



MANNA

UNIVERSITY

Manna U 101

Manna University 101

Manna University stands securely on two foundational pillars, both of which make up our name:

First, we are MANNA. The Hebrew word for Manna literally means, “What is it?” The biblical accounts of Manna from heaven are examples of God’s supernatural provision (Ex. 16:31-35). This concept also connects with Jesus’ instructing the disciples to ask God for their “Daily Bread” (Matt. 6:11). At Manna U, before anything else, we are dependent on the supernatural power and provision of God the Father, God the Son, and God The Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). We are Bible-centered because Jesus, who is the living word of God, is also the bread of life (Jn. 1:1; 6:35). At Manna U, our success, strength, and security come from God (Ps. 20:7, 115:1; Jam. 1:17).

Second, we are a UNIVERSITY. As an institution of biblical higher-education, we are serious about academic excellence delivered in an environment of grace. We are a thinking center where the status quo is challenged, the ancient ways are explored and applied, and practical solutions are developed through research and analyses (Jer. 6:16; Matt. 22:37; Eph. 2:8-10; Tim. 2:15).

► **Our Mission.** Manna University is a biblical higher education institution dedicated to educating, equipping, and empowering emerging leaders to change the world.

► **Our Vision.** We exist to advance the Kingdom of God through biblical higher education – Everywhere.

► **Our Strategy.** By everywhere, we mean that our plan is to establish a presence in every state in the U.S. and wherever there is a need for biblical training around the world. We believe this plan goes beyond buildings, and focuses on preparing people to be movement makers - Everywhere.

Manna U’s ultimate heart is to advance the Kingdom of God. At Manna U we do three things:

1. Educate
2. Equip
3. Empower

Our focused approach allows us to center all of our activity on preparing emerging leaders to change the world.

The 3 How's of Preparing Emerging Leaders

1. Educate (Biblical Training)
2. Equip (Practical Ministry)
3. Empower (Personal Development)

What is an “**Emerging Leader**”? Regardless of age, an emerging leader is an individual who is being transformed into an effective leader through spiritual, practical, and personal development.

EDUCATE.

At Manna University, **we are a people and a place of learning.**

Accountability –

We are a Biblical Higher Education institution. Regardless of the subject, all of our course content must pass through the filter of a biblical worldview. We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, the written record of His supernatural revelation of Himself to man, absolute in its authority, complete in its revelation, final in its content, and without any errors in its teachings. Our educational model is accountable to the Word of God.

Our partnership with the Association of Biblical Higher Education, our accrediting agency, allows us to operate within a global movement of like-minded institutions, all committed to education that is legitimately postsecondary and academically rigorous, challenging students to develop critical thinking skills, and leading them in the formation of a biblically grounded Christian worldview.

Practically, our courses do not just sprinkle a Bible verse here and there. Instead, all of our faculty are encouraged to integrate a biblical worldview into the curriculum in a way that consistently challenges our students to consider, “What does the Bible say about the matter?”

Academic Excellence –

At Manna University, we have high standards in an environment of grace. The Bible teaches us to “do everything as unto the Lord” (Col. 3:23-24). For us, excellence is a matter of the heart. We believe that every assignment, whether in the classroom or in the marketplace, is an opportunity to worship the Lord. Our academic rigor is not about perfection, it is all about giving our best effort as an act of worship.

We also place a high value on managing the gifts that God has given us (stewardship). It is a privilege to learn, a privilege to pursue our collective callings, and a privilege to partner with God in the advancement of His Kingdom.

All of our courses are designed according to the best practices in biblical higher education. We utilize rubrics, standard syllabi, and standard course design to ensure that our students are receiving high-quality content.

However, we do not pursue excellence at the expense of grace. Our desire is to serve our students by helping them fulfill the call of God on their lives. We are not punitive in the application of our standards. We speak the truth in love and our desire is to promote learning.

Attitude of Learning –

At Manna University, we get to play a significant role in the development of our students. We get to serve our students through three separate, yet connected roles: Teacher, Mentor, and Coach.

Teaching is more than just the recitation of information. As teacher our goal is to move beyond the lecture and course readings and toward an integrated approach to learning that promotes ethical and moral leadership. This type of leadership ultimately leads to effective and healthy organizations. One could argue that great teachers go above and beyond spouting off facts and make an impact on the lives of their students. In fact, it could be said that great teachers communicate with clarity, stimulate and maintain interest in learning, teach creatively, and most importantly value and respect their students. As teachers, we are facilitators of learning. We get to lead our students in a way that cultivates and fosters the appetite and discipline for learning and leadership that ultimately leads to a student’s life change.

Practically, this means that our courses should contain a blend of the latest scholarship, expert voices, and our voices and experiences.

A mentor is one who “provides modeling, encouragement, and accountability.” As mentors, our faculty and staff are in many ways the standard of Christian leadership that our students aspire to uphold. Practically, this means that we are available to share our experiences and best practices with our students in order to help them succeed in the classroom and in life.

Although coaching and mentoring have several areas of overlap, a coach is one who helps someone achieve a goal by providing them with the tools and fine-tune adjustments needed for success. The coach is the one who gives correction, guidance, and the gameplan for success.

Teaching and coaching are limited by time and space, especially within the educational context. However, mentoring is a long-term commitment and journey. We encourage our team to teach with excellence and never forget that we are more than teachers - we also mentors and coaches who get to contribute to the holistic development of our students. We are facilitators of lifelong learning.

EQUIP.

At Manna University **we serve the local church.** We don't just deliver information; we make room for application and inspiration.

Constructive Content –

The Kingdom of God is the center; it is the method and the goal (Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:15, Matthew 6:10, Psalm 103:19). The focus of the content is to foster great leadership for Kingdom growth—preparing emerging leaders to change the world!

With this as the goal, our environment of learning has a different focus than a typical University. Books and research are needed, but we are not only building book knowledge, but rather something much more—building leaders to make great Kingdom impact! To do this, it is critical to build one's knowledge biblically and holistically.

Course content and assignments not only focus on how to write a paper, interpret the Bible, and lead teams in various environments, but also how to do these with integrity, keeping in the forefront what God is calling us to as individuals, how this impacts our family, and more all within a biblical worldview. We do not simply want you to know the correct answers, but we want you to know how to “discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2b).

Character and Capacity –

It is important to develop leaders, and it is critical to develop leaders who are full of character and capacity. Through experienced faculty in both academics and ministry (vocational and/or marketplace), there is a focus on actions and character, for we know as Christians we are called to do what is “honorable” both in “the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of *other* people” (2 Cor. 8:21). Leadership is who you are and what you do. The former always influences the latter.

God empowers us through His strength to be a high-character, high-capacity leader! Not because of what we have done, but for His own purpose. 2 Timothy 1:9 (NIV) says, “He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.” Grace creates opportunity for transformation! Grace is getting what you don’t deserve. We need grace to be transformed and to bring transformation.

We don’t need more leaders who just look the part. We need leaders full of character and capacity, and here at Manna University we have experienced faculty who are leading, teaching, mentoring and coaching in this way. Together, led by the Holy Spirit, we will change the world by impacting one student at a time—one leader at a time.

Consistent Creativity –

The environment of Manna University is one that promotes a lifestyle and mentality of lifelong learning. We can see throughout the Bible that we ought to consistently grow and seek after the ways of the Lord (Proverbs 10:17, Psalm 25:4, James 1:5). An environment of continual growth promotes creativity and innovation. “Innovation is a dynamic process in which God and man willingly choose to work together, despite the unequal partnership. Human intellect and effort are obviously insufficient to complete the work that God has ordained. The innovation process exposes human frailties and

reveals God's majesty and welcomed insertion into human activities, differently from any other early situation" (Oster, 2011, p. 8). We may not be the most creative individuals, but we are able to draw near to the One who is the most creative and innovative. Our own intellect, our own creativity is not sufficient; we rely on God by including Him in our planning and strategies. We rely on His guidance, and only through that will we be able to truly make an impact. Manna University is an incubator for the creative ways in which the Kingdom will advance!

Many leadership approaches also emphasize this priority of learning, challenging, creativity, and/or innovation. Within the SERVE model, the leader is encouraged to "Reinvent Continually" (Blanchard & Miller, 2014); Kouzes and Posner (2017) in the *Leadership Challenge* believe leaders ought to "Challenge the Process", and one main component of Transformational Leadership is "Intellectual Stimulation" (Bass & Avolio, 1993). All these approaches stress the importance and benefits of continually growing, learning, and not settling for typical methods, which is often paired with mediocrity.

Our God is not one that is outdated; He is always on the leading edge. We must be faithful to invite His Presence in the direction and future of the University. "We need the Presence of God doing the work of the ministry in God's way, power, and direction. The Presence of God is a person not a thing. The Presence of God is the Holy Spirit living and working in us and others in advancing the Kingdom of God" (Crowther, 2020).

EMPOWER.

At Manna University, **we develop and deploy leaders.** We believe that personal development and spiritual formation set the stage for emerging leaders to live out their God-given calling. We do this by focusing on people and helping them each find success in their calling. To empower means to give one authority. We do not do this on our own. Jesus modeled empowerment by "giving away" power as he commissioned his disciples to change the world (Matt. 28:19-20; John 20:21). Jesus also modeled empowerment by serving others (Mark 10:45). Scholars believe that empowerment is one of the central components of servant leadership (Patterson, 2003; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Focusing on people means we cultivate environments of belonging. Every student should know that their faculty members and our staff are concerned about the details of their lives. We maintain healthy boundaries, but we are always willing to provide

whatever support and encouragement our students may need. When a student feels cared for, they feel safe, and when they feel safe, they are empowered to thrive in their academic pursuits. These students are theological, thoughtful, and transformed.

Theological –

At Manna University, we believe that everything, including leadership, rises and falls on theology for the Christian leader. As Christian leaders, our understanding of who God is (Theology Proper, Christology, Pneumatology), who we are to God (Christian Anthropology), how God responds to us (Soteriology, Eschatology), and how we are to respond to Him (Ecclesiology) influences every aspect of our lives. Therefore, it is paramount that we are lifelong students of theology before we are students of leadership, counseling, or even worship. At Manna University, we count it as a “win” when our graduates grow in their understanding, knowledge, and application of the Bible.

Thus, every class should integrate scripture into its content while also making room for spiritual formation. Our faculty are encouraged to pray with and for their students. We honor God by treating our work as worship, we reflect the love of Jesus in how we interact with one another, and we are filled, led, and empowered by the Holy Spirit daily.

Thoughtful –

One of the primary metrics of applied biblical theology is deep care and concern for others. This goes beyond hands-on practical ministry. A thoughtful leader is not afraid to challenge the status quo for the sake of the Gospel. A thoughtful leader is humble, teachable, and committed to lifelong learning, not for the sake of acquiring head knowledge, but for the sake of advancing the Kingdom of God.

Thus, every class should foster an environment of expression that makes room for individuality, creativity, and honesty. We think deeply about each other, and we share ideas for the sake of Kingdom advancement. We are not afraid of difficult conversations, controversial subjects, or innovative concepts. We do not engage in debates for the sake of arguing. We do not play “devil’s advocate” because the enemy does not need our help. We are thoughtful leaders.

Transformed –

Transformation is a theological cornerstone at Manna University. Our mandate is to “be transformed” by the word of God, renewal of the Spirit, and sacrificial living (Rom. 1-3). The reality of life in Christ is that we are new creations (2 Cor. 5:17). Since spiritual transformation is immediate (salvation) and continual (sanctification), we encourage our students to find security in their identity in Christ, while always moving toward their destiny.

Transformation is also a leadership cornerstone at Manna University. We model ethical and Christ-like behavior, academic excellence, and a posture of grace not just for our university but for the betterment of one another (Idealized Influence). We use clear, compelling, and concise language to convey our mission, vision, and values (Inspirational Motivation). We encourage deep thinking and a biblical growth mindset (Intellectual Stimulation). We choose trust over suspicion, teamwork over isolation, and collaboration over micromanagement (Individual Consideration). As transformed people, we are committed to Kingdom transformation.

Our Call – Biblical Leadership

“The way into the future for the human race is effective good leadership. Our world is filled with divergent troubling issues and many of the solutions need effective, good leaders with a robust way of leading. Looking into the future, which can appear dark at times, is actually very bright. It is an opportunity for new ways of leading with new effective, good leaders to be developed and to rally many of the new effective leaders of the world to bring bright change into our world. In the church, there is a bright future. As the church faces opposition and trouble and even cultural rejection, this is an opportunity for good effective biblical leaders to rise to the surface in the church and ministries to lead in real advance for the Kingdom of God on the earth. These are dark times, these are good times. Frankly, these times inspire me and they should inspire you too” (Crowther, 2018, pp. 164-165).

