

THE EXPERT

Think Before You Act HOW DOES OMEGA BIBLE INSTITUTE & SEMINARY RATE
 ACCORDING TO A REAL EXPERT?
 READ THE FOLLOWING AND THEN YOU DECIDE...

The following excerpts are from "Miller's Guide to Rating Non-Traditional Schools and Their Critics."

© KingdomLink Network International, Inc. *Used by permission. GETTING STARTED RIGHT * Things that sound good and exciting— such as "You may not be required to take any courses or complete any studies for your degree" -- may be the very thing that points to a major problem or flaw in a school or its methods of operation.

* The failure to include a picture of their facilities is certainly not a fatal flaw in an otherwise good school's literature. Yet it doesn't stand to reason that if a school has a decent facility or campus, they wouldn't want to show it off up front to their prospective students? IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT HIDDEN COSTS * Are there up-front evaluation/assessment fees?

* Are textbooks, video tapes, and workbooks included in the stated price, or must you pay extra for these things?

* Are there finance charges?

* Is the school/college accredited? NOTE: There are many good non-traditional institutions that are not regionally accredited (i.e., holding accreditation from government sponsored associations). When inquiring about accreditation, always ask what kind of accreditation an institution holds. Then decide whether a particular institution will meet your needs even though it may not be regionally accredited. CRITICAL POINTS * Evaluating transcripts and job/life experiences is a valid way for the non-traditional schools to help you as a potential student not to have to take certain studies you've already completed.

* When supposedly legitimate schools start running ads saying such things as "NO entrance fee...NO thesis... NO textbooks...NO schedule to keep...NO long waiting period to earn your degree" and so forth, ask your self about the ultimate value of such a degree. Is such a school actually granting you credit towards a quality degree program, or do they simply want your money?

* It's certainly not too much to expect that the people at a school/college should be friendly and courteous.

* Another question you should ask yourself— and then proceed to look for the answer is, "Just how far is a school willing to go to be "user-friendly"?" Here are a few examples of innovative and friendly ways to help students:

1. A website for easy information/communication
2. Phone/Fax/E-mail
3. Toll-Free student hotline
4. Ability to talk with faculty as needed
5. Student mentors and/or faculty advisors

* Rule number 1 in evaluating a non-traditional school's faculty is if the school in question puts together even a halfway decent-looking catalog but can't manage to list their instructors' educational degrees, professional experience, etc., there may be a big problem.

* The typical 3 credit hour college course requires approximately 15 weeks of 3 classroom hours per week for a total of 45 man hours of classroom work time. Likewise, good non-traditional coursework should require students to invest 15-20 man hours of study and work per credit hour.

* Beware of schools that give mostly "A's," and a few "B's," and the rest "C's" (and nothing lower). EVALUATING EXPERTS * There are a number of self-styled "experts" in the field of recommending (they usually call it "evaluating") non-traditional schools. The typical style of approach is to evaluate a given school based upon the expert's own personal and subjective set of criteria. Once this is done, they proceed to tell you whether a school is "good" or "bad".

* What would you think of someone who strongly criticized non-traditional schools because they had only a post office box address, yet this person used a post office box address to advertise his institute and a book called "Name It and Frame It"? When my colleagues and I made a telephone call to Pennsylvania to check on Mr. (or Dr.) Steve Levicoff, we learned from the state of Pennsylvania that Mr. Steve Levicoff was the only one on his board. It must be concluded that Mr. Levicoff's views and opinions were totally formed by himself. Also, Mr. Levicoff claims to be an expert in law, yet he holds no law degree.

* What would you think of a man who used his first guide-book, Walston's Guide to Non-Traditional Schools, to criticize almost every non-traditional school in existence, then turned around and sent materials to enroll you in his own non-traditional school? This is none other the Rick Walston, another "expert."

* What would your think of a man who placed schools/colleges on his bad list because the institutions refused to complete his questionnaire? This person is Dr. John Bear. He is one of the first critics who published a guide-book that rated non-traditional schools. Other than profiting from sales of his book, Bear has not apparently had any ulterior motive behind his work. Nevertheless, Bear takes the same position as Walston and Levicoff in telling you what he thinks of any given school rather than equipping you to discover the truth for yourself. You are ultimately left with having to take his word for it. He practices

prejudice against schools that have the audacity not to answer his questionnaire. Rather than being objective and either not including the institution in his book or simply stating that a certain institution did not respond, Bear's book puts non-responding schools into a "negative" category and implies that they are inferior or unacceptable schools. Upon investigation, some non-responding school officials said, "We have no intentions of helping Dr. John Bear to develop his ever expanding book. We choose not to respond, this is our prerogative."

* Some of the so-called "experts" play a little too fast and loose with the truth, particularly if a given school is not in their

favor. As an example, one well-known seminary in Alabama chose not to cooperate with Bear or Levicoff and, therefore, did not complete their questionnaires asking for personal information. Because of non-compliance, this seminary was viciously attacked and given the lowest grade. Yet when Rick Walston rated the same seminary in his guide, Walston's Guide to Non-Traditional Schools, he listed the same "bad seminary" as one of the "best seminaries" in America after he became well acquainted with its president. Who are we to believe...Bear, Levicoff, or Walston? Incidentally, Rick Walston has changed the name of his book to Walston's guide to Christian Distance Learning.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gregory Miller is a non-profit corporation and church law specialist. He began his career as an Assistant District Attorney. Today he is a legal advisor to both American and international non-profit corporations and ministries. He also advises several non-traditional universities and seminaries as well as Christian radio and television stations. Mr. Miller received his Juris Doctorate

at Loyola University School of Law (New Orleans) in 1986. He was recently included in the prestigious Marquis Who's Who in American Law 1998-1999.

FINAL NOTE FROM OMEGA

We at Omega like the logical approach of Attorney D. Gregory Miller. He does not attempt to tell you if an institution is "good" or "bad" but gives a challenge to each inquirer to gather information on their own based upon what knowledge they have. Mr. Miller challenges potential students to ask questions until they are satisfied and then check out the answers given by various institutions.