



Why I No Longer Recommend Christian Colleges

By

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I no longer recommend Christian colleges and universities because I don't trust many of them. By that, I mean I don't trust many of their professors and leaders. I don't trust much of their theology. I don't trust many of the books and curriculum they use to instruct their students.

Why don't I trust them? Because I read what their professors write. I listen to what their graduates preach and what they write. Unfortunately, much of what has been coming out of 'Christian' education leans toward progressive and gnostic theology.

What do you think of when you hear the names of these schools?

- Harvard University
- Yale University
- Princeton University
- Oxford University
- Cambridge University

Did you know that each of them began as a Christian institution of higher learning? That might surprise some people in light of what they think of those schools now. However, when you read the history of each university you will see the 'downward drift' that led the schools toward liberal theology and even outright rejection of God and His Holy Word.

Unfortunately, the same thing has been happening in current 'Christian' colleges and universities across the United States, the UK, and Europe. I have found it very difficult to recommend a good school of solid biblical theology to Christians wanting to learn more about God and His Word.

Many young people attend colleges affiliated with their church's denomination. Others attend schools of higher learning based on the guidance of people they trust. That's what I did. One of the people God used to answer my questions as an atheist recommended I attend a particular Christian college to further my theological education. That was back in the 1970s. I still have some of the course materials from my classes, along with notes from my professors, and have re-read them during the last few years. Fortunately what I was taught was pretty good, but some of

the authors we read as part of our studies later 'drifted' from solid doctrine.

What if I had followed the later teachings of those authors instead of comparing their later teachings to God's unchanging Word? I wouldn't be writing this article for one thing. For another, following bad teaching would have taken me in some bad directions in life and ministry.

The Process – The People

As a journalist, I observe ‘people, places, and things.’ I do the same thing as a Bible teacher. I observe carefully, ask questions, follow up on answers, and ask more questions before beginning the process of interpretation and application. That’s a ‘process.’ I recommend it for anyone thinking about attending a Christian school of higher learning.

1. First, who are the people who run the college or university? What’s their theological background? What have they written or said that you could compare with Scripture?
2. Second, who are the people who teach at the college or university? What’s their theological background? What have they written or said that you could compare with Scripture?
3. Third, who are the people who graduate from the college or university? What’s their theological background? What have they written or said that you could compare with Scripture?

How do they compare? What do they believe? What do they practice? Don't know? It's easy to find out these days with so much information available 'online.' Look them up. What have they said? Watch some videos of their preaching/teaching. What have they written? Read some of the articles, blogs, and books they've written. Do you see any warning 'flags' in what you find? What I mean by warning 'flags' is anything that causes you to take a 'second look' at what someone says or writes. Taking a second look doesn't mean the person is wrong, but it is a way that the Holy Spirit may guide you in finding error and false teaching in these institutions.

Jesus Christ told His followers that He would send them the Holy Spirit to 'guide them into all truth' (John 16:13). That's wonderful, if you actually allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. If you allow a human being to guide you 'over' what the Spirit clearly shows you, you are not being guided by God's Spirit. God will bring human beings into your life to help with godly guidance, but humans are not infallible. Only God is infallible. Trust Him and don't lean unto your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6). If the Spirit throws a 'flag' on the play and leads you to take a second look at a Christian college, follow the Spirit's lead. It's part of the process. Listen to God and He'll lead you in the right direction.

If you do follow God's lead, you may find yourself not accepting a scholarship to attend a school or even dropping out of a particular school. That seems better than being 'infected' with the dangerous teaching of many professors today. Some academics may not even know how they've been led astray, but some do. Many of them lecture and write as if they have some 'secret knowledge' that only they can give you. That's a BIG FLAG when I hear that kind of communication from a teacher. The only 'knowledge' any of us can trust is God's knowledge. How is that acquired?

It begins with 'fear' – fear of God. That is the 'beginning of knowledge' (Proverbs 1:7). King Solomon went on to write that, 'fools despise wisdom and instruction.' There are lots of 'fools' in academia. Be careful. Someone with letters after their name (e.g. MDiv, Ph.D, etc) may be one of the 'fools' that Solomon said 'despise wisdom and instruction.'

The next thing I recommend as part of this process is to study the Bible 'in context' Read biblical text within the context, based on the original language and purpose of the author – keeping in mind that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate Author of all Scripture – 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God' (2 Timothy 3:16). Why

does that matter? ‘... it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work’ (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

I had the opportunity to attend many ministry conferences decades ago, often taught by professors in Christian universities. While some of them seemed to be on target, it was obvious that many were beginning to ‘drift.’ As I checked in on those professors through the years I found that they drifted further and further from the truth. Some of them stepped into aspects of ‘modern gnosticism’ and ‘heresy.’ What if I had trusted them at the conferences just because of their titles or promotion? Where might I be today if I didn’t see the ‘flags’ the Holy Spirit threw out for me to see? I credit God for His protection.

Jesus and His apostles warned God’s people that ‘bad’ people were going to get into churches (also think Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries) and get some of the people to follow them instead of Christ. We need to heed those warnings today.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Matthew 7:15

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Acts 20:28-30

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 2 Peter 2:1-3

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. 1 John 2:18-19

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ ... But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. Jude 1:4, 17-19

The Process – The Places

A friend recently told me he was planning to attend a particular seminary. Most schools have websites, so I looked it up. I searched for the school's 'Statement of Faith.' Some schools call that section 'What We Believe.' I clicked the link and read the statement of beliefs. It didn't take long before I found some problems with the school's stated position on certain areas of theology. I let my friend know what I found.

Some schools, like some churches, will 'hide' what they really believe because they know there are people like me out there who are curious and skeptical (good attributes for a journalist). However, if you dig deep enough you can discover a school's position on almost any topic. That's the benefit of the Internet and social media. Most schools have a website and various social media presence. Leaders and professors from the school often have their own social media pages where you can see what they believe about a variety of topics.

Searching for schools that may have ‘hidden’ agendas usually slip up somewhere. Sometimes it’s their promotion, sometimes it’s a slip of the tongue, sometimes it’s just bragging – sometimes it’s just saying the ‘truth out loud.’ If you want to go attend a school with the kind of ‘sound doctrine’ that Jesus and His apostles would approve, use every tool available to make sure you’re not being pulled into something that’s ‘spiritual quicksand.’

Another Internet search that will often find ‘problem’ areas is something like this:

- College name false teaching
- College name error
- College name heresy

The same is true for the professors:

- Professor’s name false teaching
- Professor’s name error
- Professor’s name heresy

Since some Internet search engines are ‘trained’ not to give up that kind of information in the first 100 pages of search results, I use a variety of search engines. I’ve learned the ones that will give up the info I need and the ones that are programmed to hide the info I need. Once you learn which search engines will give you the best information, you’re on your way getting information that college, universities, seminaries, and professors would prefer you didn’t know. That’s a good thing.

It’s a lot like being an investigative reporter (which I was), but in this case you’re doing more than bringing hidden information to light that impacts the public. You’re bringing to light hidden information that can impact the rest of your life. Once you buy into a particular institution, professor, etc., it’s hard to turn back. Sometimes that’s because we can’t believe a particular professor, author, or college we trusted would fall away from faithfulness to God and His Word. Sometimes it’s because we’ve become hardened to the point that we won’t believe a professor, author, or college we trusted has fallen. If you stand in quicksand long enough, it will swallow you whole.

The Process – The Things

Things are things. By that I mean they are ‘things’ you can see, hear, and touch. Visit a campus you’re considering. Wander around. Look at posters on bulletin boards. Look at what’s written on curriculum. Visit the library. What books are prominently placed for students to see? Talk with students. What do they do when they’re not in class. Are they motivated by the Gospel of Christ or the gospel of progressive socialism? Take a look at what speakers are promoted on campus. Any flags? If so, do some more digging and be prepared to walk away – no matter how ‘nice’ everyone seems. ‘Nice’ is not the same thing as ‘right.’ Christians need to be ‘right’ about sound doctrine. Yes, we should be kind and loving, but real kindness and love is not allowing people to ‘drift’ away into unsound doctrine.

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2 Timothy 4:2-4

... holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. Titus 1:9

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. Titus 2:1

‘Sound doctrine’ is always the goal. The word ‘sound’ in the Greek (*hugiainó*) means ‘healthy, pure, uncorrupted.’ That’s the kind of teaching we need in our churches, colleges, universities, and seminaries. The sad thing is that the most of those institutions are ‘sick’ and ‘corrupted.’ Don’t believe me? Here’s what Jesus said to some churches almost two-thousand years ago –

Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. Revelation 2:4-5

I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. Revelation 2:14-16

... you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches

the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. Revelation 2:20-23

I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. Revelation 3:1-3

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Revelation 3:15-19

Keep in mind that this is what Jesus told the Apostle John to write to 'churches' in Asia. The Lord was not addressing a conference of unbelievers. He was speaking directly to Christians. If that's what Jesus said to churches more than 1,900 years ago, do you think things have somehow gotten better today? They are worse. They are worse in churches. They are worse in Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries. Christians are falling deeper and deeper into the 'quicksand' that is unsound doctrine. Don't be one of them.

An Important Question for Students

Some students or their parents reading this might wonder what they should do if they are close to graduating from a school that teaches 'unsound doctrine.' Good question.

If you've already spent two or three years at a Christian school, you may decide to complete your degree. However, finish knowing the truth that some of what you've learned may not be correct.

Another option is to transfer to a school that more closely meets the biblical criteria for instructing a Christian for ministry.

That's a question you and your parents will have to decide. I recommend you pray about it, have some good discussions with your parents and trusted friends, listen to the Holy Spirit and follow His guidance.

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