

CHANGING TO  
VOCATIONAL  
CHRISTIAN  
SERVICE



Northwest College  
of the Bible

## WHAT IS VOCATIONAL CHRISTIAN SERVICE?

Those working for the Lord can be divided into two groups. Most of us serve as volunteers. But, through the centuries, there have been a few men and women who have devoted their full time to ministry and received their income from their labors. A useful phrase to describe this is *vocational Christian service*.

Full-time service for God has its roots far back in the Old Testament. One of the twelve tribes (or major family groups) of Israel was supported by the other eleven tribes so they could set up worship for the entire nation. This was *God's inspired plan*. Later, God had another class of servants — the prophets. Many of them were vocational or full-time people.

## THE EDUCATION OF GOD'S WORKERS

Most of the prophets were disciplined into their work by more experienced prophets.<sup>1</sup> Jesus trained his own twelve men personally. They, in turn, picked others to train. This was true in the case of Luke. Following his conversion to Christ, he set aside his medical practice to travel with Paul and to learn from him. As a result, he wrote more of the New Testament than any other writer.<sup>2</sup>

## THE NEED FOR EDUCATION

Because of the pressing need for effective full-time workers, there is a strong temptation to short circuit the educational process and get on with ministry. While this seems to work for a tiny handful, most do not survive. When we choose a doctor, we do not look for a person with minimum schooling. Education is important to *effectiveness* and even *survival* in ministry.

At **Northwest College of the Bible**, four years of education are basic to graduation. (We do not recommend the two year program for full-time workers.)

## THE ROLE OF NCB

*NCB* has been training men and women for both vocational and avocational Christian service since 1952. Our graduates have become leaders and pacesetters in their chosen fields. We specialize in assisting men and women who *already have* a career to make the *change* to a career of full-time Christian service. Most of our students are in this mature age group.

## EDUCATION IN THE SCRIPTURES

Our view, as a faculty, is that aspiring leaders must learn the Bible *first*, then add their specialty or area of interest to their educational portfolio. We think that a serious (and later, painful) error is made by shortchanging the student's Bible education and moving directly into training for specialized ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 10:5-12; 19:20-24; 1 Kings 18:4-13.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, in *Luke* and *Acts*, wrote about 2,500 more words than Paul did in his letters.

## TRAINING IN LEADERSHIP

Leadership is not learned from books alone. At *NCB* the career-change student is learning leadership in actual church situations under the supervision experienced leaders. The *NCB* faculty has over 250 years of combined experience in the field working with people. Most of the faculty members are active as elders or evangelists in congregations within two hours drive of Portland.

## AN ACT OF FAITH

The first step is the big one. It means that we leave our comfort zones.<sup>3</sup> For most of us it means replacing a secure income with the uncertainties of employment and housing in Portland. The school administration stands ready to help provide a soft landing. The Lord opens up jobs and housing. Others have done it and are doing it now. We will be glad to put inquirers in touch with students who have made the leap.

## POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Frankly, not everyone is adapted to vocational Christian service. Because we want to maintain our excellent record, we do not encourage students that probably cannot become leaders. On the other hand, God has places of service that are not in the public eye, but are equally important.

*NCB* can never be the *end* of education for God's service. At the least, today's Christian leader must continue to attend seminars and workshops to keep on the ever-changing strategies for reaching men and women with the gospel.

Some students choose to go on to graduate school. Others take special training as missionaries, Christian education directors, youth leaders, or music directors. Some are already busy with vocational Christian work by the time they graduate.

## COSTS

Classes cost \$50 per semester hour. A full-time student would spend about \$135 per month for tuition calculated on a twelve-month basis. Books are extra. Our student scholarship program has, in several cases, *paid all tuition costs* for those who choose to participate. In addition, there *may* be monthly income from the plan. It is our goal that students not graduate with a load of school-caused loans that will hinder their service to God for several years following graduation. We use the spacious facilities of the growing Central Christian Church for classes.

## GETTING STARTED

For more information, to visit a class or to register, call Charles Dailey at **800-685-4 NCB** or the school office at **503-235-2114**. Our address is: ***Northwest College of the Bible***, 1844 S.E. 39th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214.

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<sup>3</sup> Consider Hebrews, chapter 11. Especially note the case of Abraham in verses 8-10.