

WHY STUDY THEOLOGY?

by W. Ward Gasque

Theology—the study of God and his revelation to us—is too important to be left to the clergy. It is also essential for the laity, who make up 99% of God's people who are called to bear witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world.

In the past, we have tended to think of theology as something that you study if you are "going into the ministry" or preparing for "full-time work" as a pastor or a missionary. In recent years, however, more and more church leaders have rediscovered the biblical teaching that "ministry" belongs to all God's people.

If the ministry belongs to all the people of God, then it stands to reason that all God's people need to be equipped for ministry.

To equip God's people for their ministry in the world is the prime role of pastor-teachers (Ephesians 4:11-13). However, there is the need for some to have training that goes beyond what the local congregation can normally provide.

In order to fulfill their mission in the world, ordinary Christians need to be strongly rooted in their faith. Many believers have spent years and years, as well as thousands of dollars, obtaining their secular education, while investing very little time and money in educating themselves in the fundamentals of their faith. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Christian church is making such a minimal impact on our society.

All Christians need to have a solid grasp of the Bible and basic Christian doctrine. They also need to have a basic understanding of the history of Christianity, Christian ethics, the world mission of the church, and foundational skills for ministry. And they need help in identifying and in developing their spiritual gifts.

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