



STATEMENT DM100

Does Dr. Walter Martin Have A Genuine Earned Doctor's Degree?

Any Latter-day Saint dealing with “anti-Mormon” literature is bound sooner or later to run into the name of **Dr. Walter Martin**, a man who, perhaps more than any other, is cited as the final word on the subject of orthodox Christianity and the cults.

Facts which are not disputed concerning **Walter Ralston Martin** are as follows: *He is an ordained Baptist minister and a member of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is also sympathetic with the Charismatic movement. He holds four earned degrees including a Master's Degree from New York University. He is trained in the ancient languages of the Scriptures, although he is careful to maintain he is not a linguist. Demonstrably, his areas of expertise are Religious Education, Philosophy, Ancient Church History and Apologetics*, the latter an evangelical term meaning “the defense of the faith.” Many Mormons feel this loosely translates “**attack on the faith**,” for if the claims of the LDS church be true, Martin is no defender of anything that is true or holy. The fact which most certainly is disputed is Walter Martin's claim to having an earned doctorate **from a legitimate degree-granting institution**. Arguing most vocally of late against Martin are **Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brown of Arizona** in three extensive publications, “**THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE**” Volumes 1, 2 and 3. (Further volumes are contemplated.) *They have flatly rejected the genuineness of Dr. Martin's degree and, indeed, have lumped him together with Dee Jay Nelson, a purported Egyptian scholar whose degree, it is agreed by all — Mormon and non-Mormon — is an absolute humbug, bought and paid for from an outfit in Washington State that was “...by no means even remotely a borderline legitimate school,” but was rather “... the most dangerous kind of degree mill ...”* (BEAR'S GUIDE TO NON-TRADITIONAL COLLEGE DEGREES, 6th Ed., P. 129).

The Facts Speak

Let us first consider, then, if indeed Walter R. Martin has any real claim to be called “Dr.” and then ask ourselves honestly what credentials are required to critique the LDS church.

First, while this writer is generally uncomfortable with the term “expert” in any application, there most certainly is a uniformly respected expert in the field of Alternative, or Non-traditional College Education. After having had the privilege of communicating with him, I am confident he would likewise prefer some alternate epithet to “expert,” but nonetheless is an expert. His name is Dr. John Bear. His degrees are legion, and they are earned and easily verifiable. Many years ago Dr. Bear became fascinated with the entire concept of college without campus. This fascination led him to a field of research heretofore untouched, and resulted in the publication of “*BEAR'S GUIDE TO NON-TRADITIONAL COLLEGE DEGREES*,” cited above.

Robert and Rosemary Brown, in their criticism of Walter Martin's doctoral credentials, pointed out that California Western University, now known as California Coast University, is operated out of humble headquarters in Santa Ana, California, and does not bear a physical resemblance to what one would conjure up in one's mind when one imagines a university. Dr. Bear, however, is careful to note that some very fine programs are offered by small schools. Such apparently is the case with California Coast University.

“California Coast University...was one of the first of California's non-resident universities... CCU is the only non-resident school in California to have received state approval of all degree programs offered...each faculty member holds recognized degrees from traditional schools.”

Dr. Bear, who, it should be noted, has *no* interest in any religious controversy, concludes with this observation:

CRI, P.O. Box 8500, Charlotte, NC 28271
Phone (704) 887-8200 and Fax (704) 887-8299

“For those persons willing to spend a year or more to earn their (graduate) degree, California Coast University offers an excellent alternative” (BEAR’S GUIDE, 10th Edition, p. 85).

We are therefore compelled to concede that Walter Martin does have a real claim on the academic title “Doctor”, having earned his degree from a legitimate institution of alternative higher education. It should also be noted that Dr. Martin completed all his graduate studies at New York University, a fully accredited school, and simply submitted his thesis at CCU. Honesty compels us to reject the Brown’s comparison of Dr. Martin’s degree with the phony, dime-store diploma of Dee Jay Nelson. **There is no comparison!**

For additional information supporting the accepted status of CCU and Dr. Martin’s degree, the California State Department of Education has stated in the California Education Code, Section 94310(b):

The degree is conferred by an institution having full institutional approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for all degree programs offered. Such institutions have been evaluated favorably as being *consistent with accredited institutions* in terms of curricula quality and verifiable evidence of graduates’ academic achievement.

An institution may be granted full institutional approval if the superintendent approves every degree offered by the institution. The law mandates the superintendent to determine — in advance of issuing an approval and in renewing such approval — by a qualitative review and assessment of the institution through the use of an institutional self-study and a comprehensive onsite evaluation by a qualified visitation committee impaneled by the superintendent: that the curriculum is consistent in quality with curricula offered by established accredited institutions; and the courses achieve their professed objectives, with verifiable evidence of the students’ achievement being comparable to that required of graduates from accredited institutions.

Approved institutions and the degrees and credits they issue are deemed to be meeting the superintendent’s standards and those comparative qualitative standards existing in accredited institutions. The degrees and credits earned from approved institutions enjoy relatively wide recognition and acceptability.

Now that we have examined Dr. Martin’s claims, let us ask again our second question in this outline, **“What credentials are required to critique the LDS church?”**

A key to this question lies in the area of **easily verifiable fact**. For example, what if you are suffering from a mortal disease and someone comes along who claims to be a doctor of some healing art, and tells you that if you will follow his prescription you will be made well? Obviously, in such a case, you would be a fool not to check such a one’s credentials. **His claims are not easily, if at all, verifiable.**

However, if someone comes to you and tells you your house is on fire, you need do nothing but peek out the door and look to see if he is telling you the truth. *In other words, easily verifiable fact.*

What is Mormonism?

In the area of Mormonism, Dr. Martin makes certain claims. He claims **Mormonism is polytheistic**. It is. Plurality of gods is part and parcel of LDS doctrine, Dr. Martin claims **Mormonism is a system of works**. It is. Any LDS individual would be happy to affirm that he or she is working his or her way to the Celestial Kingdom. Dr. Martin claims that the Book of Mormon has no archaeological endorsement from any non-Mormon scholar. It truly has no such endorsement **Even Mormon archaeologists acknowledge this**. Dr. Martin claims that *no matter what your works may be, you will die in your sins if you do not believe that Jesus Christ is God* (not a god, or a product of sexual intercourse, but God!). **So does the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!** (John 8:24; 8:58).

Yes, *Walter Martin’s doctoral degree is legitimate, and, no, it really does not matter.* Down through the centuries God has used both the great and the simple to bring the gospel message: He used the sinner Matthew and the scholar Paul. He used the wealthy Shedd and the destitute Brainerd; He uses great books and even little articles like this one. The message is all the same: **Christ died, was buried, and rose again on the third day.** *Christ did not die for “Adam’s transgression alone” but for all “our sins.”* Thank God for His matchless gift, which cannot be earned, which is not for sale at any price!