

# Churches should focus education on knowledge of the Bible

September 26, 2013 by [Randy Bright](#)



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Last week I wrote about how I believed that Christians in America were being “dumbed down” and how Christians in the present have never gained the knowledge base that those in previous generations had.

Before Progressives began driving Christianity and the Bible out of our schools, teaching from the Bible was very commonplace. In the early times in our country’s history, even those who weren’t Christians had a better working knowledge of scripture that present day Christians do now.

In last week’s article, I wrote about a movie, *The Book of Eli*, that demonstrated how in a post-apocalyptic time, all Bibles had been destroyed – except one – and that when that one was lost, the entire Bible was re-written and given back to mankind from the inspired memory of one person.

When I began to specialize in the design of churches in 1996, I drew from my knowledge base of the Bible to help me visualize how a church building could help a congregation live out their purpose.

I was raised in an independent Christian Church, and from about age three until I graduated from high school, I attended a Sunday School class every Sunday. We had Bible studies on Wednesday evenings, and had even more exposure to scripture in youth activities Sunday evenings. I was in Boy Scouts, and completed the God and Country award, which took fourteen months of intense Bible study.

Working from the knowledge of the Bible, I concluded that the organized church needed three things within the church walls to be a healthy church – worship, fellowship, and education.

Worship is an activity in a time and place that allows a person to connect to God in a corporate way. That can be through music, reading the Word of God aloud, Communion, giving, prayer,

and listening to sermons. It is a time where a person's mind should be "vertical", or focused on God rather than on any other thing.

Fellowship is a time where Christians gather together to enjoy each other's company, make new friends, or share a meal. It is a time where attentions are "horizontal", that is focused upon each other, and where strong bonds can be formed between Christians.

Education, though, is extremely important, because it is both vertical and horizontal. It should be done in a time and place that allows participants to hear the Bible being taught, and be able to discuss and ask questions in a very focused environment.

Not only should education begin early in life, as it did in mine, but it should begin early in the life of a new Christian. Many people come to Christ late in life, with little to no knowledge of the scriptures. They need to learn in a way that allows them to quickly gain a working knowledge, and to develop a hunger for and a habit of studying scripture.

It is around these thoughts that I developed much of my own design philosophy, and which I still promote today.

But things have changed with churches in America. There is more focus on worship in the form of music, so much so that it is common for the music service to be referred to as the worship time. In many churches, the music has become performance oriented instead of participatory, and often draws people from church to church in search of the best music. This has changed the design of a worship space from being more vertical to that of a performing arts stage.

Fellowship has changed as well, though perhaps not as much as worship has. While churches still hold congregation-wide fellowship events, it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so as overall attendance exceeds the available space where everyone can meet together. This is especially true of those holding multiple services. A good problem to have, to be sure, but one that requires a larger number of fellowship events.

Education is seeing the greatest change, because it is being replaced with small group meetings or being eliminated altogether.

Small groups are actually very important fellowship meetings, in which people can gain some Bible knowledge, especially in general studies that teach practical applications of principles in the Bible. But they are a poor substitute for the kind of structured education that helps people understand the Bible and give them an ability to defend their faith.

Change within the church is inevitable, and some changes can strengthen the church. We need to expect them and adapt to them when necessary for the edification of the church. However, it is this writer's opinion that we have gone too far in reduction or elimination of education in the church, and for the church to be truly strong, it needs to focus severe attention on restoring it.

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