and *understanding* come together, they can’t be kept inside, but will be expressed through your life now and into the future.”¹¹

Theologically this thesis project explores local church discipleship activities and processes which fall under the rubric of experiential sanctification. The Christ-follower seeks to

¹⁰ J.T. Young, “An Elite Still Reject Him,” *The American Spectator*, <http://spectator.org/archives/2012/12/24/an-elite-that-still-reject-him> (accessed January 9, 2013). “Christmas reminds us that, to some of our ‘elite,’ Jesus’ ultimate ‘crime’ remains unchanged. Though two thousand years separate them, some members of the liberal elite of our own day, just as were the elite of his, are unwilling to accept Jesus admitting to being God.”

¹¹ History of Moody Bible Institute. Moody Bible Institute, http://www.moody.edu/edu_MainPage.aspx?id=3474 (accessed January 15, 2013).

understand about God and the salvation that He freely grants. “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18). Most disciples need help or are able to learn faster with the assistance of those who have progressed in the Christian life. David Lanier has an appropriate word on this subject. “We need to have a concept of what discipleship entails. Much of what our Sunday school classes accomplish on Sunday morning falls under the category of discipleship. But we need to get back to scripture to get the content straight. This lecture has been but a step in that direction. Once we understand what biblical discipleship entails, we need to begin discipling others, one on one and in small groups. These people need to understand that their training is not an end in itself but a means to a larger end. The day will come when each of them will be discipling others.”¹² This spiritual input may come in the form of a special discipleship class or program or through introductory and advanced Bible classes. Paul Watson reports that groups learn faster than individuals. “Groups require less repetition of facts and principles before they can recall them collectively. As we’ve said before, the group recollection process causes group memory to become individual memory.”¹³

Charles Stanley said, “Would you like to learn to use your spiritual gift? Then you must find a place to serve. It is in the practice of your gift that you will best learn to use it.”¹⁴ The apostle Peter emphasized as much: “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in

¹² David E. Lanier, “The Multiplication of Disciples,” *Faith and Mission Journal* 16, (Spring 1999). <http://www.galaxie.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/article/fm16-2-01?highlight=discipleship> (accessed January 9, 2013), 12.

¹³ Paul Watson, “Small Groups that Have the DNA of a Disciple-Making Movement. A Group Exercise,” *Mission Frontiers*, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/small-groups-that-have-the-dna-of-a-disciple-making-movement> (Accessed December 29, 2012).

¹⁴ Charles Stanley, “How Can I Discover My Spiritual Gifts?,” *In Touch Ministries*, http://www.intouch.org/you/spiritual-gifts/content?topic=learning_about_your_spiritual_gift_spiritual_gifts (Accessed January 9, 2013).

serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). Peter’s exhortation points to the disciple as one who must use one’s gifts to serve others, and not merely edify oneself. Paul explained similarly that in fact, when we use our spiritual gifts it is God actually working through us. “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all” (1 Corinthians 12:1-4). Hence, it can be seen that scripture plays a significant role in sanctification. Paul taught that true Christ-followers would demonstrate the life of Christ in their being and conduct. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The previous statements concern the doctrine of experiential sanctification.¹⁵ Paul offers words of exhortation in 1 Thessalonians 4:3: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.” These words encourage believers to apply the Word of God directly in daily living, to acquire a growing sanctification. The heartbeat of any Bible Institute program is the continued spiritual growth and maturity of its students. Popular Bible teacher John MacArthur also connects the Word of God with discipleship and Christian maturity.

The process of sanctification that goes on all our lifelong and we never arrive at the finish, there's no such thing in this life as perfect sanctification. But the process is dependent upon scripture. Just as the process of your own growth is dependent upon food, you grow as you eat. And our food is scripture, the Word of God, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Characteristic of life is growth, where there is life there is growth, where there is growth there is life, it's not static and we grow because we live and we live because we eat and

¹⁵ “Experiential sanctification is related to Christian growth. Christians are immature in wisdom, knowledge, experience, and grace. In all these things they are appointed to grow, and their growth should be manifest.” Lewis Sperry Chafer. *Major Bible Themes*, rev. ed. Ed. John Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1974), 209.

we eat the Word of God. So the scripture then is the food that fuels our spiritual growth and our sanctification.¹⁶

The effectiveness of a Bible Institute is its focus on Bible knowledge and Bible doctrine. The local church struggles to lead its congregants in these two vital areas of Christian experience in the weekly worship services of the church. Teaching time is usually limited to the Sunday and Wednesday evening meeting events. An extended time of expository teaching is required to involve individuals in learning about their salvation and its subsequent outworking in daily life. The church-based Bible Institute is equipped for such ministry. The post-salvation work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christ-follower is the work of making that one more like Christ. This process is known as sanctification. Charles F. Baker provides a simple definition of the term sanctification. “The basic meaning of sanctification is a separation unto God or a separation from evil, or the resultant state, the conduct befitting those who are thus set apart. A saint is one who is thus set apart.”¹⁷ J. Hampton Keathley offers another helpful definition: “Experiential sanctification is the process whereby God makes the believer more and more like Jesus Christ through our union with Christ and the indwelling Spirit. Note: Just as in justification, sanctification is the work of God that must also be appropriated by faith.”¹⁸ By implication one may assert that the setting apart to God of one in salvation continues on progressively in the life of the believer. There are several key principles involving one’s experiential sanctification.

¹⁶ John MacArthur. *The Power of Scripture in the Process of Sanctification*. Grace to You, <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/90-287/the-power-of-scripture-in-the-process-of-sanctification> (accessed January 9, 2013).

¹⁷ Charles F. Baker, *A Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Grace Publications, 1994), 454.

¹⁸ J. Hampton Keathley, “Soteriology—The Doctrine of Salvation,” <http://bible.org/article/soteriology-doctrine-salvationepl.org> (accessed December 29, 2012).

1. Disciples of Christ Must Be Truly Converted.

All human beings are separated from God by sin and must come to the place of acknowledging their status as sinners before God. The Bible says we are dead to God. “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved” (Ephesians 2:4, 5). “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23.) “There is none righteous, no, not one...” (Romans 3:10).

The sinner must realize that sin must be paid for. “For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life” (Romans 6:23). Theologian Wayne Grudem states, “Because we are sinners in bondage to sin and to Satan, we need someone to provide redemption¹⁹ and they ‘redeem’ us out of that bondage. When we speak of redemption, the idea of a ‘ransom’ comes into view. A ransom is the price paid to redeem someone from bondage or captivity.”²⁰

The sinner must believe that Christ paid that price. “But God demonstrated His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). And also, Titus 3:5, 6 provides needed insight. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” The world is full of religions. Religion is man’s attempt to become accepted by God. However, in the true gospel, the sinner must believe that Christ took his place on the cross, paying the penalty for

¹⁹ Floyd H. Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 3d ed. 1998, 348). “Redemption is the act of God whereby, on the basis of Jesus’ ransom payment, He releases the gospel believer from bondage to his evil spiritual masters and from the penalty of his sins and brings him into bondage to the Lord Jesus, his Benefactor.”

²⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 580.

his sins. Floyd Barackman defines substitution. “The idea of substitution is that Jesus died for sinners (Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:14-15). With “for” (Gk. *Huper*) meaning ‘on behalf of,’ this emphasizes the truth that Jesus took the place of sinners on the cross.”²¹ The apostle Peter explained it pointedly: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

Salvation is possible because of God’s love and grace alone through the work of Christ. Chuck Swindoll explains one of the motives for God’s salvation as a satisfaction concerning His infinite love for sinners. “The first motive God had in saving us was to satisfy His infinite love for the lost. This particular motive is stated repeatedly in the scriptures, but no verse is more familiar and loved than John 3:16.”²² “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The apostle Paul highlighted the gifting aspect of God in John 3:16. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

The Good News of Christ was an Old Testament prediction as confirmed by Peter in his sermon at Pentecost. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which

²¹ Barackman, 158.

²² Swindoll, 810.

God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21). Any student of the Bible must come to understand the Old Testament Scriptures point to the future ministry and advent of Christ.

The sinner must believe that salvation is believing that Jesus Christ alone provides forgiveness of sins and eternal life and trusting in His death, burial and resurrection for salvation. Wayne Grudem provides a cogent definition: “Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God.”²³

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The sinner must receive Jesus Christ personally. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13). The believing sinner receives Christ as personal Savior and Lord. It is God that does the accepting because His Son has taken the punishment for that sinner.

2. Disciples of Christ Must Know Bible Doctrine.

Experiential sanctification is achieved by an in-depth understanding of Bible truth. Living as Christ lived is learned behavior and it is Christ’s desire for true believers. Jesus spoke of this in His prayer to the Father. “Sanctify them by your truth. Your

²³ Grudem, 710.

Word is Truth” (John 17:17). Paul echoed this truth in Ephesians. “Husbands love your wives as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word” (Ephesians 5:25, 26). The goal of knowing and understanding God’s truth is found in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (Ephesians 4:11-15).

The mature believer has a full knowledge of the person and work of Jesus Christ and thereby is living the Christian life on a sure foundation that prevails against atheistic attacks and pollution by the culture.

3. Disciples of Christ Acquire Experiential Sanctification by the Work of the Holy Spirit in Faith. That it is a work of faith is demonstrated in Colossians 2:6, 7. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Scholars may debate whether this verse pertains to the believer’s faith or the faith of Christ or both. The point is, the Christian life is not our life to live because Christ’s life within us. In his letter to the Galatians Paul strongly defended the true gospel. In the conclusion of his argument on that theme he said this: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ

lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

The Old Testament sage offers wisdom in this regard. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6). The sanctified life is possible because of God’s life in us. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). Paul follows up this notion in chapter 6. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). And, the disciple of Christ has been adopted into God’s own family. “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6). We can check ourselves to see if we are progressing in our sanctification. “And he that keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 John 3:24).

4. Disciples of Christ Acquire Experiential Sanctification by the Work of Prayer.

Communicating with God, true praying is a believer’s effective communication with God. The general New Testament formula for prayer is to pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18), through (or in the name of) Jesus Christ (John 14:6, 13), and to the Father (Ephesians 2:18; 3:14).²⁴ Jesus said on one occasion, “Apart from me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5). A gospel preacher or teacher will not be in ministry long before this truth is borne out. Much can be accomplished in the flesh

²⁴ Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *Understanding Christian Theology* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 1033.

but accomplishing good works in the spiritual realm require God's work and that is obtained by prayer. Jesus emphasized this as He neared His earthly ministry. He told His disciples: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13, 14). The servant of Christ must develop a consistent life of prayer in order to commune with God and enjoy His fellowship.

This then, is the necessary information concerning the biblical and theological requirements of the thesis project. A Bible Institute student will be truly converted, obtain thorough Bible knowledge, understand how experiential sanctification is a part of the Christian walk and be known for a life of prayer.

Statement of Methodology

Chapter One relates the basis for this thesis project in a statement of the problem involved, a statement of the limitations of the research, a statement concerning the biblical and theological basis for the thesis project, a statement of methodologies employed, a review of the core literature and abbreviations used in the thesis project. The thesis project is not a topical paper but a case study using qualitative research. The purpose of qualitative analysis is to understand and interpret social interactions while the purpose of quantitative analysis is to test hypotheses, look at cause and effect, and make predictions. The scientific method employed is as follows: qualitative researchers gather the facts or information and then develop a hypothesis. This is the inductive method of research. Quantitative researchers utilize the deductive method of investigation, beginning with a hypothesis and seek the data to prove it,

that is, researchers test a theory. The kind of data or information sought by the researcher helps understand the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research.²⁵ Qualitative researchers normally seek data from sources that employ open-ended responses derived from personal interviews, focus groups or some other way of making observations and or reflections. For instance, researchers may make use of reviews by “combing through scholarly literature or other published writings to determine attitudes towards a subject.”²⁶ By contrast, “quantitative data is based on precise measurements using structured and validated data-collection instruments.”²⁷ In addition, qualitative analysis involves smaller groups of individuals that are not randomly selected and the data sought is in the form of words, images or objects and not statistical numbers.²⁸

This thesis project employed a survey tool to gather particular responses from the participants that were specific and some other responses that were open-ended based on the individual’s opinions or experiences. Thus, while most of the research was qualitative in nature, like nearly all research it was a blend of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The qualitative research was collected through institutional documents and archive records, personal interviews and a compilation of pertinent information derived from a variety of typical and non-standard sources.

²⁵ “Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research,” Xavier University Library, http://www.xavier.edu/library/help/qualitative_quantitative.pdf (accessed March 30, 2013).

²⁶ “Qualitative versus Quantitative Research,” American Intercontinental University, <http://www.aiuniv.edu/Student-Life/Blog/October-2012/Qualitative-Vs-Quantitative-Research> (accessed March 30, 2013).

²⁷ Xavier.

²⁸ Ibid.

Chapter Two concerns the overall development of the Bible Institute Movement in America as a foundation for context in which to observe TRBI, Harold Willmington's first Bible institute and the subsequent Institutes he established. It is necessary for those interested in this project to understand the context within which the Bible Institute at Thomas Road Baptist Church had its origin. More importantly it will enable those individuals who love and appreciate the man involved in leading TRBI and its "children" for nearly forty years to learn much of the commitment of the persons and events that comprised the Bible Institutes of H. L. Willmington. Thus, to document this rich heritage serves to enhance their own Bible training experience because of their direct participation in that move of God. Those individuals can be thankful for the faithful service of the godly men and women who endeavored to teach, train and formally equip the lay people of God's churches.

Chapter Three presents the story of the beginning of Harold Willmington's ministry at Liberty University. The content of this chapter involves the original vision for the program, the primary persons associated with it and the man who actually did the work to establish the program and lead it forward. Also included is the historical record of milestones of the program.

Chapter Four discusses the seven major contributions made to Liberty University from 1972 to the present day. The content includes general analysis of the various curricular items and pedagogical approaches to the teaching-learning philosophy used in the Bible Institute with a special look at Dr. Willmington's teaching style. Space is also given to the Bible Institute curriculum as it developed and transformed over the various iterations it experienced. Sample lessons and instructional items are available in the appendices.

Chapter Five is a concluding section concerning the findings of the research instrument, which is a post-graduation survey concerning the effectiveness of the Institute's training module. Also included are remarks concerning the continued relevancy of the Bible Institute program at the present. Several key lessons and applications are highlighted and the chapter concludes with a challenge and recommendations for future generations of Bible lovers and investigators.

Review of Selected Literature

The Church Literature

Some books written during the early years of Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University contribute information concerning the development of God's vision for formal Christian education. A list would include *Capturing a Town for Christ* which presents the determined efforts of Jerry Falwell to reach his city for Christ and to inspire others to join him in doing so. The book served to spark renewed interest in other pastors to redouble their efforts to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to their communities. The book helped Dr. Willmington in understanding the scope of the vision God imparted to Jerry Falwell and others. It also inculcated a sense of the commitment to prayer, planning, communicating and energy of Jerry Falwell as he worked to make the vision a reality.

Church Aflame is another work that inspires personal and corporate evangelism. Super-aggressive evangelism was the approach employed by Dr. Jerry Falwell from the onset of his ministry efforts. Such commitment to evangelism resulted in the conversion of many individuals who then required the benefit of discipleship ministry and Bible training. It is

difficult to believe that in the early days of the Thomas Road Baptist Church detractors criticized Jerry Falwell for emphasizing evangelism. This evangelism focus resulted in a large church for which he received criticism as well. That did not bother him because his mandate came from the Bible. Towns wrote, “Strategy for church outreach his found in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The strategy of the Great Commission is reflected in three aspects; (1) evangelism, (2) baptism, and (3) teaching. The Great Commission has three aspects, but it is one command. Christians cannot choose what aspect of the Great Commission they will obey.”²⁹

A recent book highlights again the simple vision of a giant of the faith, D.L. Moody, who desired to train Christian workers. James Vincent, senior editor of Moody Publishers, wrote *The MBI Story: The Vision and Worldwide Impact of Moody Bible Institute*.³⁰ Moody had many capable friends and colleagues assisting him in the development of the Bible Institute and its various outreaches. They shared his fire for evangelism and the training of “gap-men” that would work for Christ. These individuals were not seminarians but “practitioners” who pastored the flock of God. The Moody Bible Institute early on offered training for men and women, as well as a colportage (distribution of religious booklets or materials) association, a correspondence school launched by R.A. Torrey, an evening school and a missionary union. Harold Willmington is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and no doubt was keenly influenced by the Moody organization and the means employed to carry out the Great Commission.

²⁹ Elmer Towns and Jerry Falwell, “Strategy Based on Scripture,” in *Church Aflame* (Lynchburg, VA: Digital Commons at Liberty University, 1971), http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/towns_books (accessed January 2, 2013).

³⁰ James Vincent, *The MBI Story: The Vision and Worldwide Impact of Moody Bible Institute* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2011), location 193 of 4961 Kindle Edition. See also location 2294.

The Local Church Bible Institute Start-Up Manual by the author and other IBS staff members from 1984 provides step by step instruction for establishing a church-based Bible training center. This work provides organizational, staffing, recruiting and teaching helps for those who will implement the program in the local church.

Before he became the host of the Back to the Bible radio broadcast, Woodrow Kroll was president of Practical Bible College (Now, Davis College) in Johnson City, NY. He wrote a pamphlet entitled *Is the Day of the Bible Institute Dead?* which offers much important information in its concisely written pages about the validity of the Bible Institute as an educational institution.³¹

The Evangelical Teacher Training Association website features the condensed presentation of Jonathan N. Thigpen who wrote *A Brief History of the Bible Institute in America*.³² This book is crucial reading for a solid overview of the establishment and growth of the Bible Institute movement.

The Liberty Bible Institute and University catalogs of various years were instrumental in providing needed background information.

The Moody Bible Correspondence Course, Vol. I provided important background information on C.I. Scofield, one of Dr. Willmington's favorite teachers and the early development of the C.I. Scofield correspondence program that is administered even today, through Moody Bible Institute.

³¹ Woodrow Michael Kroll, *Is the Day of the Bible Institute Dead?* (New York: Practical Press, c. 1982), p. 3 (no pagination in this pamphlet).

³² Jonathan N. Thigpen, "A Brief History of the Bible Institute Movement in America," Evangelical Training Association, <http://www.etaworld.org/general/a-brief-history-of-the-bible-institute-movement-in-america.html> (accessed December 15, 2011).

Jerry Falwell, Aflame for God was instrumental in helping Dr. Willmington “catch fire” for attempting large things for God’s glory. Along those same lines but many years later is the autobiography of Jerry Falwell, *Strength for the Journey*.

Another resource that entered into Dr. Willmington’s professional life was a book by one of his favorite teachers at Moody Bible Institute, S. Maxwell Coder. He wrote the book *God’s Will for Your Life*. Dr. Willmington firmly believes that seeking God for guidance and direction is possible through prayer and Bible study and that God confirms His intentions in some manner.

Several doctoral dissertations or major projects were also investigated for pertinent information. These included Dr. Willmington’s Doctor of Ministry project, “A Bible Appreciation and Learning Program for the Adults of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia,” Douglas Allen Barcalow’s “Continuing Education in the Bible College Movement: A Historical Study of Five Institutions,” and Donald Bruce McKay’s “An Evaluation of the Windsor Institute for Theological Studies of the Campbell Baptist Church of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.”

The Secular Literature

Laurie Richelin’s *Blueprint for Learning* adds insights for tapping students for mentoring and classroom assistance.

Fixing College Education by Charles Muscatine defines the educated person. One question for this thesis project then, is, how does the Bible Institute contribute to the requirements of an educated person?

Kate Exley and Reg Dennick teamed up to write an excellent resource entitled, *Giving a Lecture*. This information reflects upon a major teaching method used in the Bible Institute program.

Teaching the Big Class by David Vaught was interesting to compare with Dr. Willmington's experience in teaching large groups in a classroom setting.

Charles A. Wedemeyer opens one's eyes to non-traditional learners with his book, *Learning at the Back Door*. The local church Bible Institute has an educational advantage to colleges or universities in that it is not necessarily locked into standardized approaches to learning. It is smaller and autonomous and probably can more easily adapt to new technologies or innovations in teaching or learning more quickly than a larger institution.

The Biblical Literature

The pastor is the equipper of the disciples of the local church. A touchstone passage for this truth is Ephesians 4:11, 13:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Dr. Falwell, Dr. Towns and Dr. Willmington adhered to this Biblical injunction to utilize spiritually gifted individuals in preparing the local church congregants for gospel

ministry and discipleship ministry. These leaders strongly believed that it was the responsibility of the local church and the pastor to train the lay people to do the work of the ministry. The pastor was not the caretaker of the congregation who performed all the work of the ministry. Philippians 2:19-30 epitomizes the mature saints of God working with less mature saints to become mature in the faith. Jerry Falwell, Elmer Towns and Harold Willmington seized the multiplication principle that Jesus imparted and which was recorded in John 14:12. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” These men, as well, lived every day in the living mandate of Christ’s Great Commission.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:16-20).

The Bible Institute is needed in order to offset the confusion about the Bible. The apostle Paul offered helpful guidance. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1). In 2 Timothy 4:3, 4 he indicated a future time when the elect will fall away. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

It is difficult to train lay people in comprehensive Bible knowledge and doctrine through the weekly preaching events of the church. Much more time is required of the pastor

and staff to disseminate the information, address questions and provide guidance. The Sunday School is effective to an extent as explained by Elmer Towns in his book *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School*. Elmer Towns has spent a lifetime studying the Sunday School. He relates how planning and curriculum are part of the Sunday School ministry.

Sunday School lessons, however, follow a predetermined curriculum. These lessons are planned by specialists in Christian education who are concerned that equal treatment be given to every subject according to the importance it has in scripture and the influence it can make on a life. Some curriculums plan to cover the Bible every four years, others in seven years, and some once in the lifetime of a student. Regular Sunday School attendance is important for every believer so that he might gain a full knowledge of Bible content and doctrine.³³

The point here is that it takes years for the individual to receive a comprehensive exposure to the content of the entire Bible and formal teaching of Bible doctrine. Clearly, some entity beyond the Sunday School is required to more quickly train people in the scriptures and doctrine.

Jerry Falwell was a man of extraordinary faith in the will and ways of God. He read the account in Acts of 3,000 souls coming to Christ in one day and believed God for a multiplication of souls in his hometown. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

Christian education is of paramount concern to the local church. Bob Jones University Press has the following statement regarding the purpose of Christian education. “The purpose of Christian education is the directing of the process of human development toward God's

³³ Elmer Towns, *How to Grow an Effective Sunday School*, http://elmertowns.com/books/online/howto_grow_ss/how_to_grow_a_successful_ss%5BETowns%5D.PDF (accessed January 3, 2013), 2.

objective for man: godliness of character and action. It bends its efforts to the end ‘that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’ (2 Timothy 3:17).”³⁴

The Bible Institute is needed in order to obey the commands within the Bible. Note its various admonitions in the following passages. Paul teaches in 2 Timothy 2:1, 2 the necessary transferability principle of God’s ways of preserving the faith in the world. “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 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.” Paul also indicated the personal responsibility of the person who would handle the Word of God before others. He or she must be prepared to accurately impart the truth of God. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). The student of the Bible can rest assured that the truth he or she is proclaiming is of God and is effectual. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

And in 2 Timothy 4:1, 2 those who preach and teach the Word of God can stand on God’s revealed body of truth. “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

³⁴ BJU Press. “The Christian Philosophy of Education.” <http://www.bjupress.com/resources/christian-school/solutions/philosophy-education.php> (accessed January 12, 2013).

As Paul exhorted Timothy, all those who are called of God to proclaim His Word must be strong of heart and committed to fulfill the will of God no matter the circumstances they face in the execution of those duties.

Titus 1:9 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Elmer Towns had this verse in mind when he said, “Education must be *transmissive* in nature and *indoctrination* in focus.”³⁵ The next two passages refer to the passing on of the faith from the present generation to the future generation.

Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them to thy sons, and thy sons’ sons; specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children” (Deuteronomy 4:9-10). Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).

An overall conclusive passage that relates to Dr. Willmington’s ministry of the Word is found in Colossians 1:9, 10. “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

³⁵ Towns, Elmer. *Church Aflame*, (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2009), <https://lucas.liberty.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=333447> (accessed January 12, 2013).

CHAPTER TWO
A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE
BIBLE INSTITUTE MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

Definition of “Bible Institute”

At this point it will be advantageous to ask this question: “What is a Bible Institute?” Bible institutes typically do not grant degrees but diplomas. Woodrow Kroll, former president of Practical Bible Training School in New York, clarifies the differences between other ministry schools and the Bible institute.

A Bible Institute is sometimes referred to as a three-year Bible college but that is a gross understatement of the differences between the two. A Bible Institute is, in the truest sense, a vocational school. It is a three-year specialized school, a school of ministry. It is a unique school, a specialized school, a vocational school and frequently a terminal school. It is a school of ministry. It is designed neither as a pre-seminary program nor as a substitute for college or seminary. It is totally different approach to the study of the Bible and the skills to minister the Word effectively to the needs of others. The Bible Institute is not a pared-down college but a beefed-up school of ministry.¹

The Beginning of the Movement

The literature on the subject of the Bible institute movement in America is anything but prolific. A Google search of the topic reveals a mere 9,000 hits, with most of them of a secondary nature. Jonathan Thigpen, writing for the Evangelical Teacher Training Association,

¹ Woodrow Michael Kroll, *Is the Day of the Bible Institute Dead?* (New York: Practical Press, c. 1982), 3.

puts the era of beginnings for the movement as 1882-1915. A.B. Simpson began a formal training school in New York City in 1882. He called it the Missionary Training College for Home and Foreign Missionaries and Evangelists. He established this training institution because of a burning heart for the immigrant poor of New York City. After a later move and name change it is now Nyack College.²

God was imparting a similar vision in the hearts of other believers in America. The following item from the web site of Moody Bible Institute is informative.

Early in 1883, several Chicago residents began meeting weekly with Dryer³ to pray that Moody would return to Chicago and develop the new school. During a Jan. 22, 1886 meeting in Chicago to discuss city evangelization, the subject of a training school again came up. By this time Dryer's persistent message had taken hold in Moody's heart. Moody addressed the gathering: "I tell you what I want, and what I have on my heart. I believe we have got to have gap-men to stand between the laity and the ministers; men who are trained to do city mission work. Take men that have the gifts and train them for the work of reaching the people." Thus the Chicago Evangelization Society, later renamed the Moody Bible Institute, was born.⁴

Consider this newspaper announcement in the New York Times dated August 21, 1889 for additional detail concerning the founding of Moody Bible Institute.

Chicago. Aug. 20--There will soon be opened in Chicago a theological school that will be unique among contemporary institutions for religious training. It is to be called the Bible Institute, and is intended for education and practical training of evangelists. While in some outward features it will resemble the theological seminary of the regulation type as conducted by all Protestant denominations on the present day, in other more essential points it will be analogous to the schools of the prophets as they are believed to have existed in the Old Testament time. It will be conducted under the auspices of the Chicago Evangelization Society. D.L. Moody, the originator and propagator of the

² Jonathan N. Thigpen, "A Brief History of the Bible Institute Movement in America, Evangelical Training Association, <http://www.etaworld.org/general/a-brief-history-of-the-bible-institute-movement-in-america.html> (accessed December 15, 2011).

³ This was Miss Emeline "Emma" Dryer. D.L. Moody met her in Chicago and saw her great heart for Christ and keen ability to teach. They became good friends and Moody put her in charge of Bible training programs and eventually she was influential in persuading him to start a Bible Institute in Chicago.

⁴ History of Moody Bible Institute, Moody Bible Institute, http://www.moody.edu/edu_MainPage.aspx?id=3474 (accessed December 15, 2011).

innovation, is also to be its president. Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, Marshall Field, Carson, Pirle and Scott, E.G. Keith, John V. Farwell, and many others have contributed \$250,000 for the founding of the school. Of this sum \$75,000 will be used in providing the home for the institution in Pearson Street between Wells and LaSalle avenues, on the north side. October 1 is the time set for opening the institution to students. Both young men and women are to be admitted to the school on equal terms. Miss Gertrude Harlbert, an experienced teacher from Northfield, Mass., will be Principal of the woman's department when opened.⁵

Moody and A.B. Simpson, two giants of the faith shared similar passions for training men and women of God in the Word of God. Their desire was not to train pastors but “worker bees” for Christ. With America experiencing the winds of revival and such great human need the Church of Jesus Christ was poised to minister the gospel and help the people. But to do this great work the workers needed adequate training so the Bible Institute movement began. What was the beginning like? Consider Thigpen's description.

Simpson and Moody's efforts were the beginnings of an avalanche of Bible institutes which were started from 1886 to 1915. In this 30-year period, no less than 32 institutes were formally organized. These schools spanned the geographical as well as theological spectrum. Many of these schools are still in existence today, although now as colleges or seminaries. Well-known modern institutions of higher learning such as Biola University, Northwestern College (MN), Gordon College, Toccoa Falls Bible College, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School were all begun as Bible institutes during this time period (Brereton 1990, 71-72). All of these institutions emphasized the need of training lay people for Christian service, although this focus decreased for many of the Bible institutes as the years went on.⁶

Another historical explanation for the Bible institute movement in America is provided by a chapter entitled “Hispanic American Religious Cultures” in *American Religious Cultures*, ed. Miguel A. De La Torre.

⁵ A Bible Institute. (1889, Aug 21). *New York Times (1857-1922)*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/94746407?accountid=12085> (accessed November 14, 2012).

⁶ Ibid.

The beginnings of Bible institutes can be traced to what Lawrence A. Cremin identified as the metropolitan period (1876–1980) of educational developments in the United States. During the earlier part of this period, Protestantism was facing the challenges of addressing modernism and industrialism. Two different Christian views arose to address this challenge. The first was an emergent social Christianity. This perspective saw the church as responsible for bringing Christian values to bear on the industrial order. The second Christian view was a fundamentalist one. It viewed the world as a sinking vessel from which its passengers could be saved only through immediate conversion. Hence, the church's mission was an evangelistic one with a more personal pietistic focus. It was out of the fundamentalist perspective that the Bible institute movement emerged. Dwight L. Moody pioneered three major educational strategies: the Bible conference, which focused on renewal through Bible study; the Student Volunteer Movement, which recruited college graduates for services as domestic and foreign missionaries; and the Bible institute, which became a training school for persons who would carry out ministries in local congregations and on the urban streets.⁷

According to Thigpen numerous Bible institutes were established from 1916 to 1929 in an era he termed “Continued growth of the Bible Institute movement” and the emphasis on training began to shift towards preparation for full time Christian service rather than training the men and women in the local church. Here is an example of a Bible institute operating during this time period. The report is from the *New York Times* dated Sept. 30, 1927.

The fall semester of the National Bible Institute was opened last night with a dinner for students at the headquarters building, 340 West Fifty-fifth Street. President Don O. Shelton announced that the enrollment of students will probably exceed last year's total of 325. The Faculty will include thirty-six professors and lecturers.⁸

The Christian Missionary and Alliance main educational institution has Bible Institute beginnings: “Simpson University was founded in 1921 as Simpson Bible Institute by W.W.

¹¹ Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth. “Bible Institutes.” In *American Religious Cultures*, edited by Miguel A. De La Torre. Vol. 1. 71-78. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009.
http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ps/i.do?action=interpret&id=GALE|CX2446900023&v=2.1&u=vic_liberty&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&authCount=1#contentcontainer (Accessed November 14, 2012).

⁸ "Bible Institute Opens." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, September 30, 1927,
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/104063870?accountid=12085> (accessed November 12, 2012), 4.

Newberry, who served as its first president. Established in Seattle, Washington, the school was named in honor of Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919), a Presbyterian minister who pioneered the Bible institute movement during the late nineteenth century and founded and founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance.”⁹

An interesting item is reported in the *Washington Post* of 1931 concerning a promotion at the American Home Bible Institute.

William C. Bond has accepted the presidency of the American Home Bible Institute, the position being offered him by the cabinet of that institution. The American Home Bible Institute was organized in 1918. Since that time scores of classes have been conducted in churches and homes in Washington and, in addition, many individuals in this country and in Canada, have been directed in systematic Bible study.¹⁰

The American Home Bible Institute met in churches to teach the scriptures but also ministered the Word of God in individual homes as well. A bit of history for the AHBI reveals its development:

Washington Bible College was established to provide an opportunity for the study of the Word of God. The vision of its founders is perpetuated in the statement that "first emphasis shall be upon Bible courses." In the early twenties three Bible institutes existed in Washington DC. The American Home Bible Institute placed its emphasis on correspondence courses and home Bible study. The Washington School of the Bible stressed Bible training to prepare full-time Christian workers in this country and abroad. In 1938, three schools merged to form Washington Bible Institute. The merger was completed in 1940, and Mr. Glenn W. Wagner was elected to be the first president. In 1956 the name was changed from Washington Bible Institute to Washington Bible College, and the school was accepted into associate membership in the American Association of Bible Colleges.¹¹

⁹ "History," Simpson University, <http://simpsonu.edu/Pages/About/Simpson/History.htm> (accessed November 12, 2012).

¹⁰ "W.C. Bond Heads Bible Institute," *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*, March 28, 1931, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/150223449?accountid=12085> (accessed November 12, 2012), 10.

¹¹ Ibid.

This item exemplifies the perpetuation of Bible Institutes through transformation or amalgamation with other institutions of higher learning.

The Blossoming of the Movement

The Bible Institute movement entered a standardization phase from 1930 to 1947 with two associations serving as accrediting bodies. Thigpen writes,

Between 1930 and 1947, 48 new Bible institutes were started (Brereton 1990, 74-76). By 1947, well over 100 Bible institutes/Bible colleges were in existence in the United States. Two organizations, which started on opposite ends of this time period, played important roles in the continued development of the Bible institute movement. Evangelical Teacher Training Association (ETTA, today ETA, Evangelical Training Association), founded in 1930 and the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC), founded in 1947, were the two key bodies which served to standardize the Bible institute movement.¹²

From 1948 to 1969 the Bible Institute movement experienced institutionalization and separation. From its beginnings the Institute existed to train lay men and women in Bible content and ministry skills. By the 50s and beyond the Institutes began a focus on degree-granting programs.

The Bible institute movement involved not only evangelical institutions but Catholic and Lutheran as well. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* made this report on Sept. 16, 1956.

Chicagoland Lutherans Have 12 Units--Lutheran church Bible institute program started with two branches has begun its eighth year with Chicagoland area locations. "The interest in this program has been on the increase the last few years," outlined Adolph H. Kramer, superintendent of Christian education for the Northern Illinois district of the Lutheran Missouri Synod and superintendent of the Concordia Bible Institute, 308

¹² Thigpen, *A Brief History of the Bible Institute Movement in America*.

Chicago Avenue, Oak Park. “The institute program got started in St. Louis back in 1948 when a Bible institute was opened there,” Kramer continued. “A year later we opened the Concordia Bible institute and started two branches in this area. This fall, 57 institutes will be operating throughout the country under the auspices of the Lutheran church Missouri Synod.”¹³

Another early Bible institute movement participant was the Assemblies of God.

One of the Bible institutes that was organized during this time and that still continues to operate is the Latin American Bible Institute in La Puente, California.¹⁴ Founder Alice E. Luce was a missionary of the Church Missionary Society. After working in Texas she launched out on her own to the Pacific coast to take up missionary work among the expatriate Mexicans in Los Angeles, leaving behind the work undertaken by Henry Ball in Texas. In 1926, she began the Latin American Bible Institute (LABI) in San Diego. She also contributed educational materials and the curriculum to an institute with the same name that Henry Ball had begun at the same time in Texas. Both institutes continue to operate as a part of the Assemblies of God Higher Education Institutions.¹⁵

The period from 1970 to 1995 saw many changes to the Institute movement. The social and economic changes of these decades put pressure on Bible Institutes in general. As more young people sought a college degree, the population available for recruitment in Bible Institutes shrank accordingly. In addition pressure to recruit students led a number of Institutes to either merge or close altogether. Others became Bible Colleges and began offering degrees. Thigpen makes an interesting observation about “diploma mills” during this period.

¹³ “Bible Institute Opens 3 More Area Branches,” *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)*, September 16, 1956, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/179934178?accountid=12085>, 1.

¹⁴ About LABI, Latin American Bible Institute, <http://www.labi.edu> (accessed November 11, 2012).

¹⁵ Ibid, Miguel A. De La Torre.

The third factor which affected the Bible institute movement was the proliferation of so-called “diploma mills.” This phenomenon, well-documented by author-researcher Steve Levicoff in his book *Name and Frame It* (Institute on Religion and Law), is where an institution grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in return for some type of “academic” work and a sizeable amount of money. These schools are not accredited by a recognized academic body and operate mainly through the mail. This type of school is strongly criticized by those who are offering legitimate work in a correspondence or extension format. The criticisms against the “diploma mills” are not usually focused at the *mode* of education employed, but rather that degrees granted by such schools are simply *not equivalent* to those granted by accredited schools.¹⁶

The staff at Liberty Bible Institute also noted a change in the 90s and beyond concerning its graduates. It was becoming increasingly a degree-requiring world for those seeking employment in local churches and in other areas of Christian service. It was thought that the LBI program was strong enough to overcome this degree requirement and our graduates would return to the local church and establish local church Bible institutes to continue training those who could not move away to attend Bible college.

One area of Christian ministry that more often than not requires a college degree is foreign missions. Most recognized mission agencies have degree requirements that applicants must meet. Sudan Interior Mission, for instance, addresses the issue on its web site for applicants to the mission. “There are academic qualifications that will be required, depending on the type of ministry and length of term. Some countries require a degree for entry.”¹⁷ The colossal Southern Baptist Convention International Mission Board posts the following requirement guidelines for missionary service three years and longer. These are summarized for brevity: “The International Mission Board has determined that the long-term effectiveness of missionary personnel is closely related to solid academic preparation, especially in biblical,

¹⁶ De La Torre.

¹⁷ Qualifications for Service, SIM, <http://sim.org/index.php/content/qualifications-for-service> (accessed December 20, 2012).

missiological and theological areas.” Each apprentice head of household applicants (husbands and all singles) is required to have a minimum of 12 hours of credit from an approved, graduate level theological institution prior to being approved by trustees. The twelve credits must be in the categories of biblical survey, theological survey and hermeneutics. Individuals serving as career missionaries or church planters require a bachelor’s degree and some cases a graduate level seminary degree.¹⁸

What differences exist between Bible Institutes and Christian Liberal Arts colleges or universities? Are certain distinctive elements associated with Bible colleges that separate them from other institutions of learning? Dr. Kevin Bauder is president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Plymouth, MN. He expressed his thoughts regarding this question in an essay concerning the future of the Bible College as a viable institution for training Christians. In his discussion he provides information about various educational institutions.

Most obviously, Bible colleges must play to their strength, and that strength is biblical instruction. It goes without saying that good biblical instruction is (almost?) completely absent from secular institutions. More relevantly, Christian universities and Christian liberal arts colleges generally do teach the Bible with less excellence than the better Bible colleges. Christian education has to involve more than tacking a few Bible survey courses onto a degree in broadcasting or physical therapy. It has to involve the intensive, concentrated study of the Bible itself. The distinctive of a Bible college is that every student graduates with a Bible major. Every graduate will have studied biblical interpretation, surveyed the entire canon, gained familiarity with the most important introductory issues, focused specifically on the most important biblical books, and been introduced to the entire system of Christian doctrine. A graduate of a Bible college will also have been taught the dynamics of the life of faith and will (or, at least, should) have had his or her affections shaped by carefully chosen exposure to the best of Christian devotion. At the undergraduate level, no institution can do this work better than a Bible college.¹⁹

¹⁸ 3 or More Years, IMB Connecting, <http://going.imb.org/3yrsormore/details.asp?StoryID=7441&LanguageID=1709#seminary> (accessed December 12, 2012).

¹⁹ Kevin Bauder, “The Future of the Bible College,” *Sharper Iron*, entry posted January 5, 2010, <http://sharperiron.org/article/future-of-bible-college> (accessed December 29, 2012).

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the powerful impact of the Bible Institute as a training vehicle for evangelism training and discipleship ministry. The movement entailed many different denominational groups. They each fostered formal training in Bible and evangelism. That is, their guiding principle was the Great Commission given by Christ, the Head of the church.

The Current Status of the Movement

The future of the Bible Institute movement is bright. With the advent of distance e-learning, it is easier than ever to acquire course materials and expertise. The local church can now easily offer some type of formal Bible, theology and ministry training for their people who serve in the local church. The opportunities for Bible and ministry education abound. The problem for senior pastors is trying to discern the best educational option for their particular congregation. It is still amazing to think that a teacher in a public high school needs a degree with specialized training and skill-sets but that in the practice of the local church anyone can “fill a teaching slot” in the local Sunday School departments regardless of training.

This brief rehearsal of the Bible Institute movement in North America mainly addresses institutions of higher learning with brick and mortar facilities reaching clientele from a particular region or locality. A subset of the Bible Institute movement is what can be termed a “local church Bible Institute.” Such entities attempt to educate the members of a local church with a more formal approach to church training than exists ordinarily or that may occur in an otherwise happenstance manner. Thus, individuals do not have to leave home to receive further training in Bible, theology and ministry development.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW THE MINISTRY OF HAROLD WILLMINGTON BEGAN AT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

The Bible Institute at Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia

1972-1981

The Leaders

Harold Willmington

Harold Lynn Willmington was born April 7, 1932 at Patterson, IL. His parents were Paul and Velma Willmington. The Willmingtons relocated to Mt. Vernon, IL, when Harold was eight years old. He received his elementary and high school education at public schools in Mt. Vernon. He married Marjorie Sue Ransom April 15, 1961. They have one son, Matthew. There are several introductory elements comprising Harold Willmington's story. First, his salvation testimony is a personal response to the gospel of Jesus Christ at age sixteen at Logan Street Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon, IL. That day he received Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord.¹ He was call to Gospel ministry was sometime in 1951. His call was acknowledge by the local church with an ordination service on November 16, 1955 at Calvary Baptist Church, Quincy, IL. Dr. Willmington then entered his period of formal academic training. He completed three years of Bible and ministry study leading to a Bible Diploma from Moody Bible Institute, 1955. He earned the Bachelor of Arts from Culver-Stockton College in 1960.

¹ The biographical items in this section were gathered from a personal interview on August 9, 2011.

He attended Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX and Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, OH. Further studies were completed at the Institute of Holy Land studies, Mt. Zion, Jerusalem. He completed his formal study program with the Doctor of Ministry granted by Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, in 1981.

His Pastoral Experience involved service at Calvary Baptist Church, Quincy, IL for the years 1955-1958. He served at Community Bible Church Mansfield, OH from 1961-1965. And he pastored the Powderhorn Baptist Church of Minneapolis, MN from 1965-1968. His final pastorate was at Emmanuel Baptist Church of South Haven, IN from 1970-1972. His ministry experience and continuing service is as follows: He is the dean of Willmington School of the Bible at Liberty University. He is also the dean of Liberty Home Bible Institute. He also serves as professor, School of Religion, Liberty University. On the church side of things, he is the main teacher at the Thomas Road Baptist Church Bible Center. He has been a member and servant of Thomas Road Baptist Church since 1972.

Elmer Towns

Dr. Elmer Towns is a college and seminary professor. He is a prolific author having written over 175 Christian books. Elmer Towns graduated from Northwestern College in Minneapolis, MN in 1954. He received the M.A. from Southern Methodist University in Dallas TX, the Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX, the MRE from Garret Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL and the D. Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA. He began his teaching career at Midwest Bible College, St. Louis, Missouri, where he taught for three years. He became president of Winnipeg Bible College and served at that institution from 1960 to 1965. He later was on the faculty of Trinity Evangelical Divinity

School, in Deerfield, IL, from 1965 to 1971 where he taught courses in the field of religious education and evangelism. In 1971 he began working with Jerry Falwell and was co-founder of Liberty University that same year. Dr. Towns travels extensively nationally and internationally to speak on church growth, evangelism and Christian education. Currently, he serves as dean of the School of Religion at Liberty University and dean of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.²

Jerry Falwell

Founder of Liberty University

Aug. 11, 1933 - May 15, 2007

In 1956, at the age of twenty-two, Jerry Falwell graduated from Baptist Bible College Springfield, MO. In June of that year he started Thomas Road Baptist Church in his hometown of Lynchburg, VA., with thirty-five charter members. Today this mega church continues to minister to millions through its local outreaches and via the “Old Time Gospel Hour” syndicated radio and television ministry.

In 1967, Dr. Falwell launched his first effort at building a Christian education community that could train a person from kindergarten through Ph.D. The Liberty Christian Academy educates youth at its large Lynchburg, VA campus and online. Liberty University which was established in 1971 has 12,000 residential students and approximately 90,000 online students. The Liberty Bible Institute became a part of this vision when it was established in 1972. Dr. Jerry Falwell was a faithful husband, father, pastor and educator. He was a role

² “Biography of Elmer Towns,” Spiritual Breakthroughs: ElmerTowns.com, <http://www.elmertowns.com/index.cfm?action=bio> (accessed June 13, 2011).

model of the Christ life he sought to instill in every student whom he referred to as young person “young Champions for Christ.”³

The Vision and Elmer Towns

Little did the Church of Jesus Christ know what the Spirit of the Church was about to do one blustery evening in Pittsville, Illinois in October, 1958. Harold Willmington and Elmer Towns first met that evening at the Cardinal Inn truck stop. Both men were friends of Wes Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pittsville, Illinois. At this time Elmer Towns was conducting a Sunday School seminar for area pastors at Wes Hunt’s church. It was this event that brought both men together and this meeting was arranged to discuss a matter dear to the heart of Dr. Willmington, a Bible training concept that he had been developing for some time. This Bible training concept was a two-year Bible institute aimed at training lay people in the scriptures that they might provide more fruitful service in the local churches. Dr. Towns sensed the great passion for Bible teaching his new friend possessed as he laid out the curriculum scope and sequence and the operational plan. Some years later when Dr. Jerry Falwell called Elmer Towns to Lynchburg, Virginia to establish Lynchburg Baptist College Dr. Towns remembered his friend who wanted to start a Bible Institute in a local church.

Jerry Falwell and Elmer Towns

Following is a summarized version of how Elmer Towns came to join with Jerry Falwell in developing a new Christian liberal arts college.

³ “Founder,” Liberty University, <http://www.liberty.edu/aboutliberty/index.cfm?PID=6921> (accessed June 13, 2011).

I was preaching at Canton Baptist Temple (sixth largest church in America) on the last weekend of January 1971. Pastor Harold Henniger told me at dinner one night that, Jerry Falwell is going to start a college; I want you to talk with him and help him start it. He won't do it for six years, I answered Pastor Henniger. Falwell has a Christian grade school through grade six, and will add a grade a year. He won't start a college for six years. No, he's going to do it immediately, Henniger said. Harold told me, I want you to pick up the phone and call him tonight. The apartment where I was staying had a phone system attached to the switchboard. I could call out, but no one could call in. I still had my overcoat on when I picked up the phone and dialed Jerry Falwell around 7:00 that Saturday evening and he said, Elmer, what are we going to call the college? Dumbfounded, I didn't know what to say. I didn't know it until after our phone call was over, but fifteen minutes prior to my calling up Jerry, he had called my home in greater Chicago and talked to my wife Ruth. He told her that he wanted me to start a college, because he liked my spirit and vision, commenting, Elmer gets things done! After talking with Ruth a few minutes, Jerry said, I never ask a wife if her husband would come to work for me, but do you think that Elmer would come start a college for me. He'd be perfect for the job, Ruth answered. She explained that I had been a college president in Winnipeg, and I had been on the committee of the AABC, the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. As they continued talking, he sold Ruth on the college before talking with me. As a result, Ruth immediately began praying for the college, asking God to motivate me to phone her long-distance so she could tell me about the new college. For an hour while Jerry and I were drawing mental blueprints for a world-changing college, Ruth was in the presence of God interceding for our future. God's timing for spiritual advances is always perfect.⁴

Other Influences on the Decision to Establish a Bible Institute

While these three men of faith sought the mind of Christ on their vision, the impact that Moody Bible Institute had upon this vision cannot be overlooked for D. L. Moody himself pioneered Christian education in many ways. James Vincent offers information about Moody Bible Institute.

The impact of MBI in the annals of both higher and general adult education makes the school a leader in innovative training. Consider these firsts:

- The first program to train church musicians, in 1889. Northwestern University of Evanston, Illinois, launched the second church program in 1896.

⁴ Elmer Towns, *Memoirs of Elmer Towns*, (Personal Writings, Liberty University), chapter 9, 1-22.

- First correspondence courses offered by an evangelical school (1901). MBI became just the third correspondence school in America, preceded by Chautauqua and the University of Chicago.
- First Bible-oriented evening school, begun in 1903.
- First complete (three-year) program in Jewish studies (1923). Bible conferences, tracing back to 1897. Though such meetings began earlier, the extension department became one of the main promoters of such conferences, and influenced the Bible conference movement more than any other evangelical organization.
- First correspondence school course offered on radio (1926). Radio School of the Bible became the longest running educational radio program, offering on-air courses from the Moody correspondence school for eighty-six years.
- First carried on Chicago station WMBI, it was later syndicated nationally. The final program aired in September 2002.
- First noncommercial educational and religious radio station, WMBI-AM (1926).⁵

Northwestern College was an educational venture of William B. Riley, pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN.⁶ The Northwestern Schools as it was called involved a theological seminary, a college and a Bible institute. Dr. Falwell and Dr. Towns both wanted a different kind of Bible College. They desired an academic institution that not only prepared students spiritually but also provided a college education which would enable individuals to go out into the many disciplines of life and influence individuals and institutions for the sake of righteousness. Thus Christ would be glorified and individual lives would be transformed.

Jerry Falwell and Harold Willmington

Dr. Willmington relates how he came to join Jerry Falwell and become part of the effort to work out his dream of “Training Young Champions for Christ.”

Well, we started in 1970. I was pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in South Haven, Indiana and Elmer Towns was teaching at Trinity Seminary in Deerfield, Illinois. I had known Elmer since 1958. We would meet periodically in the Chicago area for coffee and to chat. In 1970 Elmer Towns told me he was leaving Trinity & going to Lynchburg, Virginia to start a Christian school for Jerry Falwell. He did exactly that. And in 1971 it started with 154 students. In 1972 in February, Elmer asked me to come

⁵ (Vincent, 2011, Kindle Locations 186-193).

⁶ Ibid.

and teach a modular the second week in February. So he introduced me to Jerry Falwell (I was teaching every day from 9:00-noon). And on that Friday Jerry Falwell took me to lunch and told me he started Lynchburg Baptist College with plans to start a Seminary in 1973 but starting that September (1972) he wanted to start a Bible Institute and Elmer Towns said that was the reason we had you to come to Lynchburg.⁷

While Elmer Towns and Jerry Falwell are the two main individuals involved with Harold Willmington and the Thomas Road Bible Institute, there were other important influences regarding the vision for this great adventure for Christ. Two books were also instrumental in shaping the vision for the Bible institute at Thomas Road Baptist Church, *Church Aflame* and *Capturing a Town for Christ* co-authored by Towns and Falwell. Dr. Falwell made a tremendous statement when he said, “I want to build the greatest church since Pentecost, not for personal fame, but for lost souls.”⁸ To Dr. Willmington, those new believers and church attendees would need Bible training. The church would need additional lay leaders who were equipped to conduct the training. And such an effort would bring much glory to Christ, the Head of the Church. The many people involved in gaining a solid background of what the Bible says and means for daily living could experience transformation and then participate in the process to transform other lives for Christ. Dr. Willmington agreed wholeheartedly with Jerry Falwell’s statement in *Church Aflame*.

The Bible truth reads, *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* In outline form this portion of chapter four reads, “The third aspect of the Great Commission is teaching or education. The church carries on the example of Jesus the teacher. He taught as one having authority, not as one of the scribes.

1. *Teaching biblical content.* The main educational priority upon the church is to communicate scriptural content. The aim is for every pupil to know the core doctrine contained in the Bible, so that he will be protected from the contamination

⁷ H. L. Willmington and Elmer Towns, interview by author, August 8, 2011, Lynchburg, VA, tape recording and transcript, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA.

⁸ Elmer Towns and Jerry Falwell, *Capturing a Town for Christ*, The Old Time Gospel Hour Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973), 7.

- of sin, will be built up in the Christian life, will understand God's purpose for his life and will become a productive Christian that brings glory to God (Titus 1:9; 2:7).
2. *Training in skills.* If teaching content is the first half of education, then training in skills is the second half. Training puts into operation what is taught through theory.
 3. *Transforming of attitudes.* Much of historic education has been concerned with content and skills, but has ignored the attitudes of life. Yet, the attitude a person has toward the Christian life will reflect the quality of his life.
 4. *Spiritual understanding and growth.* Spiritual growth is the ultimate in educational objectives. The pupil must put into practice the lessons of the classroom, or there is no Christian education.⁹

The Bible itself played a significant role in the development of the vision for the Institute at Thomas Road Baptist Church. The primary verse for Dr. Willmington concerning this Bible Institute was 2 Timothy 2:2. "And the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit you to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

This biblical principle has remained the driving force for Dr. Willmington as he applied it for his vision for the local church. Consistently and passionately he has imparted this principle of reproduction to his students. It is an ancient principle of multiplication but at its core is the necessity that disciples must be taught. This does not occur to the degree necessary in the traditional three church services per week in the local church. Some experience in formal instruction is required so that individuals might be thoroughly exposed to the vast body of knowledge comprising the content of the scriptures. In addition, the theological meaning associated with that content needs to be explained and embraced.

Dr. Willmington has possessed a burning desire for adults to learn basic Bible knowledge and theological doctrine. This is borne out in some statements he made in his doctoral dissertation submitted to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

⁹ Elmer L. Towns and Jerry Falwell, *Church Aflame* (Nashville: Impact Books, 1971), 52-54.

Finally, the Bible mandate for older persons to teach and train the younger ones cannot be obeyed unless the older are familiar with the spiritual material involved in the training. The following verses vividly bear this out.

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them to thy sons, and thy sons’ sons; specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children”(Deut. 4:9-10).

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Prov. 22:6)

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their children” (Titus 2:3-4).¹⁰

Another influence upon Dr. Willmington concerning his desire to help

adults learn the scriptures was Howard F. Vos who wrote the following:

It is the privilege of every believer to go directly to the Word and find *therein* the clear-cut message of truth. The practice of running to a commentary before studying the Bible itself gives a definite direction to one’s study and a cast to this thinking which may lead him to conclusions never intended by the Holy Spirit. Further the individual deprives himself of the blessing of discovering eternal verities for himself. After all those who wrote the commentaries had to get their material in the same way any present-day Bible student can get it. It should not be necessary for the Christian constantly to depend on the Biblical research of another; he should seek a spirit maturity that will enable him to get beyond this stage.¹¹

Another substantial influence concerning the structuring of the Bible Institute was Dr.

Willmington’s three-year stint at Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL, and attendance for one year at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX. It was at Moody Bible Institute that Dr.

Willmington enjoyed the thorough exposure to the content of the Holy Scriptures. It was at

¹⁰ H. L. Willmington “A Bible Appreciation and Learning Program for the Adults of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia” (D.Min. project, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL, 1981), 1-2.

¹¹ Howard F. Vos, *Effective Bible Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), 16.

Dallas Theological Seminary that he was challenged to prepare to teach the Bible from cover to cover.

The Vision and Harold Willmington

In the 1950s, which was the Bible Institute heyday, most institutes were three-year programs of Bible study and ministry preparation. Frequently these Bible institutes were part of a denominational seminary. It became apparent to leaders in the seminaries that many of their associates in church ministry possessed considerable personal experience in preaching and church ministries but lacked formal Bible training. Many of these local church leaders also desired a ministry credential. Thus, training programs were set up within the seminaries to help these individuals acquire training in Biblical studies and other academic interests.

Dr. Towns had some experience with the threefold educational model of Northwestern Seminary and College in Minnesota which featured a theological seminary, college and Bible institute.¹² Dr. Willmington's two-year scenario made perfect sense to Pastor Falwell who had the previous year launched Lynchburg Baptist College. Falwell's thinking was that students of a three-year program would compete with the four-year college programs now launched. Thus, the two-year Bible Institute format was optimum at that time. Jerry Falwell wanted Harold Willmington to start the Thomas Road Bible Institute in Lynchburg, VA, at the Thomas Road Baptist Church in the fall of 1972. Dr. Willmington's thoughts on this invitation were thus:

I was honored but reluctant to be considered for such a worthy and challenging cause. We really prayed about this momentous decision for our family for some three or four months. I had to make sure it was a divine calling and not a human opportunity. So Sue

¹² Willmington-Towns interview by author, August 8, 2011.

and I and Matt prayed together for the will of God to be disclosed to us. As the weeks passed it became apparent that it was God's will that we were to accept the offer and move to Lynchburg, VA. We arrived on the last Sunday in June in 1972.¹³

¹³ Willmington-Towns interview by author, August 8, 2011.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SEVEN MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF HAROLD WILLMINGTON
TO LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

The seven major contributions of Dr. Harold Willmington are:

1. Establishing the Thomas Road Bible Institute
2. Establishing the Liberty Home Bible Institute correspondence program
3. Establishing the Local Church Bible Institute program
4. Re-establishing the Institute as the Liberty Bible Institute
5. Producing his Bible curriculum
6. Employing his teaching philosophy
7. Role modeling the victorious Christian life

Contribution #1: Establishing the Thomas Road Bible Institute

The first major contribution of Harold Willmington to Liberty University began in the summer of 1972 when Dr. Willmington and family moved to Lynchburg, VA to assume the position of Dean for the yet to be founded Thomas Road Bible Institute.

Name: Thomas Road Bible Institute

Date: Fall, 1972

Location: 701 Thomas Road, Lynchburg, Virginia

Theme: Biblical Knowledge Aflame

Chancellor: Jerry Falwell

President: A. Pierre Guillermin

Dean: H.L. Willmington

The Purpose

The Institute catalog included Jerry Falwell, Chancellor provides this purpose statement. “The Thomas Road Bible Institute is another ministry of Thomas Road Baptist Church. We believe in the importance and the sanctity of the local church. Beyond that, we believe the Bible is God’s inspired Word. For that reason, we have dedicated the Thomas Road Bible Institute as ‘The Teaching Arm of this Local Church.’”

The opening message from the dean was and continues to be an inspiring message for any and all students entering into ministry training. As always, Dr. Willmington’s message was centered on a Bible passage.

During the late afternoon of that first Easter Sunday, two followers of Christ were making their way along the dusty road which led from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They walked along with heavy hearts and hushed talk. The reason for their sorrow was the tragic death of the beloved Savior, Who had, but a short time ago, been cruelly crucified. They had placed so much trust in Him. Now what would they do? Indeed, what could they do? As they plodded along a mysterious Stranger suddenly appeared and joined them. He asked them why they were so sad. Upon hearing their answer we are told that: “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27).

As they came into Emmaus, this couple invited the unrecognized Savior into their home for a meal. It was then that they knew Him. After He left, they commented: “Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures” (Luke 24:32)?

When the student can repeat these words along with the Emmaus disciples, then the grand goal of the Thomas Road Bible Institute will have been achieved.¹

¹ TRBI catalog, 1973, 11.

Doctrinal Position of the Institute “Take heed...unto the doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:16).

- We believe in the verbal inspiration and authority of the scriptures. We believe that the Bible reveals God, the fall of man, the way of salvation, and God’s plan and purpose in the ages.
- We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that salvation is “by grace” plus nothing and minus nothing. The conditions to salvation are repentance and faith.
- We believe that men are justified by faith alone and are accounted righteous before God only through the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the visible, personal, and premillennial return of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.²

The Faculty and Staff

Dr. Jerry Falwell, Instructor

Dr. Harold Willmington, Founder and Dean

Dr. Elmer Towns, Instructor

Rev. Kenneth Chapman, Instructor

Dr. Jim Moon, Instructor

Ben Isley, Assistant to the Dean

The Student Body

What was the student profile? Individuals from all over America relocated to Lynchburg, Virginia, to become part of this new school started by Jerry Falwell. The first class of 1972-1974 was a diverse group of Bible lovers indeed. They were truck drivers, home-makers, missionary hopefuls, pastors, business people, tradesmen and entertainers. But the one thing they had in common was a burning desire to study the Bible in a formal setting in the midst of a church

² TRBI Catalog, 1973, 14.

aflame for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Institute students tend to be labeled as non-traditional learners. The following quote from Angelo State University reveals that the non-traditional learners of today are not much different those of yesterday.

Non-traditional students (non-trads), sometimes referred to as “adult learners,” are an extremely diverse group of people. Those who feel they do not fit the traditional college student profile may be considered non-trads, including undergraduate students who entered college a year or more after high school graduation, are working to support themselves and/or their families, have dependents in their care, are married or divorced, are serving in the armed forces or are veterans. Nationally, non-trads comprise approximately one quarter of the undergraduate population. With their unique life experiences, non-traditional students often add an exciting dimension to the classroom and college experience.³

It is important to mention that the Institute student body nearly always included a number of deaf students. American Sign Language interpreters were part of every class session interpreting the lectures for the deaf students. Sue Willmington was the director of the deaf program and also appeared on the Old Time Gospel Hour television broadcasts as interpreter. The deaf students were a community within a community and added a degree of richness to the fellowship of the entire student body

Dr. Willmington has described the student body profile:

What kind of person would fit best into the Thomas Road Bible Institute? For what type of student are we looking? The Thomas Road Bible Institute has been especially prepared with the following individuals in mind.

- A. **YOUNG PEOPLE**, who desire a basic background in the Bible to help shape their lives, even though they might be planning a secular future in such fields as medicine, engineering, nursing, teaching, etc.
- B. **OLDER ADULTS**, who may or may not have had a formal education, but who sense a real desire to know more of God’s precious Word to help them in becoming better pastors, Sunday School teachers, soul winners, parents, Christian lay workers, etc.

³ “Non-Traditional Students,” Angelo State University, Student Life, http://www.angelo.edu/services/student_life/nontraditionals.php (accessed January 24, 2013.)

- C. ANYONE AND EVERYONE, who shares along with the apostle Paul a burning conviction to “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).⁴

The Bible Institute has always had in mind the people in the pew who do the work of local church ministry but have not had the opportunity for four years of Bible school in pursuit of a professional degree. Dr. Willmington clarifies just who he has in mind for enrolling in the Bible Institute:

Who should enroll in this school? Our entire program has been prayerfully and carefully prepared with the following special people in mind. A general consideration. That dedicated person who desires to be fully trained in the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible! A specific consideration. Mature men, feeling the call of God to preach. Mature men and women feeling the call to prepare for some type of full-time Christian service. Mature women, desiring an in depth study of the Bible that they might teach it to other women. Those individuals preparing for the mission field. Those full-time Christian workers needing a challenging review of the Word of God and church growth principles. Those retired individuals, now having time to study the scriptures.⁵

The Thomas Road Bible Institute featured all of the normal and requisite aspects associated with a formal college when it opened in 1972.⁶

T.R.B.I. Academic Offerings

Bible Diploma. Thomas Road Bible Institute was established as a complete Bible training program developed for the purpose of preparing men and women for Christian ministry. The catalog informed prospective students about the academic credentials earned in the various programs that were provided by the Institute.

The educational program was designed to capitalize upon many basic learning principles. Some outstanding techniques are incorporated within the daily classroom sessions. These

⁴ The Institute of Biblical Studies was discontinued in 1986. The Institute was reopened in the fall of 1992 under the name Liberty Bible Institute.

⁵ Staff, *Information Kit #2*, Liberty Bible Institute, 1992.

⁶ The admission policies, tuition costs, dormitories, student life, and many other aspects of the Institute are found in the catalog which is available from the Institute office or Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

include the use of the latest educational tools such as overhead, opaque, and 35 mm slide projectors, specially made Biblical maps, colorful charts and graphs, and cassette and reel-to-reel listening systems. The most important feature of the entire Institute course is the printed materials, which cover the vital phases presented during classroom lectures. This frees the student from extensive note-taking and will assure him of his own accurate and complete personal record. These materials, especially prepared by the Dean, include his newly completed "Basic Stages in the Book of Ages" textbooks on the Old and New Testaments, plus twelve doctrinal study books and additional study aides.⁷

The catalog makes the following statement regarding completion of all studies and requirements for graduation. "After successfully completing prescribed studies in the curriculum and fulfillment of Christian service requirements along with establishing a known Christian character, the Institute faculty will recommend a two-year Bible diploma to be publicly awarded."⁸

Pastor's Course. This program was mainly intended for individuals called of God to do the work of the pastor. The successful candidate for graduation would score a grade of "C" or better in all required subjects. The academic area was not the sole determiner of the granting of the diploma. The catalog further stated, "Also to be taken into consideration will be the student's attitude, deportment, and maturity. We consider the calling of a pastor to be a very high one and only students meeting the qualifications set forth in the Bible will receive a diploma from this course."⁹

⁷ TRBI Catalog, 1978.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

General Bible Course. The General Bible program was for those individuals who wish to have a better knowledge of the Word of God and to be able to use their training in practical ways such as personal evangelism and discipleship ministry.

Certificate. Some individuals lack the academic background or wherewithal to succeed in college level work. For such individuals a non-academic certificate was granted.

Initially the TRBI offered two courses of study over two years leading to a General Bible Course diploma or the Pastors Course diploma. The chart below presents the course requirements for these two training programs.

Table 1: Scope and sequence of courses for the pastor's course of study

Pastor's Course	
General Requirements	
First Year	
First Semester	Second Semester
TRBI 101 Chapel	TRBI 102 Chapel
TRBI 103 Chronological I	TRBI 104 Chronological II
TRBI 105 Old Testament I	TRBI 106 Old Testament II
TRBI 107 Theological I	TRBI 108 Theological II
TRBI 109 Evangelism I	TRBI 110 Evangelism II
Second Year	
First Semester	Second Semester
TRBI 201 Chapel	TRBI 202 Chapel
TRBI 203 Chronological III	TRBI 204 Chronological IV
TRBI 205 New Testament I	TRBI 206 New Testament II
TRBI 207 Theological III	TRBI 208 Theological IV
TRBI 209 Evangelism III	TRBI 210 Evangelism IV
Supplementary Requirements	
TRBI 120 English	
TRBI 121 Speech	
TRBI 140 Seminar I	
TRBI 180 Homiletics I	
TRBI 240 Seminar II	
Electives	
TRBI 142 Sunday School Methods	TRBI 165 John-Acts

TRBI 143 Journalism	TRBI 166 Romans-1Corinthians
TRBI 144 Gifts and Ministries of Christian Women	TRBI 167 Hebrews
TRBI 145 Beginning & Intermediate Sign Language	TRBI 168 Revelation
TRBI 146 Advanced Sign Language	TRBI 182 Hermeneutics
TRBI 147 Practical Church Graphics	TRBI 183 Greek I
TRBI 160 Minor Prophets	TRBI 184 Church History
TRBI 161 Prison Epistles	TRBI 221 Speech II
TRBI 162 Pastoral Epistles	TRBI 245 Establishing a Deaf Ministry I
TRBI 163 Pauline Epistles	TRBI 246 Establishing a Deaf Ministry II
TRBI 164 Daniel	TRBI 280 Homiletics II
	TRBI 283 Greek II

The other diploma offering was a general Bible program which had the same requirements as above, excepting the Supplementary Requirements for pastors.

Table 2: Scope and sequence of courses for the general Bible course of study

General Bible Course	
General Requirements	
First Year	
First Semester	Second Semester
TRBI 101 Chapel	TRBI 102 Chapel
TRBI 103 Chronological I	TRBI 104 Chronological II
TRBI 105 Old Testament I	TRBI 106 Old Testament II
TRBI 107 Theological I	TRBI 108 Theological II
TRBI 109 Evangelism I	TRBI 110 Evangelism II
Second Year	
First Semester	Second Semester
TRBI 201 Chapel	TRBI 202 Chapel
TRBI 203 Chronological III	TRBI 204 Chronological IV
TRBI 205 New Testament I	TRBI 206 New Testament II
TRBI 207 Theological III	TRBI 208 Theological IV
TRBI 209 Evangelism III	TRBI 210 Evangelism IV
Electives	
TRBI 120 English	
TRBI 121 Speech	
TRBI 140 Seminar I	
TRBI 180 Homiletics I	
TRBI 240 Seminar II	

TRBI 142 Sunday School Methods	TRBI 165 John-Acts
TRBI 143 Journalism	TRBI 166 Romans-1Corinthians
TRBI 144 Gifts and Ministries of Christian Women	TRBI 167 Hebrews
TRBI 145 Beginning & Intermediate Sign Language	TRBI 168 Revelation
TRBI 146 Advanced Sign Language	TRBI 182 Hermeneutics
TRBI 147 Practical Church Graphics	TRBI 183 Greek I
TRBI 160 Minor Prophets	TRBI 184 Church History
TRBI 161 Prison Epistles	TRBI 221 Speech II
TRBI 162 Pastoral Epistles	TRBI 245 Establishing a Deaf Ministry I
TRBI 163 Pauline Epistles	TRBI 246 Establishing a Deaf Ministry II
TRBI 164 Daniel	TRBI 280 Homiletics II
	TRBI 283 Greek II

The following chart presents the TRBI seminar curriculum.

Table 3: Scope and Sequence of the Various Training Seminars

Seminar Curriculum	Hours
TRBI 140, 240	Six Hours
In addition to the formal study program, seminars on practical topics will be included.	
1. How to Organize and Carry Out a Bus Ministry	
2. How to Conduct a Visitation Program	
3. How to Organize a Local Church Bible Institute	
4. How to Finance a Church Program	
5. How to Write a New Church Constitution or Improve Upon the Old One	
6. How to Conduct a Business Meeting Via Robert's Rules of Order	
7. How to Set Up the Various Sunday School Departments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cradle Roll b. Nursery c. Beginners d. Primary e. Junior 	

f. Young Teens g. Senior High h. Adult	
8. How to Conduct Weddings, Funerals, Baptism, and the Lord's Table	
9. How To Advertise and Promote a Local Church Program	
10. How to Carry Out a Deaf Ministry	
11. How to Minister to Senior Citizens	
12. How to Lay Out and Print a Church Newspaper	
13. How to Begin a Day School and a Christian Academy	
14. How to Develop an Effective Radio and Television Ministry	
15. How to Carry Out a Dynamic Youth Ministry	
16. How to Develop an Effective Ministry of Music	
17. How to Study	
18. How to Improve One's Reading Speed	
19. How to Set Up a Personal Life-Long Bible Study Program	
20. How to Manage One's Money	
21. How to Set Up and Manage One's Money	
22. How to Operate Various Office Machines, Including Off-Set Presses, etc.	
23. How the Successful Pastors Did It	
24. How to Write Curriculum for Your Sunday School	
25. How to Minister to the Retarded [<i>sic</i>].	
26. How to Plan Week-Long Conferences such as missionary, prophetic, or evangelistic	
27. How to Counsel	
28. How to Organize a Prison Ministry	
29. How to Organize a Children's Church	
30. How to Secure and Supervise a Qualified Staff	
31. How to Work with Various Church Boards and Elected Officials	

The Faculty

The following chart lists the faculty and staff for the 1972-79 academic years and reveals a fast-developing Bible training program.

Table 4: Listing of the beginning faculty and staff

EARLY FACULTY AND STAFF ROSTER	
Jerry Falwell, Th.G., D.D. Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church; Th.G., Baptist Bible College, Springfield; D.D., Tennessee Temple Schools; Professor of Evangelism, Church Administration, and Pastoral Duties.	President
Harold L. Willmington, B.A., D.D. Graduate, Moody Bible Institute; B.A., Culver-Stockton College, Canton, Missouri; Seminary, D.D., California Graduate School of Theology; former instructor in Bible, Northwestern College, Minneapolis, MN.	Dean, T.R.B.I. Chairman of Bible, LBC Founder & Director, Operation Sword Advisory Dean, Evening Schools of the Bible
	Director, L.H.B.I.
Elmer Towns, B.A., M.A., Th.M., M.R.E., D.D. B.A., Northwestern College, Minneapolis; M.A., Southern Methodist University, Dallas; Th.M., Dallas Theological Seminary; M.R.E., Garrett Theological Seminary; D.D., Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO. Former president, Winnipeg Bible College (Canada); teacher at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Winona Lake School of Theology, Midwest Bible College and Dallas Bible College.	Professor Doctrine, Journalism. Vice President Board of Directors
Roger Melton, B.A., M.A. Graduate, Los Angeles State University, B.A., Fresno State University: M.A., Graduate work at Loyola University, Pacific College, University of Wyoming.	Assistant Dean Bible Institute
Kenneth A. Chapman, Diploma, B.S. Diploma, Moody Bible Institute; B.S., Lynchburg Baptist College	Associate Dean Instructor Bible
Marie M. Chapman, Diploma, B.S. Diploma, Moody Bible Institute; Diploma, Kinman Business University; B.S., Lynchburg Baptist College	Instructor
Calvin Combs Graduate, Kansas City Junior College; Guilford College; Central Virginia Communications College	Instructor, Bible
William E. Crowder, JR., B.S. B.S., Lynchburg Baptist College	Instructor
Jani Desaezher B.A. B.A., Bob Jones University; Professional Requirements for Teaching Credential, Pepperdine College.	Instructor
Robert D. Harris, A.A., B.A., M.A.	Instructor

A.A., Modesto Junior College; B.A., California State College, Stanislaw; M.A., Liberty Baptist Seminary; additional graduate work at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.	
Alvin E. Hickey, B.A. B.A., Cumberland College; M.Ed., Miami University; additional graduate work at the University of Virginia.	Instructor
Richard Lawrenson, JR., Diploma Diploma, Thomas Road Bible Institute	Instructor
Donald R. Leslie, B.S., C.P.A. B.S., Bob Jones University; C.P.A.	Business Manager
James Moon Th.G, Baptist Bible College; Associate Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church	Instructor, Bible
Elroy J. Newman, Diploma, B.S. M.A. Diploma, Thomas Road Bible Institute; B.S., Liberty Baptist College; M.A., Liberty Baptist Seminary	Associate to the Dean
Michie Proctor, B.Th., Th.M., D.D. Union Baptist Theological Seminary, Houston, Texas; B.Th., Th. M., D.D., Bus Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church	Instructor, Bible
Benita L. Severson, Diploma, B.S. Diploma, Thomas Road Bible Institute; B.S., MacMurray College.	Recorder
James D. Stevens, B.A., M.Div., S.T.M. B.A., Bob Jones University; M.Div., Grace Theological Seminary; S.T.M., Dallas Theological Seminary; additional graduate work at Eastern Michigan University.	Assistant Professor of Religion
Sue Willmington Director, Deaf Department, Thomas Road Baptist Church	Instructor
Guest Seminar Speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerry Falwell, President of TRBI, Pastor, TRBC • Paul DeSaegher, Director of Music, TRBC • J.O. Grooms, Personal Evangelism • Vernon Lewis, Instrumental Music • Gordon Luff, Youth Minister • Mrs. Marie Chapman, Teacher of Journalism • Gifford Myers, Associate Dean, LBC • Dr. Jim Henry, Division Chairman, Education, Lynchburg Baptist College 	

The Facilities

The first classes met in the main sanctuary of the Thomas Road Baptist Church building and in subsequent semesters classes were conducted in the adjacent Pate Chapel building. Institute staff offices were located in the original church facilities commonly referred to as the “Donald Duck” building because the church purchased the property from the Donald Duck bottling company.

This concludes the description of the initial Thomas Road Bible Institute organization, academic structuring, student requirements and leadership elements of the school

The Liberty Bible Institute (1979-1980)

Visionaries often develop plans for new projects that do not come to pass. Below is one such example. There was a name change to LBI. It is included here because it demonstrates the strong desire and determination of Dr. Willmington to make his Bible teaching ministries as fact-filled and fruitful as possible. This plan basically was a combination of the curriculums of both the Liberty Home Bible Institute and the Thomas Road Bible Institute. It was to provide students with a formidable array of Bible teaching resources and a trip to the Holy Land. This program did not launch.

The Thomas Road Bible Institute became the Liberty Bible Institute in 1979. From 1973¹⁰ to spring semester 1979 the institute logo incorporated the words “Thomas Road Bible

¹⁰ No academic handbook exists on file for the Fall 1972 academic year.

Institute, Operation Sword.”¹¹ Beginning in fall 1979 the logo read, “Liberty Bible Institute, School of Scripture Study.”¹²

Promotional material from this time relates the following information about the new name. “A Wonderful new Concept in Bible Education” is the title of the piece. The new concept is a twofold Bible institute program. Following are highlights of the content of the advertising piece.

In 1972 the THOMAS ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH in Lynchburg, Virginia began enrolling students in a two-year campus program. In 1976 the LIBERTY HOME BIBLE INSTITUTE was officially introduced on nationwide television. Since that time over TEN THOUSAND students have enrolled in both programs. But now, under the leadership of God, BOTH of these widely used PROGRAMS have been wonderfully united in a single SUPER-SUMMARY SCHOOL OF THE SCRIPTURES!

The new name: A new idea deserves a new name. The name for this unique institution of Bible information is the LIBERTY BIBLE INSTITUTE!

The new plan. All students enrolling in the LIBERTY BIBLE INSTITUTE automatically receive every one of the more than 400 taped lectures which go to make up the regular Liberty Home Bible Institute program. IN ADDITION TO ALL THIS, the student of Liberty Bible Institute will receive that on-the-spot intern and invaluable Christian training within the confines of one of the world’s greatest spiritual centers, the famous THOMAS ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH!

The NEW TRAINING TECHNIQUE: In addition to the hundreds of taped lectures, live lecturer, program-learning sheets, color-coded textbooks, we now have available nearly ONE THOUSAND SPECIALLY-DRAWN 8-1/2 x 11 inch VISUAL MAPS AND CHARTS covering the entire range of Biblical knowledge.

The NEW PLAN: Liberty Bible Institute, like Thomas Road Bible Institute, is a two-year program. However, we now offer AN ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR OPTIONAL STUDY PERIOD. This program will cover in-depth the subjects of world missions, practical youth work, pastoral ministry, counseling, and Christian Education. Only those who have graduated from the Liberty Bible Institute or who have had some previous Bible background elsewhere will be allowed to enroll in this optional year.

The NEW OPPORTUNITY: Finally, during the month of May each year the Liberty Bible Institute will conduct a special study trip to Israel.¹³

¹¹ This is according to the academic handbooks of that period.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The promotional piece is on file with the office of Dr. Willmington.

In addition, in association with the name change, an evening school component was to be added to the Liberty Bible Institute program. About 1973-74 Dr. Willmington traveled to five cities within two hours driving time to teach evening Bible Institutes that were not part of Lynchburg Baptist College. It was planned to launch this program and include these training centers as extension schools of Liberty Bible Institute. A press release provided this description.

Liberty Bible Institute

Evening Schools in Five Cities

Dr. Jerry Falwell announced recently that the Liberty Bible Institute will now offer an evening Bible institute in five cities in Virginia. Starting next August the evening Bible institute presents the general Bible course in Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Danville, Richmond and Roanoke. A student of the evening extension school has classes two nights each week. The counterpart of the two-year day campus program is completed in three years in the evening institute. The course covers the Bible completely in two ways: chronologically and doctrinally. Each student of the Liberty Bible Institute receives the complete library of cassettes of the famed Liberty Home Bible Institute. Students also receive about 5,000 pages of printed, color-coded notes and 1,000 visual maps and charts. Dr. Willmington, Dean of Liberty Bible Institute, says, "This will enable people to stay in their cities, maintain their regular employment, and get the best Bible training available."

¹⁴

Dr. Jerry Falwell, Chancellor, Thomas Road Bible Institute, announced a name change for the two-year Bible Institute program, calling it Liberty Bible Institute. The change is effective immediately. And with the new name, Falwell introduced an enriched program in the Institute for mastery of the Bible. According to Falwell, the name Liberty will identify the Institute with Liberty Baptist College and Liberty Theological Seminary. "This is not only a three-year curriculum," explained Willmington, "but a Two Plus One program. "A third dimension of the Liberty Bible Institute is an evening school" announced Willmington. This is given two nights a week. Students complete the equivalent of the two-year day program over three years.¹⁵

¹⁴ Promotional piece on file at the office of Dr. Willmington.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Again, this Liberty Bible Institute program did not launch. This information is included in this thesis project because it reflects the expanding vision of Dr. Willmington to provide as much educational instruction and resources to his students as he possibly could while they were associated with the Institute. In the 1980-81 academic school year Thomas Road Bible Institute moved from Thomas Road Baptist Church to the School of Religion building on the campus of Lynchburg Baptist College. The Institute also received a new name, the Institute of Biblical Studies.

Contribution #2: Establishing the Liberty Home Bible Institute Correspondence Program (1976-Present)

1976 was a pivotal year for the Bible teaching ministries of Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church. The second major contribution of Dr. Willmington to Liberty University began as a casual conversation with Dr. Falwell at a banquet table.

Dr. Willmington relates the following anecdote concerning the idea for a home Bible study correspondence program.

During a Christmas banquet in December of 1975 Dr. Falwell asked, how is the Bible Institute going? And I said it was going very well, and that I was excited at our growth. I mentioned that we were getting many letters from people who were watching the OTGH TV program and seeing our promotions for the Bible institute and that they would love to come but could not leave their jobs or sell their homes to do so. Many of them asked me, "Do you have a Bible correspondence program?" Dr. Falwell then asked me so what are you telling them?" I replied that, "I have been recommending that they take the Scofield Bible Correspondence Course from Moody Bible Institute." "Oh, you can't do that." He said emphatically. I answered, "Why not"? His startling answer to me was, "We need to start one here!" And that brief exchange began the birthing process of the Liberty Home Bible Institute.

In January of 1976 Jerry Falwell called me and said, Harold, I keep coming back to our conversation about the correspondence course. He then said, Let's do it! I want YOU to do it! By the way, it actually was Liberty University's first distance learning program. In March of 1976 we began promoting the new Liberty Home Bible Institute correspondence program. We made several seven-minute infomercials filmed in an

informal office setting with coffee table and chairs. It was shot with just the two of us in a light conversational manner. I remember the camera began to roll, and Dr. Falwell jumped right in. He gave a brief introduction and then turned it over to me by asking me a series of questions about the particulars of the program.

With the “infomercials” completed and going out to America, I immediately began producing the program at a feverish pace.

I did the following to get things moving.

- Developed a scope and sequence of instruction for the two years. This included 240 Old Testament, New Testament and Theology survey lessons.
- There were also eight elective courses involved. George Rogers approved a course development pay schedule of \$5,000 for the professors making the elective courses.
- I wrote and recorded 240 44-minute audio lectures.
- Our team developed reams and reams of study notes, programmed learning sheets and exams.
- We hired staff. The initial launch was accomplished by the dedicated work and service and heartbeat of Joel Pierson and a small office staff.
- Around 1979-80 Roy Newman became the director of the program’s day to day operations. He was assisted by Rick Lawrenson, Larry Schlapman and Neil Eidson.¹⁶

Dr. Willmington was exposed to such a program while a student at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. The proposed plan was to develop a full two-year Bible and theology training program that individuals could complete at home; at their own pace. There were no semester deadlines to meet and there was very little pressure other than what one must bring to bear in the way of personal discipline to make progress towards completion of the program and the earning of a diploma. Students listened to scores of 44-minute audio lectures, completed a programmed learning workbook series and then finished with mid-term and final exams for each course. The idea was a great success. Thousands of pastors and lay people were able to access a comprehensive Bible and theology educational program at an affordable cost. A number of those graduates enrolled in the Distance Learning Program of Liberty University to pursue a four-year degree.

¹⁶ Willmington interview by author.

Roy Newman's tenure as director of the LHBI correspondence program was from 1980 to 1992. His most influential contribution besides his spiritual guidance and presence was guiding the continued development of the curriculum and overseeing the complete operation of the ministry.

Rick Lawrenson, Jr. and Larry Schlapman oversaw the vast amount of mail asking Bible and theology questions. They developed and catalogued a host of topic-related replies for answering the myriad questions that came in to the Institute monthly. This "answering system" standardized responses to questions for the entire ministry and maintained theological consistency.

Financials

Start up and developmental funds were provided by the Old Time Gospel Hour ministry, a separate entity from the Thomas Road Baptist Church. During the summer of 1976 Dr. Falwell and Dr. Willmington shared thoughts on the possible opening enrollment for the new venture in Bible training of adults. Dr. Falwell was "pushing" the program at church, on TV and the radio. He knew what effort and money it took to recruit students. He said, "We'll have fifty for the fall." And that was a good expectation considering the short window of promotion for the project. In 1976 the program pricing was set at a flat \$1,000 fee. That was a strong price point for those days when the median income for 1976 was \$12,690.¹⁷ Dr. Willmington and staff continued working and praying for God to enable a successful program launch. The actual enrollment the first semester of Fall 1976 and the subsequent Spring 1977 semester was right at 700 students! In 2009 LHBI welcomed its 100,000th student. As of 2012 enrollment is

¹⁷ *Current Population Reports: Consumer Income*. Series P-60, No. 109, issued January 1978. <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-109.pdf> (accessed July 28, 2012).

approaching 110,000 students.¹⁸ The students are from all fifty states and forty foreign countries. Now, after thirty-five years, a person can still get basically the same course for approximately the same price of \$1,000. The initial program was developed as follows.

Table 5: Scope and Sequence of Instruction for the two-year plan of study

Duration	2 year plan	Self-paced	
Location	At home		
Staff	LHBI staff		
Curriculum	Courses	Scope and Sequence	
	240 44-minute audio lectures on cassette	Old Testament Survey I-II	
		New Testament Survey I-II	
		Theology Survey I-II	
		Book of Genesis	
		Book of Isaiah	
		Gospel of John	
		Book of Acts	
		Book of Romans	
		Church History	
		Hermeneutics	
	Daniel - Revelation		
Graduation	Candidates for graduation are invited to participate in the commencement at Liberty University each May. Graduates are honored for completion of their diploma program.		

The LHBI educational program

The program was student-friendly from the start. Traditionally people begin school in the fall of the year and it was logical to launch the program in September 1976. However, LHBI students were on a self-paced platform and this allowed anyone suffering pressure from illness, work or family concerns to delay submission of assignments or completion of exams. It also proved to

¹⁸ Ken Smith of Liberty Home Bible Institute, interview by author, July 10, 2012, Forest, VA.

result in a considerable number of uncompleted courses. This is inherent in any self-study project. Students followed a program-completion track but could study any topic offered in any sequence. Usually students would begin with the Old Testament Survey courses, move on to the New Testament courses and then the Theology survey courses, and finally completing their studies with any electives they chose in their course work.

Enrollment History

Dr. Willmington stated that growth of enrollment was tremendous at the start and for a good number of years. There was an informal marketing test in a sense that was the result of the tremendous interest in a correspondence program of formal Bible study for adults who watched the OTGH television program.¹⁹ An enthusiastic and experienced team developed the LHBI program. They felt called of God for this endeavor and worked tirelessly to put it all together and give the Bible student the best learning experience possible. This was a new venture for the church. Although certain faculty were involved in the curriculum production the church team was responsible for development and deployment of the courses. The Moody Bible Institute's correspondence program, The Scofield Bible Study Course, was an effective educational product priced at about \$75.00 at the time. It did not offer as much content as the LHBI program but its popularity provided a general idea of the interest in correspondence programs. There did not appear to be much competition for students and the horizon was bright.

¹⁹ Willmington-Towns interview by author, August 8, 2011.

The Future

Dan Reber became Director of the Liberty Home Bible Institute program in 2012. He was a great personal friend of Jerry Falwell, Sr. for many years and a substantial benefactor of Liberty University. Mr. Reber has been involved in producing numerous Bible training formats in recent years and his involvement in the LHBI program is providential. He is making plans for the program that involve large vision. "I want the Liberty Home Bible Institute program to go around the world. In the very near future the program content will be totally in digital format and available in five major languages."²⁰

The Institute of Biblical Studies (1980-1986)

From 1980 to 1986 the Thomas Road Bible Institute moved from the church campus to the university campus and was called the Institute of Biblical Studies.²¹ In 1986 the institute was discontinued due to a falling enrollment.

Dr. Willmington and his staff worked from offices in the School of Religion building on the main campus of Liberty Baptist College at this time. IBS classes were conducted in the Fine Arts auditorium. During the 1983-1984 year a special one-year specialized program was included within the Institute. This program²² was designed for individuals who already held an undergraduate degree. Those enrolled in this special program would study at the Institute for one year and then go out to a larger sized church and establish a local church Bible institute. There were five individuals in that group with this author among them. This group met frequently with

²⁰ Dan Reber of Liberty Home Bible Institute, telephone interview by author, July 3, 2012, Lynchburg, VA.

²¹ Student Hand book "Welcome" page.

²² It was not a formal program but led to a diploma with special acknowledgement.

the Institute coordinator and wrote a start-up manual that guided a local church in organizing, promoting and operating its own evening Bible institute using Dr. Willmington's curriculum.

A promotional brochure from this time indicated that an Associate of Arts degree was now possible through the Bible Institute. The reply device for those seeking more information about the Institute indicated two areas of study for the Bible Institute program, a two-year general Bible diploma or a two-year Associate of Arts degree.

There are no data to substantiate that the associate degree track was ever implemented.

Institute records during this period are irretrievable. This writer was a student in the Institute for the 1983-84 school year and recalls enrollment at eighty-six students for the fall 1983 semester. When the Institute was discontinued in 1986 enrollment was at fifty-six students. The following chart indicates the personnel involved in the Institute in this time period.

Table 6: Listing of Faculty and Staff for the Period of 1980-1986

ADMINISTRATION 1980-1981	
Dr. Harold L. Willmington	Dean
Dr. Lindsay Howan (1980)	Administrative Coordinator
Kenneth Chapman	Associate Dean
William Crowder	Student Affairs, LBI
Jerry Edwards (1981)	Coordinator
Elroy Newman	Director, LHBI
Earl Denny	Evening Schools, LBI
Tammy Bjorklund (1981)	Graphics
FACULTY 1980-1981	
Dr. Harold Willmington	Bible Survey
Kenneth Chapman	Bible
William Crowder (1980 and prior)	Bible, Homiletics
Marie Chapman	Sunday School Methods Journalism, Music
Richard Lawrenson	Graphics, Bible

Philip Feist (1981)	Bible, Homiletics, Hermeneutics, Church History
Sue Willmington	Sign Language
STAFF DIRECTORY	
Janice Fortner	Executive Secretary
Marlene Crowder	Secretary
Benita Severson	Recorder
Richard Lawrenson	Graphics
Sandra Spencer	Graphics

Contribution #3: Establishing the Local Church Bible Institute Program (1984-present)

The Local Church Bible Institute was a direct spinoff from the Liberty Home Bible Institute. LHBI is a correspondence program developed for individuals studying at home. It is a fact known to those who work within such programs that completion rates are seldom higher than ten to fifteen percent.²³ Thus, it follows that there are many individuals interested in pursuing some type of formal Bible study who either realize that they are unlikely to be self-motivated enough to continue participation in their program or feel that studying in a classroom setting with their peers provides a more suitable learning environment. With such background information it is understandable that some local church pastors attempted to convert the curricular materials associated with the LHBI program into local church Bible study centers. This proved a problematic undertaking because of the large amount of content and the absence of teacher lesson plans in the LHBI program. In addition, copyright considerations posed a limitation to those pastors as well. Over the course of some years Dr. Willmington received repeated requests from pastors for lesson plans, exams, student study guides, and the like so that pastors could

²³ Ken Smith interview. For further information concerning dropout rates of distance learners consult *Course Completion Rates among Distance Learners: Identifying Possible Methods to Improve Retention* by Robert D. Nash. <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/winter84/nash84.htm> (accessed July 10, 2012).

establish in-house Bible learning centers for the Bible lovers of their congregations. During the academic year 1983-1984 student members of a special sub-program within the Institute of Biblical Studies devised and built The Local Church Bible Institute program (See p. 77).

The program basics are as follows.²⁴

Description of a Typical Local Church Bible Institute Program

The author has been involved to some degree with over 200 churches that established Local Church Bible Institutes. The following information is drawn from many years of experience in the field. As mentioned at the outset, Bible Institutes offered lay people the opportunity for formal Bible, theological and ministry training in a local area or local church setting. This accessible and low-cost opportunity for religious education was a boon to the local church. The main educational goal of these individuals was not to attain a college degree but the training that would enable them to perform ministry more effectively. Thus, those churches that established Bible training centers beyond the Sunday School benefited from these newly trained individuals who were part of their own congregation and were not necessarily going to leave after their training was concluded.

The Purpose of Bible Institute Educational Programs

The goal of these “technical” schools is to teach, train and disciple dedicated men and women for Christ-centered ministry. The Bible institute framework is that of an adult education

²⁴ Local Church Bible Institute Program Start Up Manual (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour, Inc., 1984).

model where the student typically works during the day and studies in the evening. Most typical of the local church institutes is a one-night-per-week scenario. The structure of the institutes is dependent upon the scope of outreach of the church or institution. Some churches enroll students only from their church. Others invite individuals of like doctrine. Others are open to whoever names the name of Christ. Additionally, the programs may involve a two-year or three-year format. A number of students and instructors are bi-vocational pastors or church staff members.

Types of Bible Institutes

The Institute is often formed along the following classifications: denominational, interdenominational, theological, leadership, and geographical. For example, various Institute names reflect the geographical vision of their ministry: the Tri-Cities Bible Institute, or Northeast Ohio School of Ministry, or the Bible Institute of South Africa.²⁵ Other Bible Institutes cater to specific groups of learners such as the deaf,²⁶ international missionaries, women's ministries and the like.²⁷ Bible Institutes operate typically on a one-year, two-year, three-year academic schedule. For instance, John MacArthur's The Master's Seminary has a one-year Bible Institute format.²⁸

²⁵ Bible Institute of South Africa, <http://bisa.org.za/> (accessed January 23, 2013).

²⁶ Silent Word Ministries, http://www.silentwordministries.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=209&Itemid=84 (accessed January 23, 2013).

²⁷ New Tribes Bible Institute, <http://usa.ntm.org/new-tribes-bible-institute> (accessed January 23, 2013). See also the Texas International Bible Institute, which establishes Spanish speaking local churches. <http://www.texasbible.org/>.

²⁸ The Master's College, One Year Bible Institute, <http://www2.masters.edu/DeptPageNew.asp?PageID=882> (accessed January 23, 2013).

Structure

Typically a formal Bible training school centered in a local church is led by the pastor, who may be the dean. A director administers the program. This person is responsible for recruiting instructors and students, setting up the school, conducting the promotional efforts, and seeing to the routine responsibilities of the program. Schools of sufficient size may have additional volunteer staff members who assist the director in registering students for classes and performing financial accounting tasks. Monday, Tuesday or Thursday evenings are the usual days for instruction. This is an oft-used format for once per week Institutes:

Fall Semester—16 weeks (Aug.-Dec.)
Tuesday evenings (6:30-9:20)
Old Testament Survey (6:30-7:20)
New Testament Survey (7:30-8:20)
Theology Survey (8:30-9:20)

Some schools cater to the students who come directly from work to the church Bible school by incorporating an evening meal before the start of instruction. The entire instructional effort is a significant blessing to the church as it ministers the Word of the Lord, fosters fellowship and fires evangelistic zeal. Some evening Institutes schedule time for a chapel period for worship and devotional messages at some point in the evening.

Table 7: Scope and sequence of the Local Church Bible Institute Program.

Duration	3 years	6 semesters	No summer courses
Location	Local church facilities		
Staff	Pastor Director Faculty	Scope and Sequence	One night per week
Curriculum	Semester One	Old Testament Survey I	6:30-7:20
		New Testament Survey I	7:30-8:20
		Theology Survey I	8:30-9:20
	Semester Two	Old Testament Survey II	
		New Testament Survey II	
		Theology Survey II	
	Semester Three	Old Testament Survey III	
		New Testament Survey II	
		Theology Survey III	
	Semester Four	Old Testament Survey IV	
		New Testament Survey IV	
		Theology Survey IV	
	Semester Five	Old Testament Survey V	
		New Testament Survey V	
		Theology Survey V	
	Semester Six	Old Testament Survey VI	
		New Testament Survey VI	
		Theology Survey VI	
Materials		288 individual instructor lesson plans	
		Six student study guides	
		Exams	
Graduation	These proceedings are conducted by the local church, usually in a formal cap and gown ceremony.		

Cost

One reason the Bible institute model succeeds is its affordability. Most institutes do and should assess certain fees, tuition and materials expenses. The instructors should expect remuneration and reimbursement for basic expenses associated with their teaching assignments.

It stands to reason that the larger the institution involved the greater the associated costs are likely to be for the students. Instructors should have an annual teaching contract which holds them accountable and makes them less likely to leave mid-term. Students should expect to pay something for this training in order to be invested in it. This too, hinders withdrawals and non-participation along the way.²⁹

Instructors

The larger the institute the more credentialed the instructors and lecturers tend to be. Some Bible institutes are accredited and the accrediting body will have requirements for the number of teachers holding terminal degrees. As with any institution of higher learning, a percentage of graduates will become instructors themselves. This holds especially true for denominational schools.

Pedagogy

The teaching-learning process in many Bible institutes is based on the principle outlined by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2, “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.” This “pass-it-on-to-the-next-generation” principle is well-suited to Bible Institute pedagogy. Most Bible institutes seek to inculcate the core beliefs of the Holy scriptures as well as some systematic approach to theology. The ministry training aspect of these schools puts some shoe

²⁹ *Start Up Manual*, Operations section.

leather to the program's desired outcomes. Homework demands for working adults are a significant recruitment factor. Individuals want to know quite specifically what time and energy demands a Bible program makes on them. It is not uncommon for graduates of a local church training program to begin to teach in that same school or another of similar doctrinal belief located in the vicinity.

Curriculum

A few pastors of local church Bible institutes develop their own curriculums with lesson plans, workbooks, assignments and assessment tools. There are other Bible teaching resources available for Bible institutes to employ in their programs. The Southern Baptist Convention through Lifeway offers the comprehensive "Explore the Bible" adult Bible curriculum. Its lesson content is presented as the various genres of the scriptures, for instance, Law—Genesis, Leviticus; Poetry—Job; Gospel—Matthew, Mark; Letter—Philippians, Colossians. The scope of this Bible program is four two-year stages. It is described as "an in-depth, expository Bible study series built to lead adult Sunday School members through major biblical themes and truths in weekly scripture passages, personal study, and life application."³⁰ The program's scope and sequence of instruction involves presenting its content in a quarterly format. It is available in three languages and also for the deaf.

This study offers resources such as a Leader Guide, Personal Study Guide, and Leader Pack. Several helps are also available for deeper study and lesson preparation, including: Commentary; the newly redesigned Discovery Study Guide for a discussion-driven,

³⁰ "Explore the Bible," LifeWay, <http://www.lifeway.com/Explore-the-Bible/c/N-1z13wmc> 11-7-2012 9:12 pm (accessed November 18, 2012).

critical-thinking approach; and QuickSource, a tool for quick teacher preparation that's perfect for new teachers or substitutes.³¹

Bible Baptist Church Publications offers Bible institute level instructional resources. The online site offers basic information for setting up a local church Bible institute and a recommended scope and sequence. This is a Landmark Baptist ministry. Many local church Bible institutes offer some or all of their curricular materials for purchase online. Most formal adult Bible curriculum involves teacher lesson plans and student resources such as a workbook or other study helps available in printed or CD lecture format.

Recruitment

Recruiting students is a never-ending challenge for Institute leadership. The main method of recruiting students concerning the local church is prayer followed by “pulpit power.” The pastor must be engaged with this outreach of the church or it simply will be neglected for certain. A series of challenging messages preceding launch of the Bible school will yield excellent results.

There are currently six Bible Institutes continuing from the 1984 era. One of the five pilot schools, Amherst County Bible Institute founded by Dr. Paul Fink, continues after nearly twenty-seven years of operation. It is the author’s personal observation that these evening Bible Institutes do not normally exist longer than ten years. One of the main challenges for continued operation of the school is recruitment of new students. If the church does not continue to grow or persistent recruitment efforts are not made the enrollments fall. Over 200 local church Bible

³¹ Explore the Bible.

Institutes affiliated with this program have been established in America, Canada and several foreign countries. In November of 1990 the Old Time Gospel Hour discontinued operations of the program. This program was consigned to the author who reorganized it under the auspices of the Bible Institute Group, Lynchburg, VA. The Group continues to establish Bible institutes in local churches. The program has changed very little in content and structure as nearly thirty years of operation have stood the test of time and practice. Although the program is rather simple in its structure it is highly effective in providing the students of local churches a platform that delivers formal Bible, theology and ministry training for those who prefer to study at home in the local church.³²

Contribution #4: Re-establishing the Liberty Bible Institute (1992-2007)

The Bible Institute campus program at Liberty University was re-established in the fall of 1992. A large promotional effort was conducted in the spring and summer before the fall term began to recruit students who would relocate to Lynchburg, Virginia and study on the campus as residential students. It was envisioned that these students would directly interact with service opportunities within the Thomas Road Baptist Church. The subsequent enrollment numbers indicate the success of the promotional efforts to recruit Bible Institute students to campus. The recruitment goal was 500 students. The progress towards this number in the summer before the semester began was tempered in part by the short notice of the program's launch and the individuals finding the means to tie up ends at home and move to Lynchburg, secure some form of employment and get settled in before beginning the academic routine. Generally it requires six months to a year to transition from out of state and set up housekeeping, find employment and

³² *The Bible Institute Group Annual Report, 2012*

move one's belongings to Lynchburg, VA. Thus, the fall semester of 1992 saw an enthusiastic group of fifty-seven individuals pioneer the new start of the Institute. To jump start the enrollment Dr. Falwell reduced the tuition to \$0. Of these fifty-seven students, eight were graduates of the Liberty Home Bible Institute and could earn the Th.G. diploma after completing a one-year Bible program.

The Fall 1992 class met in the former dining hall location but classes met in the Religion Hall from Spring 1993 to Spring 1995. In the summer of 1995 the university was experiencing considerable growth and facilities large enough to house classes for the Institute were very limited. For the school years 1996-1998, the Institute met on campus at David's Place. From 1998-2000, the Institute met at Berean Baptist Church on Greenview Drive in Lynchburg, VA.

A considerable number of students finished their programs in the Spring of 2000 and graduated. In a two-year cycle every other year sees a downturn in enrollment unless those graduating students are replaced. The effects of the large advertising and promotional efforts of 1995 which brought many students to campus were at an end by this time. No further large scale recruitment efforts for LBI were conducted by the university marketing department. The top enrollment of this period was 230 students. Below is a chart depicting approximate enrollment numbers year by year. Due to the Institute being a part of the Thomas Road Baptist Church and then Liberty Baptist College, retrieving enrollment data is difficult at best since there are two different record systems involved and computing systems not interfacing with one another made for loss of data and or irretrievability of data. The figures below are based on classroom attendance records and LBI office records. An asterisk indicates a reasonable estimation of the number enrolled.

Table 8: Estimated attendance figures for all versions of the Bible Institute from 1972 to present

Year	Enrollment
1972-1973	100*
1973-1974	142
1974-1975	161
1975-1976	225*
1976-1977	240
1977-1978	225*
1978-1979	175*
1979-1980	145*
1980-1981	115*
1981-1982	100*
1982-1983	95*
1983-1984	86
1984-1985	72
1985-1986	58*
1992-1993	57
1993-1994	95
1994-1995	74*
1995-1996	180*
1996-1997	225*
1997-1998	230
1998-1999	148
1999-2000	155*
2000-2001	100*
2001-2002	81
2002-2003	60*
2003-2004	50*
2004-2005	40*
2005-2006	40*
2006-2007	33
2007-2008	21
2008-2009	26
2009-2010	24
2010-2011	22
2011-2012 ³³	12

³³ This year was the last residential academic year and was a teach-out to enable the remaining students an opportunity to complete their training programs. No other persons were allowed to enroll in this academic year.

Below are approximate enrollment numbers for the Willmington School of the Bible-online (2007-Present)

Table 9: Estimated attendance figures for all versions of the Bible Institute from 2007 to present

Year	Enrollment*
2005	100
2006	150
2007	200
2008	225
2009	600
2010	400
2011	300
Fall 2012	800

* These numbers are close approximations based on enrollment records maintained by the Registrar's office.

The following chart presents the graduation totals for TRBI, IBS, LBI, and WSB.³⁴

Table 10: Estimated graduation figures for TRBI, IBS, LBI, and WSB from 1973 to 2012

Graduation Year	Number of Graduates	Gradation Year	Number of Graduates
1973/74	21	1995/96	17
1974/75	91	1996/97	65
1975/76	75	1997/98	74
1976/77	89	1998/99	76
1977/78	70	1999/2000	51
1978/79	47	2000/01	38
1979/80	59	2001/02	16
1980/81	45	2002/03	13
1981/82	43	2003/04	16
1982/83	30	2004/05	8
1983/84	54	2005/06	9
1984/85	30	2006/07	12
1985/86	45	2007/08	13
1990/91	1	2008/09	16
1992/93	8	2009/10	16
1993/94	25	2010/11	29
1994/95	37	2011/12	44

³⁴ Liberty University Registrar's document on file with the office of Dr. Willmington.

The Liberty Bible Institute Franchise Program (2004-2011)

In 2003 the LBI team received permission to launch a new Bible Institute outreach program involving local churches. This hybrid program connected the local church Bible training efforts with the Liberty University Distance Learning Program.

Structure

Local churches would offer LBI courses taught by adjunct professors at the church. The students would earn the same diploma as residential students in the program area of Biblical Studies. The adjuncts teaching at the local churches were bona fide adjunct professors hired and contracted by Liberty University.

Promotion

Dr. Willmington began traveling to churches along the Atlantic seaboard that were pastored by Bible Institute graduates for the most part. He held Bible conferences and would introduce the congregations to the new Bible training opportunity for their local church. They could receive formal Bible training in their own church and receive a strong credential from Liberty University. It was affordable and challenging. It enabled the local church to offer training they might not otherwise be able to provide for their people.

History

The program launched in the Fall 2004 term with twelve schools. Enrollment was not as high as expected in the schools but enthusiasm was at a high mark. It was interesting to note that each pastor predicted his first semester enrollment would be nearly double or triple the actual numbers. It is difficult to recruit students for education and training due to the heavy work schedules and family responsibilities they have.

This was a new venture for local churches and there were many unknowns. Even though the tuition was the lowest of any Bible training offered through Liberty University, cost was a consideration for a number of those individuals who considered attending. The tuition, fees and books were a budgeting factor.

It is obvious that the benefits of the schools in terms of God's people receiving quality Bible training, fellowship and future ministry are worth the great effort involved. Yet a new program endures issues and challenges. One considerable challenge was the desire of local church leaders to participate as paid adjuncts for the program at their church but who lacked a qualifying master's degree. Another challenge was the development of courses that were not totally available at launch time. A third area of concern was in ensuring that the local church teachers presented content in line with the actual LBI course. The exams were LBI-generated and if different content was presented students would tend to miss questions on the exams. A fourth challenge was the busyness of the students themselves. When a student relocates to attend Bible college or seminary, he and his family expect a radical transition that brings a change of lifestyle. Reduced incomes and lifestyle are expected, and adjustments are planned accordingly. The focus becomes school and the goal of receiving training and a degree. Many sacrifices are

made as expected. However, at home, students tend to add school work to a schedule that is already very full without the expectation of having to make sacrifices or other adjustments.

The franchise program represented a strong vision of the residential Institute for giving many church workers across the country a hybrid educational option that provided them with a formal association with a credentialed institution and completing the training at home.

Re-establishing the campus Bible Institute was a remarkable feat because of the short time before launch, the logistics involved and the recruitment effort needed to bring in the students. With minimal staff and a tight budget Dr. Willmington set to work and made it happen. His vision and energy were contagious as the team worked to get everything ready for the incoming men and women who would spend the next two years with him in study, ministry and fellowship.

Contribution #5: Producing His Bible Institute Curriculum

For two years in the early days of the TRBI Dr. Willmington conducted Bible training sessions for about 1,000 students in local churches in five localities within driving distance of Lynchburg, VA. This came about when two pastors, Danny Smith and Rudy Holland approached Dr. Willmington about offering his Bible training in their churches. Dr. Willmington met with each and set up a travel schedule for him to visit the churches and conduct the training sessions. It is interesting to note that it was also part of Dr. Willmington's plan to utilize these training venues to further develop his extensive teaching notes and hone his teaching skills. Consider this exhausting schedule. In addition to his routine daily teaching responsibilities and

the administrative workload as dean Dr. Willmington would travel each day to conduct evening Bible training sessions.³⁵ On Mondays he would drive to Roanoke, VA, to teach some 200 students at Rudy Holland's Berean Baptist Church. On Tuesdays he would drive to Richmond, VA to Danny Smith's church, Open Door Baptist Church, where he taught some 200 students. On Wednesdays he drove to Greensboro, NC, and taught at Brightwood Baptist church who gathered some 200 students. On Thursdays he travelled to Harrisonburg, VA, to Willie Weaver's church, People's Baptist Church. On Fridays he drove to Martinsburg, WV to teach. All told he taught about an additional 1,000 students during the weeknights. He did this for two years. These were eager students hungry for God's Word. Dr. Willmington's survey teaching gave them the big picture of the events and personages of the Bible. Often, this teaching was the first exposure to formal doctrine they experienced.

One would not think it necessary to convince Bible lovers to study it in depth manner but that is seemingly not the case. Dr. Willmington observed eight reasons why the child of God should study the Word of God for himself or herself. They are:

1. Because of its Author.
2. Because of the oft-repeated command to read it.
3. Because the Bible is God's chosen way to accomplish His divine will.
4. Because the enemy of the believer, the devil, has read it.
5. Because of the example of Paul.
6. Because the Bible alone provides answers to life's three most important questions.
7. Because the Christian will never have the opportunity to apply many of its verses after leaving this earth.
8. Because the only ultimate proof for our faith is the Bible.³⁶

³⁵ Willmington-Towns interview by author, August 8, 2011.

³⁶ Willmington, D.Min. project, 3-11.

Dr. Willmington's Core Bible Curriculum

As Dr. Willmington has said on many occasions, “The Bible is our textbook. All other resources including the books and materials I have prepared are supplemental.”³⁷ His core teachings were contained in a two-volume set called *The Basic Stages in the Book of Ages*. This body of work became in 1981 a book published by Tyndale House Publishers titled *Willmington's Guide to the Bible*. There is an interesting personal story that serves as the backdrop to this important Bible study resource.

In 1969 Dr. Willmington resigned his “dream church” in Minneapolis, MN. At this time he and his family would enter a period he calls the “Dry Brook Bible Institute.” This is a time in his life of ministry when he was not serving as a full time pastor of a local church. He worked at the International Harvester Corporation in the Chicago, Illinois area as a janitor. God sometimes has a strange way to prepare us for greater works. As Dr. Willmington worked the long hours of the third shift, his heart was heavy. He pondered some tough personal questions he would pose to himself. “What am I doing here?” “What will this broom do for the cause of Christ?” “Is my ministry over?” When he returned home from work each morning he worked on a curriculum project involving a survey of the entire Bible and the great doctrines of the faith. This raw material became the body of information of *Willmington's Guide to the Bible*. This work would represent the main body of his curriculum for the Bible institute. Thus, what he initially regarded as writing activity to keep his sanity, the Spirit of God intended as investment for future greater works.³⁸

A singular achievement of Dr. Willmington that became a blessing to multiplied thousands of Bible investigators was his Bible and theology survey work. These materials came to serve as the knowledge base and theological grid for these many learners. Dr. Willmington has quipped that “I am not an expert in Bible but I have an expertise in Bible which is summarization.” He can summarize the entire Old Testament in a year, in a semester, in thirty days, in a one-day seminar, in an hour. In my first class session as a student he introduced the

³⁷ Dr. Willmington has made this statement dozens of times to any number of audiences or classroom groups.

³⁸ H. L. Willmington, interview by author, Lynchburg, VA, August 11, 2011.

Old Testament Survey course like this: “We are going to survey the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament in the following fashion. We will be traveling in a high fly zone over certain portions of it. We will come down through the clouds to lower altitudes at times and we will certainly fly even lower for low-level observations. At some points in our travels, we will actually land the plane and go visit a neighborhood or two.” Other instructors teaching in the Bible institute used various textbooks and materials in their courses. But, the core learning occurred in the twelve survey courses taught by Dr. Willmington and these courses remain a distinctive and fruitful part of the curriculum.

Description of Dr. Willmington’s Bible and Theology Curricula

Dr. Willmington has consistently throughout his teaching career presented the content of the Old and New Testaments in twelve basic stages. In his doctoral project he outlines why he takes this approach to presenting the biblical data.

Nearly every Bible Institute and Christian college offers courses in Old Testament and New Testament survey. The usual approach is to briefly examine the sixty-six books, suggesting a key thought, verse, truth, character, etc., for each book. The main problem with this method is the difficulty in connecting the many “keys” with the proper biblical “locks.”

A simpler method would be to separate the sixty-six books into twelve logical and historical divisions. This I have done, entitling the process *Basic Stages in the Book of Ages*.

Each stage describes a particular and unique period of time in God’s progressive revelation to man. It should be quickly pointed out here that these twelve divisions are not dispensational in nature, but rather historical.³⁹

³⁹ Willmington, D.Min. project, 17.

Dr. Willmington presents his biblical curriculum in a package he calls *The Chronological Method*. In this method he divides the historical material into twelve stages. Consider this listing from an early advertising piece for the Thomas Road Bible Institute.⁴⁰

The Creation Stage
 The Patriarchal Stage
 The Exodus Stage
 The Conquest Stage
 The Judges Stage
 The United Kingdom Stage
 The Chaotic Kingdom Stage
 The Captivity Stage
 The Return Stage
 The Gospel Stage
 The Early Church Stage
 The Epistles Stage

Dr. Willmington also covers systematic theology in twelve doctrinal studies. The study sequence of the doctrines changed somewhat over time. There is a new approach presented in the Anniversary edition of the *Guide*.

Table 11: Comparison of Willmington's Guide to the Bible and the Revised Willmington's Guide to the Bible

Early TRBI Listing	Willmington's Guide to the Bible Listing ⁴¹	Willmington's Guide to the Bible 30 th Anniversary Edition Listing ⁴²
The Doctrine of the Trinity	The Doctrine of the Trinity	Questions & Answers about the Trinity
The Doctrine of the Father	The Doctrine of the Son	Questions & Answers about God the Father
The Doctrine of the Son	The Doctrine of the Father	Questions & Answers about Jesus Christ

⁴⁰ Advertising piece entitled "A Personal Invitation To Join A Very Select Group." Undated but is from about 1981.

⁴¹ H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1981), vii.

⁴² H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Guide to the Bible 30th Anniversary Edition* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), xvii-xx.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	Questions & Answers about the Holy Spirit
The Doctrine of Man	The Doctrine of Man	Questions & Answers about Man
The Doctrine of the Church	The Doctrine of the Church	Questions & Answers about Sin
The Doctrine of Sin	The Doctrine of Sin	Questions & Answers about Salvation
The Doctrine of Salvation	The Doctrine of Salvation	Questions & Answers about the Church
The Doctrine of Satan	The Doctrine of Satan	Questions & Answers about the Bible
The Doctrine of Angels	The Doctrine of Angels	Questions & Answers About Angels
The Doctrine of the Bible	The Doctrine of the Bible	Questions & Answers about Satan And Demons
The Doctrine of Prophecy	The Doctrine of Prophecy	Questions & Answers about Prophecy
		Questions & Answers about Heaven and Hell
		Questions & Answers about Christian Living

The writing ministry of Harold Willmington is a significant contribution to Liberty University in a number of ways. First, his writings serve as the Bible and theology curriculum for the Bible Institute programs. Second, his writings serve as textbooks for college and seminary courses not only at Liberty University but for other Bible colleges as well.⁴³ Third, his books and other writings benefit the greater Liberty University family of alumni and friends and supporters. He has certainly contributed to the academic progress of Liberty University. He has written twenty-two books but enjoys writing biblical and theological materials that he makes available to the entire Liberty community at no cost. Fourth, he has donated thousands of books to local pastors in Kenya and Ghana.

⁴³ For one, Hyles-Anderson College uses certain materials written by Dr. Willmington

Following is a listing of Dr. Willmington's writing contributions to the Christian community.

Publications

By Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN

- *The Topical Study Bible* (Contributing Editor)
- *The New Open Bible* (Contributing Editor)
- *Daily Devotional Bible* (Contributing Editor)
- *Liberty Bible Commentary* (Contributing Editor)
- *That Manuscript From Outer Space*

By Victor Books, Wheaton, IL

- *Willmington's Survey of the Old Testament*

By Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, IL

- *The King is Coming*
- *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* (30th anniversary edition just released 2011)
- *Israel at Forty*
- *Signs of the Times*
- *The Visualized Bible*
- *Willmington's Complete Guide to Bible Knowledge* (a series of 6 volumes)
 - ◆ *Old Testament People*
 - ◆ *New Testament People*
 - ◆ *The Life of Christ*
 - ◆ *Old Testament Survey*
 - ◆ *New Testament Survey*
 - ◆ *Introduction to Theology*
- *When It Hurts Too Much To Cry*
- *Willmington's Teaching Visuals*

- *Willmington's Books of Bible Lists*
- *Willmington's Bible Handbook*
- *Willmington's Complete Bible Outline*

Facts Relating to the Various Publications

The King is Coming

The book has undergone three revisions, twelve printings, and has been translated into the Finnish, Korean and Indonesian languages. There are 350,000 copies in circulation.

Willmington's Guide to the Bible

In 1988 the Sudan Interior Mission distributed 5,000 copies to 5,000 native pastors in Ghana, Africa. In 1997 a similar project was carried out for 15,000 pastors in Nigeria, Africa. The *Guide* has been translated in French, Korean, Chinese and Spanish. There are 367,000 copies in circulation.

Signs of the Times

This has been translated into Japanese.

Willmington's Book of Bible Lists

In 1988 Billy Graham distributed nearly 400,000 copies of this book, featuring it during his televised Buffalo, New York evangelistic crusade. The *Lists* book has been translated into the Italian and German languages.

Willmington's Complete Guide to Bible Knowledge: Old Testament People

This book was given the Gold Medallion Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association on July 13, 1991.

Willmington's Bible Handbook

This resource contains introductions and a verse by verse commentary on all the books in the Bible, numerous maps of the Bible world, convenient charts and lists with key Bible information, a chronology of Bible events, stories, statistics and spiritual lessons from the lives of more than 100 people from the Bible.

Cassette Lectures

In 1976 Dr. Willmington developed the Liberty Home Bible Institute, a correspondence course consisting of 240 forty-five minute lectures, eighty covering the Old Testament, eighty on the New Testament, and eighty in the area of theology. In the ensuing years, over 100,000 students have been enrolled from all fifty states, plus forty foreign countries.

Contribution #6: Employing His Teaching Philosophy

The Instructional Approaches to Learning

On any college campus there are popular professors many students adore or admire for one reason or another. There are popular teachers and “master teachers” who are greatly respected for excellence at their craft, namely teaching. Master teachers are teachers of teachers. At Liberty University, Dr. Harold Willmington is a master teacher. In its own right, that distinction is based on his approach to teaching and learning.

Dr. Willmington has always structured his teaching-learning philosophy according to a six-fold approach:

- (1) First approach: Information. What does any given Old Testament or New Testament passage actually say?

- (2) Second approach: Orientation. What are the background, context, and circumstances relating to that particular passage?
- (3) Third approach: Simplification. How can the passage or biblical truth be best illustrated for easy understanding?
- (4) Fourth approach: Internalization. How can the passage or biblical truth be personally applied to individuals today?
- (5) Fifth approach: Dissemination. How can those great biblical lessons, once personally learned, be effectively taught to others?
- (6) Sixth approach: Continuation. How can the student develop a consistent and successful lifelong program and plan to study the Bible?⁴⁴

Listing of Adult Bible Teaching Methods

Dr. Willmington sought continually to find ways to enhance learner retention and enjoyment from studying the scriptures. He thoroughly enjoyed an active participation during his course lectures. Students were supplied with workbooks, charts, maps and other materials in which they would highlight information that he thought crucial and important to retain. Often, this material was the source for exam questions. Here are some of his learning methods over the years.

1. Charts, graphs and maps.
2. Color-coded study sheets.⁴⁵ These sheets would feature different colored fonts to identify certain aspects of his teaching content. For instance, the various parables of Jesus were color-coded to separate them from Christ's sermons which would appear in another colored font. Christ's miracles would be in yet a third colored font.
3. Programmed learning sheets.⁴⁶
4. Varying Adult Bible Teaching Methods⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Promotional Chart, undated, H.L. Willmington.

⁴⁵ See Appendix C to view samples.

⁴⁶ Refer to Appendix D to view a sample.

⁴⁷ Willmington, D. Min. project, 169-172.

The following is a sample listing of the various Bible teaching methods that Dr. Willmington used or prescribed.

- 1) Lecture Method: Condensed Bible material is presented to a group of adults by a qualified teacher.
 - 2) Forum Method: An open discussion by a group concerning the subject matter presented by the teacher.
 - 3) Debate Method: Speakers holding opposing views on controversial subjects present their views to a group of adults. Topics could include pre-millennialism versus amillennialism, sprinkling versus immersion, and others.
 - 4) Panel Method: Several qualified persons discuss a given topic while an audience observes and listens. Subjects might include abortion, divorce, etc.
 - 5) Buzz Group Method: Small groups (four-eight persons) discuss a given topic for a limited period of time.
 - 6) White Paper Report Method: This is similar to the lecture method, but is presented more like a fact-finding survey report.
 - 7) Brainstorming Method: Class members suggest as many ideas as possible on a subject, withholding evaluation until all ideas are presented.
 - 8) Case Study Method: Real life problem situations are presented to the class, seeking their suggestions and solutions based on their Bible knowledge.⁴⁸
5. Teacher's Guide Manual⁴⁹

In this brief tool Dr. Willmington suggested a three-step approach for presenting his curriculum materials in a classroom setting. Below are his suggestions for teaching the basic stages material.

The three steps are:

⁴⁸ To view the complete listing see Appendix I.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 174, 175.

1. Motivation (why one should attend each of these twelve sessions.) At this point a comment concerning Dr. Willmington's teaching style/approach is in order. The authors of *Giving a Lecture* offer some words that provide a lead-in to the comments about Dr. Willmington's teaching style. "When reading about teaching and learning relating it to how you give a lecture it is important to develop your own style. It is important to work to our own strengths and to incorporate techniques and practices that best suit the material, the context and that personal style."⁵⁰ Any of Dr. Willmington's students will tell you that his style of lecturing is based on a lot of information in a brief time in a humorous mode. Ron Deiter's article, "Why Use Humor in the Classroom," is research- based and gives important reasons why humor and learning are so closely connected. One statement from the article is particularly helpful for any teacher when it comes to trying to get the listeners' attention.

"Humor can help students retain subject matter, especially if the humor reinforces the class material (Hill 1988). My own surveys of students indicate that they tend to agree that they are more likely to remember material if it is presented with humor. There are common sense reasons that I have witnessed for believing that the use of humor helps students learn. The main reason is that the use of humor helps to gain students' attention and keep their interest in the material being presented. Students I surveyed tended to agree with this assertion. Also, it is physically impossible to laugh and snore at the same time (Berk, 1998)."⁵¹

2. Application (how I can apply the basic facts found in each stage to my own personal daily Christian life). Dr. Willmington often told his students that leaders were problem solvers. An educator named Charles Muscatine echoes that sentiment. "An educated person is one who is able to autonomously bring knowledge to bear in

⁵⁰ Kate Exley and Reg Dennick, *Giving a Lecture*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 55.

⁵¹ Ron Deiter, "Why Use Humor in the Classroom?" Teaching At ISU, (Iowa State University, Nov/Dec 98), <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/newsletter/v11n2/humor.html> (accessed January 9, 2013).

explanations, on the solution of significant problems.”⁵² Thus, Dr. Willmington expected his students to do something with their new knowledge and understanding of scripture. He would quote Ephesians 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” And he would add James 2:18, “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.”

An interesting item to include in this section is to mention that Dr. Willmington involved his students in the daily operation of the Institute. Before the beginning of the Fall semester he would seek out one Institute family to provide the coffee and snacks during the school day. This family would earn money for their family as they served their classmates during the school term. The Institute had a student governing body of president, vice-president, treasurer and social events officer. Other students served as Christian service leaders and still others served as tutors. This is a natural experience for many students for most schools perhaps but Dr. Willmington was intentional about it. Educator Laurie Richelin suggests such activity. “Use Teaching Assistants in church classrooms for mentoring and learning new things.”⁵³

3. Presentation (some unique ways to introduce and present the material in each stage).

Consider the application of this threefold approach.

I. Stage One: The Creation Stage

A. Motivation

⁵² Charles Muscatine, *Fixing College Education* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 108.

⁵³ Laurie Richelin, *Blueprint for Learning*, (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishers, 2006), 16.

1. This will explain the how, who, and why of my own existence.
2. It will shed much light upon the terrible realities of sin and sufferings in this present world.
3. It shows me the origin of religion and what God thinks of it.
4. It clears up the mystery of the many languages spoken in the world today.

B. Application

1. If God created me in His own image, then He must love me and has a special purpose for me.
2. If God “remembered” Noah during the Great Flood, then he will surely remember and protect me in times of trouble.

C. Presentation

1. Begin by contrasting this study with that of prophecy. Explain that the second tells how the story ends, while this relates how it all began.
2. Use the chart on page 15 of *A Pictorial Journey Thru the Old Testament* to point out the wonders of Genesis 1:1.
3. Get their ideas on what God was doing prior to man’s creation. List the seven suggestions on page 17 in the chart book. Make sure they can think their way through the four great events in this beginning stage, namely, Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel.
4. Bible Charts⁵⁴

Dr. Willmington’s Teaching Style

Dr. Willmington is a popular speaker and teacher. One day several students gathered together and tried to analyze his approach to teaching.⁵⁵ They attempted to systematize his lesson introduction, body and conclusion. They made charts of his teaching points, illustrations and

⁵⁴ Refer to Appendix E to view sample charts.

⁵⁵ The author was among this group of students.

“sad dog stories.” They took special note of these things in the next several lecture periods. They listen to and re-listened to his taped messages. Educators Kate Exley and Reg Dennick explain the importance of lecturers working to find their own personal delivery style. “When reading about teachers and learning relating it to how you give a lecture it is important to develop your own style. It is important to work towards our own strengths and to incorporate techniques and practices that best suit the material, the context and that personal style.”⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that Dr. Willmington experienced an “Aha!” moment concerning his personal delivery style. He remarks that “when I was a student at Moody Bible Institute, I was assigned to go weekly and meet with an elderly lady as she taught Sunday School. And could she ever communicate the Bible to kids. I patterned my own teaching style after hers. It was wonderful.”⁵⁷

For Dr. Willmington Bible education is all about the learner acquiring Bible knowledge. All other related learning, theological discernment and practical Christian growth flows out from this refreshing source. He tried nearly every kind of venue and teaching scope and sequence to get this Bible knowledge out to the people of the local church. As much as institutional learning was a great part of his world, Dr. Willmington was not averse to what some call “back door education.” Charles Wedemeyer wrote about such learning.

“Jonathan Swift, in 1704, said a few choice and satirical words about institutionalized learning: ‘For to enter the place of learning at the Great Gate, requires an expense of time and forms; therefore men of much haste and little ceremony are content to get in by the back door.’”⁵⁸ In addition, he makes a comment that reflects the particular world view of Dr. Willmington, which is to get the Bible knowledge to as many as possible no matter where they reside. “In this

⁵⁶ Kate Exley and Reg Dennick, *Giving a Lecture*, 2nd ed. (New York, London: Routledge, 2009), 55.

⁵⁷ Willmington-Towns personal interview, August 26, 2011.

⁵⁸ Charles A. Wedemeyer, *Learning at the Back Door* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 18.

light, Jonathan Swift's reference to back door learning—which describes the education of most of the people of the world throughout their lives—falls into perspective. Back door learners have been a largely unacknowledged source of the vitality, energy, creativity and survivability of human existence on this earth.”⁵⁹ Dr. Willmington regards his Liberty Home Bible Institute correspondence program which was established in 1976, as Liberty University's first distance learning program. Wedemeyer made another related comment about such learning experiences.

“Human learning preceded institutions, and precedes with or without institutional sanction and guidance. Back door learners, of course, sometimes make use of institutions--or of institutionalized programs—but with a difference. Initiative and motivation reside with them, not the schools. It is still widely assumed that back door learners are narrow learners, confined and imprisoned in petty pursuits for selfish advancements. Yet we also know of philosophers, scientists, writers, musicians, artists, and statesmen who had little formal education but were avid back door learners. Today we would classify such learners as independent, distance, non-traditional, and lifespan learners, making their own way in learning by using libraries, historical societies, open schools and university extension, and external and other alternative modes of learning to augment their own resources.”⁶⁰

Dr. Willmington loved to teach large classes. The more the better was his wish. In his large Bible classes he typically presided over several hundred students. Most would be listening attentively as he expertly described the Bible story scenes with accuracy, color and his own brand of humor. He could tell a story. He was low-tech but students always went away with a handout or some other resource to reinforce the truths presented in that lecture.

Dr. Willmington loved to teach any and all people who had a burn in their heart for the Word of God. He did all he could to accommodate their learning.

⁵⁹ Wedemeyer, 19.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 20.

Contribution #7: Role Modeling the Victorious Christian Life

His Special Presence on Campus

This project has investigated and related the achievements of one person who made an incredible difference in the study, work and lives of countless individuals at Thomas Road Baptist Church, Liberty University and beyond. The presence of Harold Willmington at Liberty University is the biggest contribution of all. What has made this man unique? We have seen thus far that Dr. Willmington is a writer that speaks and a speaker that writes, a rare combination of talent and gifts. He is a master teacher. He is a humorist. He is an edifier. He is a confidant. He is a friend to all. For years, this writer has watched individuals of large and small academic stature seek out the wisdom and counsel of Harold Willmington. They do so because of his vast practical knowledge of the Bible for one, but in the main they accounted him an individual who could be trusted with their words, thoughts and pain. Dr. Willmington would ask his students a question when he taught on the pastoral epistles: “Who counsels the counselor? Who can the pastor go to for help?” Who understands the joys and pressures of being an under shepherd of Christ? Who understands the misunderstanding of leaders of local flocks? Who can the pastor seek out for guidance, instruction, and compassion? Time and again pastors came to his office for such help. He was always available. He stayed late for them. He prayed for them. He opened the scriptures to them. He wrote checks for them. He loved and he cared.

His Care and Nurture of His Students

Dr. Willmington’s door was always open to students or staff, anyone, actually, who needed a word of encouragement or guidance or the use of a sympathetic ear. His heart was big for people. He shared his precious Savior with them or God’s Word for overcoming fear,

betrayal, sickness or any other trial that confronts us all as we make our earthly sojourn complete. He cared deeply for their education and the learning process that would best enable them to serve Christ in the real world. His students saw a gracious individual who lived what he proclaimed. He believed the scriptures and held them up as truth for all. His morals were impeccable. He followed the scriptures in business, church and home. He is a role model for the Christian husband and daddy. His colleagues respect him for his stature as a man of humility and faithfulness to God. The scriptures indicate that one's spiritual growth and maturity includes role models. We are exhorted to emulate the walk of others who are living right. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who so walk, since you have us for an example" (Philippians 3:17). "Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9). Thus, Dr. Willmington set the godly example that students need to witness firsthand. He showed them the pathway to Christ-honoring service and living.

His Promotion of the University

Dr. Willmington was "in a different church every week." On those preaching engagements he would lift high the gospel banner, proclaiming the grace of Christ and the doctrines of the faith. He represented Liberty University well on these occasions in talking to parents of potential students and answering their Bible questions or merely engaging in friendly conversation. Dr. Willmington crisscrossed the country many times holding informative and memorable prophecy seminars and lifting up the name and work of Christ. He is an exuberant ambassador for the university. In addition, Dr. Willmington has always had a heart for missions

and church planting. The Liberty Church Planting Network gave him an award in May of 2009 which reads, “In appreciation for his many years of outstanding service to the Liberty Baptist Fellowship, Dr. Harold L. Willmington is awarded the title of Board Member Emeritus, presented this 18th day of May 2009 by the Board of Directors of Liberty Church Planting Network.”⁶¹ In another gesture of tribute, the university commissioned a life-sized portrait of the main figures of the institution and displayed them in the Grand Lobby of the DeMoss Learning Center. Dr. Willmington’s portrait is among them.

These seven major contributions of Harold Willmington benefit not only Liberty University but the body of Christ over all. The teaching, counsel, writing and presence of Harold Willmington at Liberty University is an asset of colossal proportions.

The contributions of Harold Willmington are not his alone. His dear wife, Sue, has been by his side at all times, supporting and encouraging him no matter the challenges. It is fitting at this point to include in this thesis project the contributions of Sue Willmington to Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University.

Sue Willmington—Deaf Ministry

During the years of its ministry the Liberty Bible Institute enjoyed the special presence of some two dozen deaf students. Sue Willmington described how it all began.

I had been involved in deaf ministry for quite some time before we moved to Lynchburg, VA to be part of launching the Thomas Road Bible Institute. One evening as I taught sign language to interested church members in the old Donald Duck Bottling Company building (location of the original Thomas Road Baptist Church) Dr. Jim Henry was passing by and he stopped to talk a bit. We talked some about this teaching I was conducting for the church folks and he asked me, “What are you doing?” And I said, “I am teaching sign language.” He asked another question, “Why aren’t you doing this at

⁶¹ The award is in the form of a plaque.

the college?” I said, “Because I don’t qualify.” He was the college’s provost (highest position on the education side of the school). He said, “Well, I say you qualify.” And that is how I began teaching sign language in the college.⁶²

Further information about Sue Willmington and her great contribution to Liberty Bible Institute is in order. The following material is a summary of data provided in a special printing by Silent Word Ministries, Inc.⁶³ While serving at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Southaven, IN in 1970, Sue began to receive sign language instruction from a deaf man in town named John. The church leadership was planning on establishing a deaf ministry in the church. Soon, Sue was able to interpret an entire service at the church. Dr. Willmington urged John to attend a service to see his pupil in action. He said, “Well, John, you know that every teacher must go to his student’s recital.” John agreed and as Sue interpreted the Gospel message that day, John’s heart was warmed by the Spirit of God and he received Christ as Savior. One day not long after as Sue was driving she heard a radio newscast that John had been killed by a drunk driver. She was so moved by that news that she pulled over and began to cry out to God and surrendered her life to serve the Lord in deaf ministry. We have previously discussed the Willmingtons’ move to Lynchburg, VA in 1972. From 1973 until 1989 Sue was the television interpreter for the Old Time Gospel Hour broadcasts. In 1974 Fred Parziale from Massachusetts enrolled as the first deaf student in the Thomas Road Bible Institute. In 1977 the first deaf student enrolled in Lynchburg Baptist College. Sue directed the deaf ministry both at Thomas Road Baptist Church and at Lynchburg Baptist College. Sue still teaches sign language course at Liberty University.

To close out this section it would be appropriate also to include a brief word about Dr. Willmington’s family. For seventeen years Dr. Willmington’s wife, Sue, appeared on the

⁶² Sue Willmington, telephone interview by author, November 27, 2012.

⁶³ *People Who Have Made A Difference in The Deaf World: Sue Willmington*, Deaf History Booklet Series, (Silent Word Ministries, n.d.).

nationally televised *Old Time Gospel Hour* program as an interpreter for deaf viewers both in the United States and Canada. She teaches a Christian Womanhood class for Willmington School of the Bible, and teaches Sign Language courses at Liberty University. The Willmingtons have one son, Matthew, who is the Associate Pastor of Ministry Development/Family Ministries at Thomas Road Baptist Church. Matt is married to Chris, a Liberty University graduate and LCA kindergarten teacher. They have three children, Nathan, Carissa, and Abigail, students at Liberty Christian Academy and Liberty University.

Interrelationships of the Institute with the Other Religious Institutions at Liberty University

As a certificate program of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Liberty Bible Institute enjoyed the counsel, teaching, service and camaraderie of this institution. The Seminary served as the technical overseer for the academic and financial aspects of the Institute once it was located on the campus of Liberty University. A number of seminary professors regularly taught LBI classes and contributed their expertise to the student body. At one time the dean of LBTS, Danny Lovett, taught Homiletics in the Institute. Christian service opportunities existed for LBI students to perform volunteer community and church related service in the locales around Lynchburg. Likewise, the School of Religion participated in the various activities of LBI. Dean Elmer Towns taught Church Growth courses for many years in the Institute and was a great supporter of the program. Finally, LBI students served countless hours at Thomas Road Baptist Church in bus ministry and inner city ministries as well as Evangelism Explosion and other outreach efforts. The church was the laboratory for that which was presented in the classroom.

Willmington School of the Bible Today

The Willmington School of the Bible operates today as a distance learning program only under the auspices of the School of Religion at Liberty University. There is no residential Bible Institute program now. It was discontinued at the conclusion of the 2011 academic year. For the academic year 2011-12 a teach-out was conducted to enable the current student body to finish out their programs in the residential program, transfer to the online program or work out a transfer of credit option with the School of Religion and pursue an undergraduate degree.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Post-Graduation Survey

Chapter five summarizes the findings of a formal survey of Liberty Bible Institute graduates involved in formal Christian ministry. This thesis project sought to ascertain what graduates thought of the information, materials and training they received while enrolled in Liberty Bible Institute. A major survey of all Liberty University graduates by the alumni relations office was conducted in 2011. The tally of religion graduates numbered in the thousands. Only eighty-nine religion graduates responded to the survey.¹ Since the bulk of those religion majors would not be Institute students, this was an insufficient number to demonstrate the post-graduation experience of the LBI graduates. An informal LBI office staff survey was conducted to gain a better idea of what the Institute graduates were doing in the service of Christ after they left the Institute. Records from the registrar indicate 1283 graduates from the various residential Bible Institutes from 1972 to 2012.² About one-third of the graduates are serving as senior pastors, associate pastors, full time church staff, missionaries or are associated with para-church ministries.³

¹ Email exchange with registrar's office.

² The data record is on file at the WSB Molly site.

³ The record of graduates is on file at the WSB Molly site.

A survey instrument was devised and uploaded to surveymonkey.com, an online survey website (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RT5LT2T>).⁴ The majority of survey questions were gleaned from the survey mentioned above. The survey was approved by Liberty University Institutional Review Board before deployment. It collected responses anonymously and was deployed from January 24-February 17, 2013. Seventy-six graduates were invited to participate in the survey. Thirty-four graduates responded and completed the survey. The compilation of responses is as follows. Responders did not answer every survey question.

Following is a discussion of each survey question and the responses to those questions.

Question 1: Select the year range closest to the year in which you graduated from the Institute. A table clearly portrays the data.

Table 12: Results for survey question one.

Graduation Era	Percentage	Number
1974-1977	4.5	2
1978-1981	4.5	1
1982-1986	13.6	3
1992-1995	18.2	6
1996-1998	9.1	3
1999-2000	13.6	4
2001-2002	4.5	2
2003-2006	9.1	3
2007-2012	22.7	10

⁴ See Appendix B.

The chart indicates that a representative sample of graduates from all years responded to the invitation to complete the survey. Personal information such as current addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of graduates are difficult for the Institute to maintain or acquire.

2. Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female

Sixty-seven percent of responders were male and thirty-three percent were female.

3. Which of the following best describes your current ministry status? (Check all that apply)

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Senior pastor
- Associate or assistant pastor
- Youth director/pastor
- Worship leader
- Adult Ministries pastor/leader
- Children's Ministries pastor/leader
- Other ministries pastor/leader
- Unpaid staff member
- Retired
- Unemployed

Twelve percent of thirty-two respondents stated that they were employed in full time ministry. Nine percent of respondents were employed as senior pastors and zero percent as associate pastors. Adult ministry pastors of varying titles or positions made up sixteen percent of respondents. The largest category was "other" comprising forty-seven percent of respondents.

The data indicates almost half of the graduates responding to the survey are involved in other categories of ministry than queried in the survey.

4. Have you completed any of the following since graduating from the Institute?

- Ordination
- Licensure
- Chaplaincy

Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated they have been ordained into Christian ministry while fifteen percent indicated they had obtained licensure to preach from a local church and eight percent indicated some credential as chaplain. The data is significant because it indicates a high percentage of the graduates in ministry have been ordained or hold other credentials.

5. Have you completed an additional degree since leaving Liberty?

- Yes
- No
- Working on a degree now
- Plan to work on a degree in the future

Twenty-two percent of respondents indicated they had completed a degree since completing the Bible Institute. Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated that they had not completed a degree but sixteen percent indicated they planned to pursue a degree in the future. These are encouraging numbers because most of the graduates were young college age people when at the Institute and to go to complete a degree reveals a desire to obtain more knowledge and skills to use in ministry.

6. Are you satisfied with the Bible training you received at the Institute?

- Extremely satisfied
- Moderately satisfied
- Slightly satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Slightly dissatisfied
- Moderately dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

This important question revealed the degree of satisfaction graduates reported about the training at the Institute. Ninety-one percent reported that they were extremely satisfied with their training while nine percent stated they were moderately satisfied. There were no numbers in any further lower categories of satisfaction.

7. How effective is the overall training you received for your ministry?

- Extremely effective
- Very effective
- Moderately effective
- Slightly effective
- Not at all effective

This question was important as well as it revealed the degree of effectiveness in the opinions of these graduates concerning the training received at the Institute. Fifty-two percent of respondents considered their training to be extremely effective. Forty-five percent said it was very effective and three percent of respondents considered the training to be moderately effective.

8. What size is the church where you are employed or serve?

- Less than 100
- 100-199
- 200-299
- 300-499
- 500-699
- 700-999
- 1000-1499
- 1500+

The results from this question are interesting. Fifty-percent of the respondents were associated with churches under 200 members. The next largest group representing twenty percent of respondents, were associated with churches of 1500 or more members. This information is important because it reveals the error of some church leaders that Institute grads are only suitable for small ministry settings.

9. If you are a paid staff member, how well are you paid for the work you do?

- Extremely well
- Very well
- Moderately well
- Slightly well
- Not at all well

Twenty percent of respondents considered themselves extremely well paid by their church. Fifty percent of respondents said they were very well paid. The remaining three categories each represented ten percent of respondents. The high satisfaction rate of remuneration in ministry is encouraging for Bible Institute graduates.

The remaining survey questions are short answer responses.

10. Did you find the quality of the course textbooks and other materials beneficial in completing your courses?

Thirty-one responses to this question yielded a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of the course resources. Some specific responses included words like “helpful,” “beneficial,” “foundational,” and “conservative.”

11. Did you find the course work to be academically challenging?

The responses to this question were similar to question ten. The most frequent answer was “yes” with fourteen responses. Six responses included wording like, “good level for Institute learners,” “just right for me,” “very much so.” Three respondents considered the course work to be moderately challenging or not challenging.

12. Did you find the material in the courses to be college level academically?

Fifteen respondents indicated the course materials to be college level. Two individuals did not feel the materials were college level. Four respondents stated the materials were moderately college level. The other responses were simply “yes.”

13. Did the LBI courses enhance your Biblical and theological comprehension?

One hundred percent of all respondents stated the courses enhanced their biblical and theological comprehension. The most common word used was “absolutely,” occurring some eleven times.

14. Have you been able to integrate the material from the courses into your own Christian service?

One hundred percent of responses indicated the course materials were used at least to some extent in ministry or personal devotion. The common reply was “yes” while nine replies stated the materials were still used to prepare sermons or lesson plans. This is an

important indicator of the solid and helpful content of the Institute's educational materials and resources.

15. Did the program contribute to your spiritual walk with Christ regarding the disciplines of worship, evangelism, prayer, personal Bible study, meditation, fasting, service, and others? Please explain.

The thirty-one responses were split down the middle with half indicating the course materials and the program in general definitely impacted their spiritual growth. The other half of respondents indicated enthusiastically reported that they continued to spiritually benefit from their experience at LBI.

16. What are your overall impressions of the LBI/WSB programs?

This question elicited some interesting responses. Three of the thirty responders were thrilled with the academic nature of the program, not expecting it to be as challenging as they anticipated. Five respondents indicated their favorable outlook by stating that they highly recommended the program to others looking for Bible and ministry training. Three persons indicated it was the will of God for them to be involved in the program and were extremely thankful for it. A few people were grateful that the program was affordable.

The other responses were "yes."

17. What are the greatest strengths of the program?

Nearly all individuals of the thirty that answered this question expressed a very favorable testimony concerning the overall program and its core curriculum of Old Testament Survey, New Testament Survey and Theology Survey courses. They saw these nine courses as providing foundational knowledge to all other coursework. Six individuals expressed thankfulness for the teachers and staff who demonstrated the Christian life before them. Two individuals reported they were impressed by the large vision of Jerry

Falwell, Elmer Towns and Harold Willmington. Other remarks mentioned that God used the program to transform their lives; that the Institute was a tremendous platform in preparing for future studies, and the dedication of the faculty and staff was the greatest asset of the program.

18. What are the most apparent weaknesses of the program?

The responses to this question were greatly varied in kind and number. Three individuals thought the Institute was too lenient on students who had academic or behavioral issues. Two individuals thought the caliber of some students was low but understood the Institutions attempt to give most anyone an opportunity to study God's Word there. A couple of respondents reported a desire for more hands on training in conducting funerals, weddings and other church events. Several respondents said they were not disappointed in anything concerning the Institute program. And three individuals expressed sadness that the Institute residential program was discontinued. Three individuals thought the program should offer Greek and Hebrew introductory languages courses. Two responses indicated no weak areas. These critiques are accurate from the author's point of view and experience with these students and the program. However, the overall tenor of the survey is that the Bible Institute accomplished a lot and delivered an immense body of knowledge and skills in a brief four semesters.

19. How have you integrated your learning and experiences at LBI into your own ministry?

The main reply to this question involved twenty-three of the thirty responses. These individuals reported that the Institute courses, materials and training events were foundational to their ministry in the local church and were still used in preparing for sermons, lesson plans and conducting church outreach and administration. This feed-back

indicates that the program is on track with the quality and suitability of its educational resources.

20. What other comments or input would you care to share concerning your experience with LBI/WSB?

The thought that ran through the bulk of responses for this question was thankfulness to God for the opportunity to study at Liberty Bible Institute. Several individuals stated that the two years spent at the Institute was one of the top highlights of their life. Another top response was the blessedness of being able to interact with faculty and students in the close-knit community at LBI. A Bible training program seeks to obtain such results and it is heartening to see the positive response of the graduates.

Overall the survey revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the Institute program and its staff and faculty. Some of the significant strengths indicated by the survey were as follows. The majority of responders indicated that the instructional materials and the experience itself were college level in expectations and academic demands. As noted above fourteen responders of twenty felt that a key strength of the academics and training aspects of the Institute program was its core curricula of Old Testament Survey courses, New Testament Survey courses and the Theological Survey courses. Six of these fourteen responders also highlighted the teachers as a key strength of the program. A few others also mentioned the visionary nature of key leaders at Liberty University as motivators for their own life and ministry.

The survey revealed a couple of weaknesses in the program. A minority of responders wished for additional hands-on training from a local church. This internship-like training was available to all who wished such training at the Thomas Road Baptist Church campus and

various ministries. Three responders believed the treatment of students was too lenient for students who lacked commitment or challenged the rules of the Institute regularly.

Fourteen of twenty responders considered their Bible Institute experience as foundational to their Christian ministry or vocation. Many expressed thankfulness to God for directing them to Liberty University and Thomas Road Baptist Church. Some indicated that they continue to be in touch with Dr. Willmington and cherish his continued love and support as well as counsel and humor. The most endearing responses however, were those that indicated the Bible Institute experience was spiritually transformational. This is one of the core goals for the program.

In conclusion, the survey revealed helpful knowledge of the program's strengths, and weaknesses by graduates of the program.

Conclusion: Summary, Key Lessons Learned, and Recommendation

Summary

This thesis project has analyzed the Gospel ministry of Dr. Harold Willmington and discerned at least seven major contributions he has made to Liberty University in the course of forty years of dedicated service.

Chapter One introduces the reader to the parameters of the project including the statement of the problem leading to the thesis project, the statement of limitations of the research, the statement of methodology for conducting the project's research, and a review of the literature both secular and sacred. Chapter One also includes a lengthy treatment of the biblical and theological basis for the Bible Institute as a discipleship tool. Dr. Willmington's vision for discipleship ministry has a keen focus upon a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible's content,

chronology and doctrinal themes. It includes the basic knowledge that Bible Institute graduates should understand concerning the content of the Gospel and the disciplines involved in practical sanctification. Thus, Chapter One prepares the reader for the upcoming content and research as well as discussion of the findings of the research.

Chapter Two provides an understanding for the reader regarding the Bible Institute movement in America in the past century or so. It is a rich heritage to learn. Great men and women of God were instrumental in developing the Bible Institute as a means of training people to conduct personal evangelism and follow-up ministry. The chapter traces the foundational work of D.L. Moody and A.B. Simpson, two Gospel powerhouses of the nineteenth century who founded Bible Institutes that continue even today. It is apparent that most of those individuals involved in Bible and ministry training geared that training towards lay people of the local church. These were the individuals in the trenches of practical ministry. The Bible Institute movement in America began in the late 1890s and blossomed in the 1920s through 1940s, and peaked in the 1950s. From the 1970s onward, pressure came to the movement in the form of social and economic changes. A greater emphasis in most disciplines was towards four-year degrees. A downward trend ensued for the number of Bible Institutes in America. Many of these two- and three-year institutions adopted the four-year format and became Bible colleges or ceased operations all together. This chapter also highlights other denominations or Christian groups that utilized the Bible Institute as a vehicle for grassroots evangelism training and personal work in the community. In particular are noted Latin American and Pentecostal denominations.

Chapter Three is a chapter introducing Dr. Harold Willmington and describing his partnership with Elmer Towns and Jerry Falwell in establishing a Bible Institute program at

Thomas Road Baptist Church in 1972. The chapter establishes the beginning of Dr. Willmington's ministry at Liberty University. Research into this beginning story reveals the sovereignty of God as these key church leaders sought the will of God and pursued His will in establishing formal training of Christian workers. Much of what Dr. Willmington has been able to accomplish for the cause of discipleship has been wrought in the crucible of the Bible Institute. This chapter reveals the structure and format of the Bible Institute started at Thomas Road Baptist Church. It highlights the core teachings that its students desired as well as the profile of the men and women who moved to Lynchburg, VA, to train under Dr. Falwell, Elmer Towns and Harold Willmington. Also described is the account of his vision and leadership to utilize the Bible Institute as a training vehicle for the lay people of the local church.

Considerable space was also allotted in Chapter Four for documenting the seven major contributions of Harold Willmington to Liberty University. The reader should find interesting the account of the evolution of the Bible and theology curriculum and teaching methods of Dr. Willmington. The appendices contain numerous examples of his teaching charts and educational resources. The seven major contributions of Dr. Willmington are:

1. Establishing the Thomas Road Bible Institute
2. Establishing the Liberty Home Bible Institute correspondence program
3. Establishing the Local Church Bible Institute program
4. Re-establishing the Institute as the Liberty Bible Institute
5. Producing his Bible curriculum
6. Employing his teaching philosophy
7. Role modeling the victorious Christian life

The final chapter of the project reports on the post-graduation survey conducted with students who were or continue to be in Christian ministry. The purpose of the survey was to determine how graduates felt about their training at LBI and to see if the curriculum of Dr. Willmington carried over into their own ministry of the Word. Also included in the final chapter is a summary of the project, the key lessons learned from the research and writing of the project and a challenge to the readers.

Key Lessons Learned From the Thesis Project

Key Lesson #1: The Bible Institute programs developed and implemented at Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University were deemed effectual by the persons who were trained by them.

The truths, principles and techniques involved in gospel ministry are portable. That is, the graduates of the program were able to put into immediate practice the training they received. The students received a well-rounded education in Bible content, Bible doctrine, missions, personal evangelism, apologetics, inductive Bible study and other specialized training like serving in a bus ministry, working with children or the deaf, leading a youth work or a prison or jail ministry and many others.

Key Lesson #2: The curriculum of Dr. Willmington was made available to students for use in their own Christian ministries.

This Bible and theology curriculum is a ready-to-go resource. Pastors or teachers can immediately incorporate it into their sermons and lesson plans as well as make it available to other Bible teachers in the church. Dr. Willmington made it a regular practice to offer suggested scope and sequence possibilities for local church use. He always deemed it a privilege to share his lessons and applications with others that they might help someone else better understand how to apply the truths of scripture personally.

Key Lesson #3: Leaving a legacy for those that follow should be intentional.

Every Christian ought to leave behind something as a legacy to honor Christ and those who are following after them. Liberty University conducts an oral history archive program. The program archivist states, “In light of our founder’s passing, we realize that many of the founding generation have valuable first- hand accounts of the history of Liberty University, Thomas Road Baptist Church, the Moral Majority, Dr. Jerry Falwell, and the Falwell Ministries. In order to preserve these perspectives, the Liberty University Archive has established a project to collect, preserve, and provides access to first-hand narratives related to the history of these entities.”⁵ In one such interview Dr. Willmington shared his thoughts on how he wanted to be remembered after his passing.

When D. James Kennedy died, Jonathan and Elmer and myself flew down to represent the ministry at Coral Ridge. And so James Dobson preached the funeral and he used a passage in the book of Acts chapter 13 to describe D. James Kennedy’s life and I thought, “I’ve heard that before. I know where I heard it. I was on the stage when Jerry Vines preached Dr. Falwell’s funeral.” He used the same scripture. And neither man knew the other was doing it. And I told Elmer, I said, “This is what I want to be remembered for.” And the scripture referred to the apostle Paul and he was on his missionary trips and he was explaining the Messiah to a group of Jews and so he talked about the Old Testament and he came to David. And this is the scripture that both men used, describing the funerals of both these men. *So David served his own generation in the will of God and fell asleep with his fathers.* I said,

⁵ Abigail Sattler, “Archives Oral Histories,” Integrated Learning Resource Center, Archives Oral History, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=19845> (accessed January 13, 2013).

“That’s what I want to be remembered for. Not a faithful husband, I hope I’ve been that, or a loving father, a writer, or an author. But Willmington attempted to serve, not a former generation or my son’s generation but I tried to serve my own generation in the will of God. And that’s all, that’s all any of us saved sinners by grace could hope to be remembered for.”⁶

Having worked for nearly thirty years side by side with Dr. Willmington, this author attests to the fact that he, himself, is a part of Dr. Willmington’s legacy. He, in turn, is serving his generation with the hope and goal of preparing the next generation to do the same. Dr. Willmington will be remembered at Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University as “Mr. Bible.” What better legacy could one desire?

Key Lesson #4: The need for training church workers at the local level remains significant.

Consider the words of Rich Murphy who is serving as pastor of a local church. “Pastors all over the world are struggling with the problem of not having enough people to do the work of the ministry. It doesn't matter how big the church is, they still have this problem. Various statistics I've heard say that eighty-five percent of the work in the church is done by five percent of the people.”⁷

One solution to this challenge is The Willmington School of the Bible which operates in the Liberty University Online Program. This online school offers tremendous opportunity to individuals who serve in the local church and need formal Bible, theology and ministry training. The current training track is in the Biblical Studies area. It is comparable to an associate degree, which is a strong credential for its graduates. It is an affordable training program with available federal financial aid and veteran’s benefits. Currently the tuition rate is \$105.00 per semester

⁶ Harold L. Willmington, interview by Randy Miller and Cline Hall, August 5, 2010, transcript, Archives Oral History, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ohp_willming_h/ (accessed January 13, 2013).

⁷ Rich Murphy, “Motivating Workers in the Church,” *Maranatha Life*, <http://maranathalife.com/teaching/motivate.htm> (accessed March 26, 2013).

hour which is a considerable bargain. In addition, the credits are directly transferrable at no cost to a related Liberty University undergraduate program. The need for trained paid and unpaid church staff is well known. Willmington School of the Bible is a ministry training program specifically geared to those in ministry now who have never completed any formal Bible or ministry training. The desire for such training is considerable and the opportunity for this training exists now.

The Local Church Bible Institute is one of the most effective answers to the need for training in the local church today. This project has sought to document the Christian ministry of Harold L. Willmington as he worked to fulfill the will of God upon his life as he executed his call and served with his spiritual gifts. He thus contributed mightily to the influence and outreach of both Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University. Dr. Willmington seized upon the educational model of the two-year Bible Institute as his mode of operation. Through the various Bible Institutes that he established, nurtured, and multiplied, he impacted tens of thousands of Bible lovers across the world.

His desire has always been that his students would stand atop his shoulders and perform greater exploits for the glory of Jesus Christ, the Head of the church. One way in which they could duplicate his ministry was to establish a local church Bible Institute in their own churches. In that way, they would have available to them the comprehensive Bible and theology curriculum they had received from him. They now had the administrative knowledge and a basic skillset for successfully operating a local church training program. There really is no reason for a local church to be filled with worshippers who do not know the Bible, do not know what they believe about Christ or why they believe it. Every local church should have some vehicle, program or ministry that provides systematic and formal Bible training for its people. A wise but

anonymous preacher said, “You can’t make disciples from the pulpit.” But it seems that many pastors attempt to do so because there is no formal approach to comprehensive Bible and ministry training for their people. Professor Bill Mounce has made a statement many evangelical pastors can agree with and others should embrace. We are moving education back into the church where we can learn together in community. We are encouraging people to learn holistically, engaging their head, heart, and hands.”⁸ Pastors ought to more intentionally utilize the training, skills, talents, resources and experience that adults in the congregation possess and that they willingly put at the Lord’s disposal. This author has a personal story to tell at this point. I was led to Christ through the efforts of individuals involved in a weekly home Bible study. My wife had come to Christ about six months earlier and the people kept inviting me to the studies. One day I went. Over a period of several weeks these people shared Christ and His gospel with me. Their genuine love and righteousness affected me. I received Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord a bit later. My point is this. We continued to be involved in home Bible studies for the next ten years. We moved around a good bit because of work transfers and other circumstances. Thus, we were involved in a wide number and variety of local churches. I loved to study God’s Word. But the churches did not offer the in-depth training I needed. I was, as was mentioned earlier in this project, a back door learner. I didn’t know any better. I didn’t know what opportunities existed for people who wanted to learn God’s Word. When I got to Liberty Baptist College and began classes in the Bible Institute I had an epiphany about the third day. I really didn’t know anything about the Bible after ten years! I thought I did but it was just a hodge-podge of unrelated information. Why couldn’t the pastors of these churches I had attended provide formal Bible and ministry training for the people who desperately needed and desired it?

⁸ Bill Mounce, Bibletraining.org, <http://www.biblicaltraining.org/forum/please-help-change-lives-church-leaders-around-world-and-next-door> (accessed January 4, 2013).

There were usually more than adequate facilities. There were knowledgeable people who were willing to serve. The people perished in this regard because of a lack of vision. When I began working in the Institute with Dr. Willmington God allowed me to be a part of the Local Church Bible Institute program. This program was the answer to my heart's desire for formal Bible training for the worker bees of the churches.

Recommendation

Colossians 1:9, 10 offers a scriptural guide for Dr. Willmington's life work in the Bible Institute. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." What final words can be said about the major contributions of Harold Willmington to Liberty University? The Bible Institute has demonstrated its usefulness in the plan of God for the evangelization of the world and the advocating of the church of Jesus Christ. Hundreds of bi-vocational pastors have received formal Bible and theology training. Thousands of other individuals have benefited from their training as well and contribute knowledge and wisdom and effective service to Christ in local church ministries across America and internationally. For all those who have been privileged to study with Dr. Harold Willmington, the call goes forth to pass along to others, the great body of scriptural truth you have received from him. Then Dr. Willmington's work will be complete. One day Heaven will reveal the fruit born by this faithful man of God as he sought so very

diligently to fulfill his life-call to give as much Bible to as many people in the shortest possible time.⁹

⁹ Willmington, D.Min., project, 95.

APPENDIX A

Bible Institute Statistics

Table 13: Sample listing of typical enrollment numbers for years 1996-2000

Student Enrollment in the Major					
Year	Total Enrollment in Major Course	Number of Courses Taught	Average Enrollment	Number in Major Declared	Number of Graduates
1996	2281	18	127	160	15
1997	2507	20	125	171	68
1998	2205	19	116	143	71
1999	1448	21	70	101	77
2000	1005	20	50	72	50

Table 14: List of graduates for years 1973 to 2012

Academic Year	Graduation Totals	Academic Year	Graduation Totals
1973/74	21	1996/97	65
1974/75	91	1997/98	74
1975/76	75	1998/99	76
1976/77	89	1999/2000	51
1977/78	70	2000/01	38
1978/79	47	2001/02	16
1979/80	59	2002/03	13
1980/81	45	2003/04	16
1981/82	43	2004/05	8
1982/83	30	2005/06	9
1983/84	54	2006/07	12
1984/85	30	2007/08	13
1985/86	45	2008/09	16
1990/91	1	2009/10	16
1992/93	8	2010/11	29
1993/94	25	2011/12	44
1994/95	37		
1995/96	17		

APPENDIX B
Institute Names, Dates and Locations

The Thomas Road Bible Institute officially opened in the fall of 1972 in Lynchburg, Virginia. It was established in the facilities of Thomas Road Baptist Church, 701 Thomas Road, Lynchburg, VA 24501. Dean, Harold L. Willmington.

1. 1972-1978 The Bible Institute operated under the name of Thomas Road Bible Institute.
2. 1979-1980 The name of the Institute was changed to Liberty Bible Institute and continued meeting at the Thomas Road Baptist Church campus at 701 Thomas Road.
3. 1981 Liberty Bible Institute was named Institute of Biblical Studies and classes were held at the Liberty Baptist College campus.
4. 1995 (Fall) met in Schilling Center (gymnasium)
5. 1996 (Spring) to 1997 (Spring) classes conducted at David's Place on the campus of Liberty University.
6. 1997 (Fall) to 2000 (Spring) classes conducted at Berean Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA.
7. Fall 2001-Spring 2001 Liberty Bible Institute was a night school only.
8. 2002-2003 Classes conducted on main campus.
9. 2004-2012 Classes conducted at Campus North (Green Hall)
10. 2011 (Summer) Residential Institute discontinued.
11. 2011-2012 a teach-out was conducted to enable current study body to complete programs or transition out of WSB residential.
12. Willmington School of the Bible operates as an online school only.
13. Dr. Willmington's office is presently located in Green Hall, room 1488. Eva Middleton is his administrative assistant. The office telephone number is (434) 592-4000.

Table 15: Chart of Bible Institute name changes

Chart of Name Changes	
Thomas Road Bible Institute	1972-1978
Liberty Bible Institute	1979-1980
Institute of Biblical Studies	1981-1986
Institute discontinued during this period	1986-1991
Liberty Bible Institute	1992-2007
Willmington School of the Bible	2007-2011
Liberty Bible Institute-Online	2005-2007
Willmington School of the Bible-Online	2007-present

APPENDIX C

Sample of Color-Coded Study Sheets

Thirty-Second Parable: “Two Sons Who Changed Their Minds” (Matt. 21:28-32)

1. A vineyard owner had two sons.
2. He asked both boys to work in his vineyard.
 - a. The first son said he would not, but later repented and did.
 - b. The second son said he would, but did not do so.

Thirty-Third Parable: “The Vicious Vine-Keepers” (Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-2; Luke 21:9-19)

1. A house-master leases his vineyard to some men and leaves the country.
2. He later sends a bondsman to gather his fruit.
3. The master continues to send bondsmen, but all are beaten and some killed.
4. He finally sends his own son, hoping the keepers would respect him, but he too, is cruelly murdered.
5. The house-master thereupon comes in fury and destroys the miserable vine-keepers.
6. Jesus relates this parable Himself, and states that He is the rejected cornerstone (Matt. 21:42).

O.T. Prophecy Fulfillment Number 19, That He Would Be the Rejected Cornerstone (Psa. 118:22, 23; cf. Matt. 21:42)

Twenty-ninth Prediction: “Concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem” (Luke 19:43, 44)

1. The city would be surrounded by her enemies.
2. Her children would be killed and her Temple leveled.

Thirty-Fourth Miracle: “Destroying a Fig Tree” (Matt. 21:19; Mark 11:14)

1. He examines a leafy but fruitless fig tree.
2. He pronounces a curse upon it: “Let there be no fruit from you hereafter.” Immediately the fig tree dried up.

Note: Of all His miracles, this doubtless was the only one which would fill Him with sadness, for in this symbolic act He was setting aside the nation Israel (often pictured as a fig tree) because of its fruitlessness. (See Matt. 21:42-45 where this is confirmed.)

Second Sermon: “On the Characteristics of the Kingdom” (Matt. 5-7; Luke 6:20-49; 12:22-31, 57-59; 16:17)

According to our Lord, a citizen of the Kingdom should possess the following traits:

1. He should be lowly in spirit, knowing God has promised him a kingdom.
2. He should mourn and weep if necessary, knowing he will someday laugh and be comforted.
3. He should be meek, for in the future he is to inherit the earth.
4. He should hunger and thirst after righteousness and he shall be satisfied.
5. He should be merciful that he might himself obtain mercy.
6. He should be pure in heart, realizing he shall see God.
7. He should be a peacemaker in order to be called a son of God.
8. He should rejoice in persecutions, knowing his reward will be great.
9. He is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
10. His righteousness is to far surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees.¹

Sample of color-coded study sheets is used by permission of H.L. Willmington.

¹ See email of permission for March 25, 2013.

APPENDIX D

Sample of Programmed Learning Sheets

UNIT I-A—The Life of Jesus Christ
Birth to the End of His Public Ministry
Matthew-Mark-Luke-John-Acts
Text Pages 1-45

How To Use This Text

Cover the left column with a card or opaque paper of some kind. Read the question in column 2 and record your answer by circling the correct answer or writing an answer in the blank provided. If you do not know the answer to the question, review the scripture reference and the text book page. After your answer is recorded slide the card down to reveal the answer in column 1. If your answer is correct, move on to the next question. If your answer is incorrect, return to the Bible text or textbook to determine the correct answer. **BE SURE THAT THE ANSWER COLUMN IS COVERED AT ALL TIMES DURING THE STUDY OF THE QUESTIONS.** The purpose of this text will be defeated if the answers are looked at **before** the questions are read. Remember, the object of any study is to learn, not just to get right answers or make good grades; therefore, follow the procedures of this text and study the Bible in those areas where you need to study. Couple your study with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and you will no doubt learn much.

For best results use this book only as a supplement to the Bible.	1. Text p. 6 Which two Gospel narratives contain a preface? A. Luke and Mark B. Matthew and John C. Luke and John
1. C. Luke (1:1-4) and John (1:1-5)	2. Lk. 1:1; Text p. 6 Luke states in his preface that one reason he wrote his Gospel narrative was because not many had tried to write the life of Christ. A. True B. False
2. B. False: ...many have ...	3. Lk. 1:3; Text p. 6 To whom was Luke's Gospel narrative to be forwarded once he had completed it? A. Theophilus B. Paul C. Peter

3. A. Theophilus (Luke also later wrote the book of Acts to Theophilus).	4. Jn. 1:1-5; Text p. 6 In John's preface what subject does he focus upon to introduce his Gospel narrative? A. The ministry of John the Baptist B. A genealogy C. The deity of Jesus Christ
4. C. The deity of Jesus Christ	5. Jn. 1:1; Text p. 6 According to John's preface where was Jesus before He was born physically into this world? A. Asleep B. Non-existent C. With God the Father
5. C. <i>In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God...</i>	6. Jn. 1:3; Text p. 6 According to John, Jesus created this world and all things in it. A. True B. False
6. A. True: <i>All things were made by Him...</i>	7. Jn. 1:4; Text p. 6 According to John's preface, Jesus Christ is both the A. _____ and the B. _____ of men. Fill in the blanks.

² Sample programmed learning sheets used by permission of Liberty Home Bible Institute.

² See email of permission for March 25, 2013.

APPENDIX E
Samples of Bible Charts

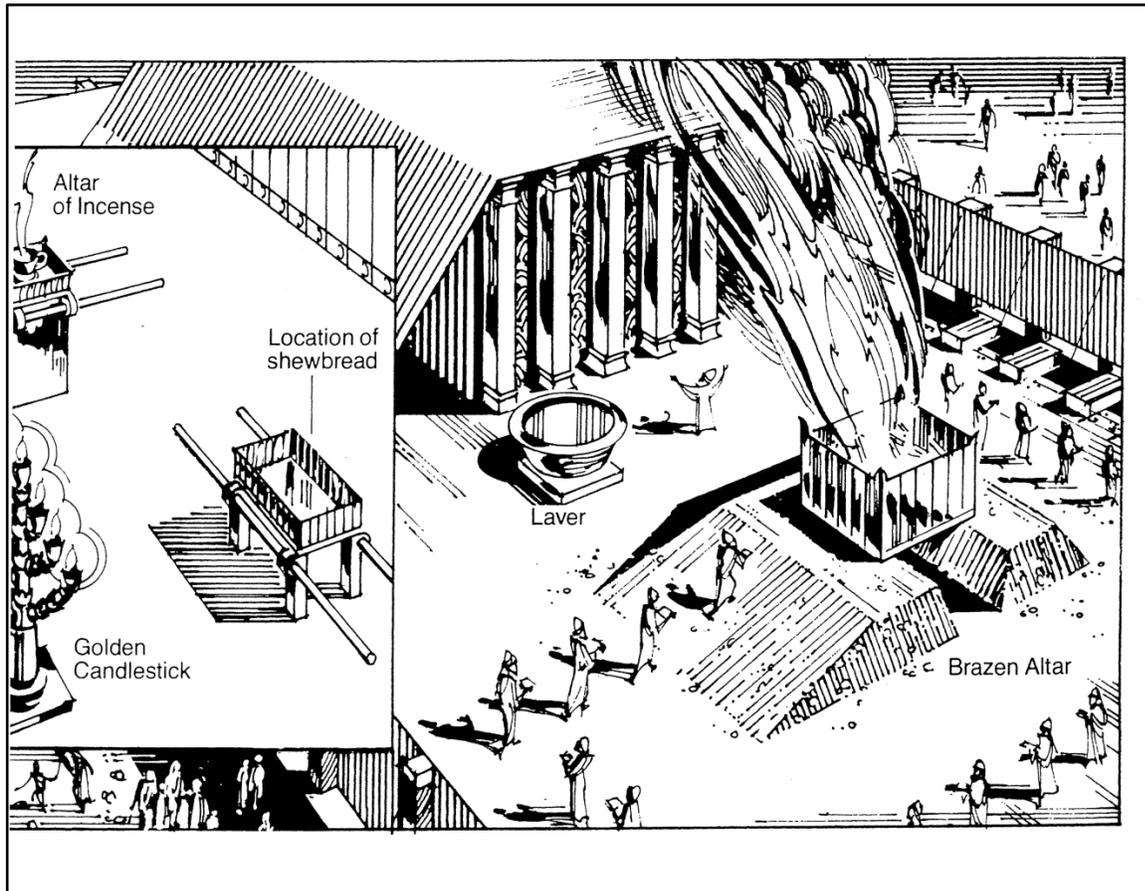


Figure 1: Teaching visual portraying the inner and outer Courts of Israel's tabernacle.³

³ Teaching visual used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers. See email of permission for March 19, 2013.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I am the good shepherd . . ."

**THE PRESENTATION OF THE SHEPHERD OF GOD
—JESUS CHRIST (EZEK. 34)**

JOHN 10:10, 11



The Many False Shepherds

They fed themselves instead of the flock (34:2, 3)
 They had not taken care of the weak, tended the sick, bound up the broken bones, nor sought the lost (34:4)
 The sheep were then scattered, having no shepherd (34:5)
 They had become prey to the wild animals (34:5)
 Therefore, the shepherds would be punished (34:9)
 Their positions as shepherds would be removed (34:9)
 They would not themselves be fed by the Great Shepherd (34:9, 10)
 They would be judged and destroyed (34:16)

The Only True Shepherd

He would search out the lost sheep (34:11)
 He would deliver them from their enemies (34:12)
 He would gather them from all nations (34:13)
 He would feed them upon the mountains of Israel (34:14)
 He would give them rest in green pastures (34:15)
 He would put splints and bandages upon their broken limbs (34:16)
 He would heal the sick (34:16)
 He would establish David as his trusted undershepherd (34:23) (see also Ezek. 37:24; Jer. 30:9; Hos. 3:5)
 He would make an eternal pact with them (34:25)
 He would guarantee their safety and place them in a perfect paradise (34:25-28)

TEACHING VISUALS/Willmington's Guide to the Bible CHART NO. 154

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Figure 2: Teaching visual comparing the Old Testament scriptures and the New Testament scriptures concerning the shepherds of God's people.⁴

⁴ Teaching visual used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers. See email of permission for March 19, 2013.

LIFE OF DAVID-3

5. The Sovereign **2 SAM. 1-10** **1 CHRON. 11-19**

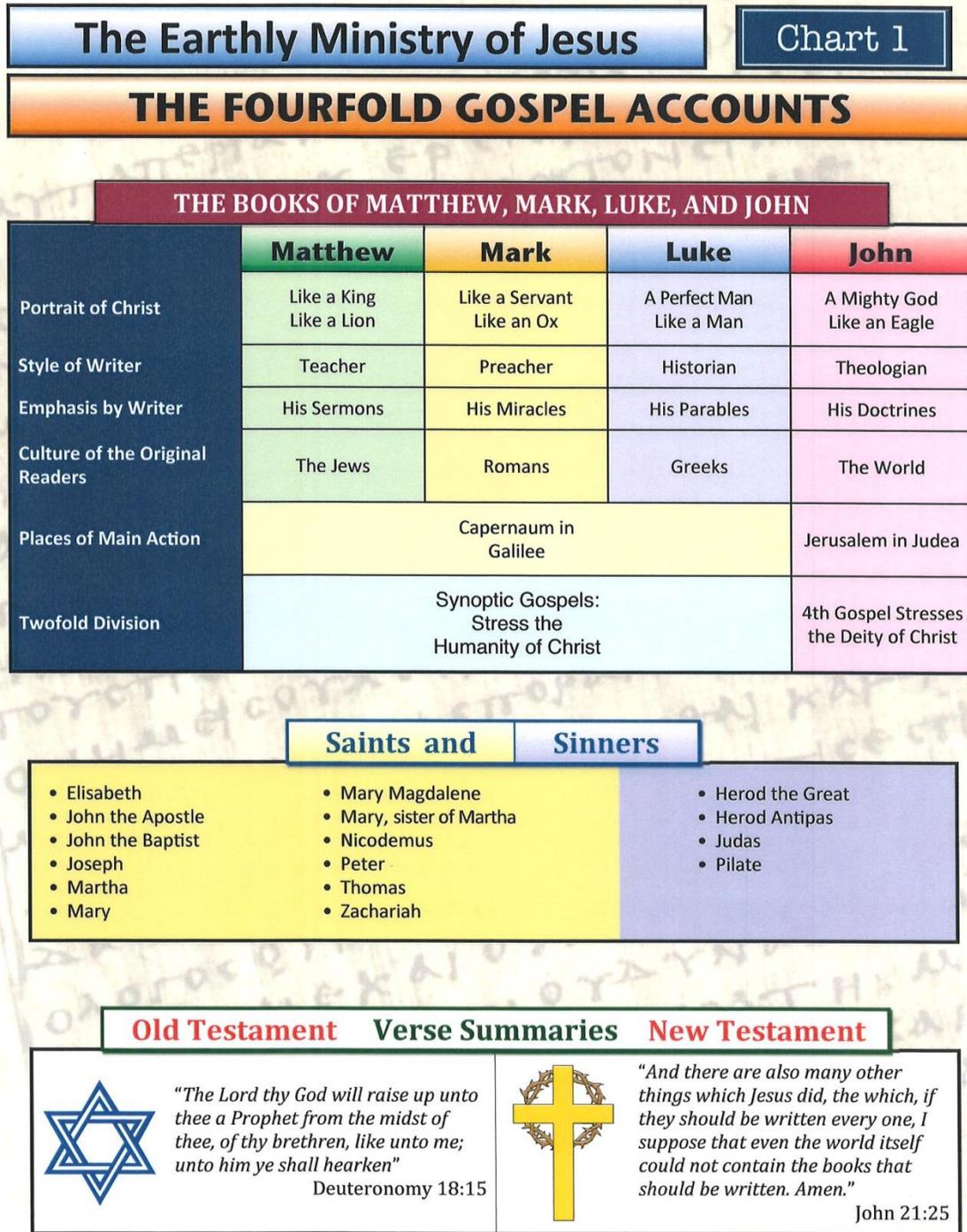


1. Upon the death of Saul, by God's command he comes to Hebron and is anointed by the men of Judah as their king (**2 Sam. 2:1-4**).
2. After a seven-year war, David is successful over the house of Saul and is anointed at Hebron by all twelve tribes (**2 Sam. 3-5**).
3. He captures the city of Jerusalem and makes it his new capital (**2 Sam. 5:6-10**).
4. He then brings the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem (**2 Sam. 6:1-19; 1 Chron. 15-16**).
5. He desires to build a Temple for God, but is not allowed to do so (**2 Sam. 7:17; 1 Chron. 17:4**).
6. He now receives the all-important Davidic Covenant from God (**2 Sam. 7:8-17; 1 Chron. 17:7-15**). This covenant in essence predicted the millennial reign of Christ, the seed of David, upon the earth someday.
7. He seeks out and shows kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's lame son (**2 Sam. 9:1-13**).

TEACHING VISUALS/Willmington's Guide to the Bible **CHART NO. 93**
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Figure 3: Teaching visual presenting a chronological outline of the life of David.⁵

⁵ Teaching visual used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers. See email of permission for March 19, 2013..



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Figure 4: Teaching overview chart of the life of Christ⁶

⁶ Teaching visual used by permission of H.L. Willmington. See email of permission for March 25, 2013.

APPENDIX F
Student Post Graduation Survey Materials

Student Survey Invitation

To the current and former Liberty Bible Institute (Willmington School of the Bible) students: I am currently completing my Doctor of Ministry Degree at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. My thesis project is the recording of the history of Bible Institutes of Harold Willmington. My goal for the survey work is to gather information and opinion from selected alumni, that is, from those who are involved for the most part in full time or bi-vocational Christian ministry.

Any evaluation of this ministry would be incomplete without input from those students that have participated in the program. This is why I am asking for your assistance in documenting the effectiveness of the LBI program you experienced.

Attached is an evaluation form approved by the IRB office of Liberty University. Your prompt response is very important and greatly appreciated. Please take time to respond to all questions thoughtfully. It is important that you be candid and thorough in your responses. The goal of this questionnaire is to get an honest evaluation of the ministry. That includes learning of the weaknesses as well as the strengths of this ministry. There is no need to identify yourself on the evaluation form unless you specifically would like to do so.

Thank you again for your valuable assistance in this project as I seek to preserve the history of the work of our beloved friend, Harold Willmington

Shalom.

Rick Buck
Assistant Professor
Liberty University

The following website is the link the Institute graduates used to access the ministry survey.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RT5LT2T>

CONSENT FORM

LBI/WSB Ministry Survey

Rick Buck

Liberty University

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

You are invited to be in a research study of the effectiveness and preparedness for ministry of the Liberty Bible Institute (now known as Willmington School of the Bible. You were selected as a possible participant because you are known to be in Christian ministry now or were so involved in the past. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Rick Buck as partial requirements for the completion of Doctor of Ministry degree with Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to collect information regarding your opinions about your academic and ministry training experiences with Liberty Bible Institute.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Copy the following web address into your browser. The survey will open up to an explanation page. Read the brief instructions and then click on "Next."

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RT5LT2T>

2. The survey involves 20 questions. Half of the questions can be answered by clicking on one of the provided responses. The remaining questions require a short answer or comment. I estimate that the survey can be completed in about fifteen minutes.

3. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

Any study or survey has some element of risk involved. The risks are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are chiefly that your experiences with the Liberty Bible Institute and Harold Willmington will be part of a data set that is analyzed and included in the Doctor of Ministry thesis project. The intent of this thesis project in part is to document the use of the Bible Institute as Dr. Willmington's tool of choice in training men and women for local church ministry.

Compensation: You will receive no payment, class or assignment points or any other token for your participation in the survey.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Your privacy and confidentiality are secure as the survey is set up to be anonymous. There is no need to supply your name or address or student number for participating in the survey. The collected raw data will be stored on a personal computer and backup device. No other participants are able to see your responses to the survey. The data will be stored for three years.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Rick Buck. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact me at rbuck@liberty.edu or you may call me at 434-485-1496. Rick Rasberry is the mentor for this thesis project. His email is rrasberry@liberty.edu and his phone is 434-582-7718.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

The survey is completed on an anonymous basis. This consent form is included in the survey to provide you with this information.

POST GRADUATION MINISTRY SURVEY

1. Select the year range closest to the year in which you graduated from the Institute.

- 1974-1977
- 1978-1981
- 1982-1986
- 1992-1995
- 1996-1998
- 1999-2000
- 2001-2002
- 2003-2006
- 2007-2012

2. Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female

3. Which of the following best describes your current ministry status? (Check all that apply)

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Senior pastor
- Associate or assistant pastor
- Youth director/pastor
- Worship leader
- Adult Ministries pastor/leader
- Children's Ministries pastor/leader
- Other ministry pastor/leader
- Unpaid staff member
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Other (please specify)

4. Have you completed any of the following since graduating from the Institute?

- Ordination

- Licensure
 - Chaplaincy
5. Have you completed an additional degree since leaving Liberty?
- Yes
 - No
 - Working on a degree now
 - Plan to work on a degree in the future
6. Are you satisfied with the Bible training you received at the Institute?
- Extremely satisfied
 - Moderately satisfied
 - Slightly satisfied
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - Slightly dissatisfied
 - Moderately dissatisfied
 - Extremely dissatisfied
7. How effective is the overall training you received for your ministry?
- Extremely effective
 - Very effective
 - Moderately effective
 - Slightly effective
 - Not at all effective
8. What size is the church where you are employed or serve?
- Less than 100
 - 100-199
 - 200-299
 - 300-499
 - 500-699
 - 700-999
 - 1000-1499
 - 1500+
9. If you are a paid staff member, how well are you paid for the work you do?
- Extremely well
 - Very well

- Moderately well
 - Slightly well
 - Not at all well
10. Did you find the quality of the course textbooks and other materials beneficial in completing your courses?
 11. Did you find the course work to be academically challenging?
 12. Did you find the material in the courses to be college level academically?
 13. Did the LBI courses enhance your Biblical and theological comprehension?
 14. Have you been able to integrate the material from the courses into your own Christian service?
 15. Did the program contribute to your spiritual walk with Christ regarding the disciplines of worship, evangelism, prayer, personal Bible study, meditation, fasting, service, and others? Please explain.
 16. What are your overall impressions of the LBI/WSB programs?
 17. What are the greatest strengths of the program?
 18. What are the most apparent weaknesses of the program?
 19. How have you integrated your learning and experiences at LBI into your own ministry?
 20. What other comments or input would you care to share concerning your experience with LBI/WSB?

APPENDIX G

Teaching Methods of H. L. Willmington

1. Lecture Method: Condensed Bible material is presented to a group of adults by a qualified teacher.
2. Forum Method: An open discussion by a group concerning the subject matter presented by the teacher.
3. Debate Method: Speakers holding opposing views on controversial subjects present their views to a group of adults. Topics could include pre-millennialism versus amillennialism, sprinkling versus immersion, and others.
4. Panel Method: Several qualified persons discuss a given topic while an audience observes and listens. Subjects might include abortion, divorce, etc.
5. Buzz Group Method: Small groups (4-8 persons) discuss a given topic for a limited period of time.
6. White Paper Report Method: This is similar to the lecture method, but is presented more like a fact-finding survey report.
7. Brainstorming Method: Class members suggest as many ideas as possible on a subject, withholding evaluation until all ideas are presented.
8. Case Study Method: Real life problem situations are presented to the class, seeking their suggestions and solutions based on their Bible knowledge.
9. Character Reading Method: Individuals are assigned to read extended Bible conversation accounts, each placing the emphasis where he or she feels it is needed. An excellent example would be the reading of John 9. One would read the words of Jesus, another, the words of the blind man.
10. Interview Method: This features an on-the-spot reporter presenting an imaginary interview with a biblical character. Interviewing Pilate, Herod, the Centurion, and others associated with the cross concerning their views on the dying Savior would lend itself to this method.
11. Pantomime Method: Here a biblical situation or event is acted out without speaking.

12. New Birth Clinic Method: Class members are invited to share with the group those circumstances and individuals involved in their acceptance of Christ.
13. Will of God Clinic Method: Here the members relate how, where, and when they discovered God's perfect will for their lives. This would concern itself with marriage, employment, career, etc.
14. Skit Method: An actual biblical event is acted out.
15. Personal Eye-Witness Report Method: A "now-you-see-it" account of a biblical event (example, the slaying of Goliath by David) by an imaginative (and biblically-oriented) reporter.
16. Great Journey Survey Method: A retracing of the trips made by Abraham, Jacob, Paul, etc.
17. Topical Subject Listing Method: A grouping of all the biblical miracles, parables, sermons.
18. Empathy Method: Here the class members are asked to assume the personality of a Bible character and attempt to explain why he or she did what they did. As an example, David, the man after God's own heart, will share why he failed the Lord through sexual impurity and murder.
19. Five Minute Summarization Method: After the study of a book, such as Ephesians, six class members might be asked to submit a five minute bottom-line summary of each of the six chapters.
20. Biographical Study Method: There are approximately 6,000 individuals mentioned in the Bible. Many of these make excellent character studies. As an example, Paul's life could be studied along the following lines: (1) his pre-conversion activities, (2) his conversion experience, and (3) his three missionary journeys, (4) his trip to Rome and imprisonment.
21. Doctrinal Study Method: This method features an outline study of what the Bible teaches about the person and ministry of Christ, the Trinity, last things, etc.
22. Paraphrase Method: Rewrite and restate in one's own words a biblical book or desired passage.
23. Chapter Title Method: Think your way through the gospel of John by assigning a particular title to each of the 21 chapters.
24. Book Background Method: A study of the background, authorship, recipients, occasion, purpose, and so on of the Old and New Testament books.

25. Inductive Method: This is to draw conclusions from a chapter or passage based on detailed observations.
26. Deductive Method: Here one reasons from a known principle to an unknown principle. An example of this biblical study method would be to deduce all children dying prior to reaching the age of accountability will go to heaven based on Jesus' words in Matthew 18:1-14.
27. Literary Method: This approach locates the various literary styles employed in the writing of the scriptures, such as history, prophecy, biography, autobiography, poetry, doctrinal, etc.
28. Analytical Method: This involves the separation of an event, book, teaching, etc., into its separate parts, attempting then to ascertain the message in all its ramifications.
29. Synthesis Method: This is the opposite of the analytical approach. It involves viewing a book or event as a whole to determine its message in general.
30. Exegesis Method: This requires a word-by-word examination in the original language of a verse or passage.⁷

⁷ Willmington D. Min. project, 87-89.

Appendix H

List of Questions for Interviews

H.L. Willmington and Elmer L. Towns (August 11, 2011)

1. Can you tell me how you two met?
2. How did the Bible Institute concept for Thomas Road Baptist Church originate?
3. What was the plan for the Institute as far as structure, duration, start-up date and so on?
4. What role did Jerry Falwell, Sr. play in all this?
5. Describe the facilities at start-up in August, 1972.
6. Describe the staff at start-up.
7. How many students enrolled the first semester?
8. What was the cost of tuition and books?
9. What was the student profile of this first group of students?
10. Who did the teaching?
11. The Institute was part of the church at first. How was the relationship between the Institute and the college?
12. What courses were taught at first?
13. The students went through the program as a group. How was that in actual practice?
14. Did the students earn a diploma or certificate or degree?
15. What actual hands-on training was available for the students?
16. Did every student have to attend Thomas Road Baptist Church?
17. Were the courses college level?
18. How many semester hours did the students carry the first semester?
19. Did the deaf ministry begin at the same time as the Institute?

20. Who taught the many training seminars that were a part of the program?

Roy Newman-former director of Liberty Home Bible Institute

1. Can we begin with a rehearsal of the founding of Liberty Home Bible Institute?
2. Can you describe the program's development at the time you took over leadership?
3. What were the facilities like in 1980-81?
4. How many students were enrolled at that time?
5. What was the rate of completion for LHBI? Was this a typical result for correspondence programs?
6. What were the staff positions and qualifications of those individuals you supervised?
7. How was the program promoted?
8. What did the program cost?
9. What was feedback concerning the satisfaction level with the course materials and approach to learning?
10. Does LHBI participate in any form of accreditation body or accountability organization both academically and fiscally?
11. What do you think is the future for the program?

Ken Smith-Program specialist at Liberty Home Bible Institute

1. How long have you been associated with LHBI, Ken?
2. What was the program like when you came on board?
3. How many staff members were involved in the program when you started working with it?
4. You are one of the main nuts and bolts persons for the program. What are the main strengths of the program?
5. Are there weaknesses at this point?
6. How has the program been promoted over the years?
7. How many pastors are involved in the program?
8. What is the typical student profile?

9. Are there any international students?
10. Does completing the program lead to college credit in some way?
11. How affordable is the program?
12. Can you provide me with the enrollment numbers for the years 1976-2012?
13. How is the program delivered to students now that technology has changed so dramatically?
14. What do you see is the future for the program?

Dan Reber, Director of the Liberty Home Bible Institute program

1. Mr. Reber, you recently took over stewardship of the program. What is the status of it today?
2. What major changes do you have planned for the program?
3. I heard you were interested in taking the program international as much as possible. Does this mean more pastors in poor regions of the world will have access to this Bible and theology training soon?
4. Does that mean translating the program into other languages?
5. Will you change the cost structure of the program?
6. Is the program going to change in any significant manner?
7. What do you think is the immediate future of the program?

Sue Willmington-LBI/TRBC deaf ministry director

1. Mrs. Willmington, when did you start the deaf ministry at Thomas Road Baptist Church and Lynchburg Baptist College?
2. How many deaf students were involved at the start?
3. How did the deaf students do compared to hearing students in TRBI? Were assessment instruments available for you?
4. What type of staff did you assemble for your ministry?
5. Can you describe their credentials?
6. When did you become involved with the deaf students at Liberty University?

7. Did SACS review your program?
8. Has the deaf community been able to “mainstream” with the larger university community?

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PERSONAL

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Children: Four sons (Patrick, Jesse, Timothy, and Nathan)
One daughter (Amber)

EDUCATION

2007-Present	Presently working on D. Min., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
2006	M. Div., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
2002	M.A.R., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
1984	Th.G., Liberty Bible Institute, Liberty University
1975	B.S., Business Administration/Economics, University of Wisconsin

MILITARY SERVICE

1967-71	U. S. Navy (Vietnam Veteran)
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EMPLOYMENT

1985-1998	Coordinator/Instructor, Liberty Bible Institute
1998-2011	Associate Dean/Instructor, Liberty Bible Institute* (*renamed "Willmington School of the Bible" in 2007)
2011-present	Assistant Professor, School of Religion, Liberty University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Co-founder with Dr. Harold Willmington-Local Church Bible Institute program.
Teacher for Faith Bible Class, Thomas Road Baptist Church

January 23, 2013

Rick Alan Buck

IRB Exemption 1515.012313: A Case Study in the Ministry of Harold Wilmington: Seven Major Contributions to Liberty University

Dear Rick,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.

Professor, IRB Chair

Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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