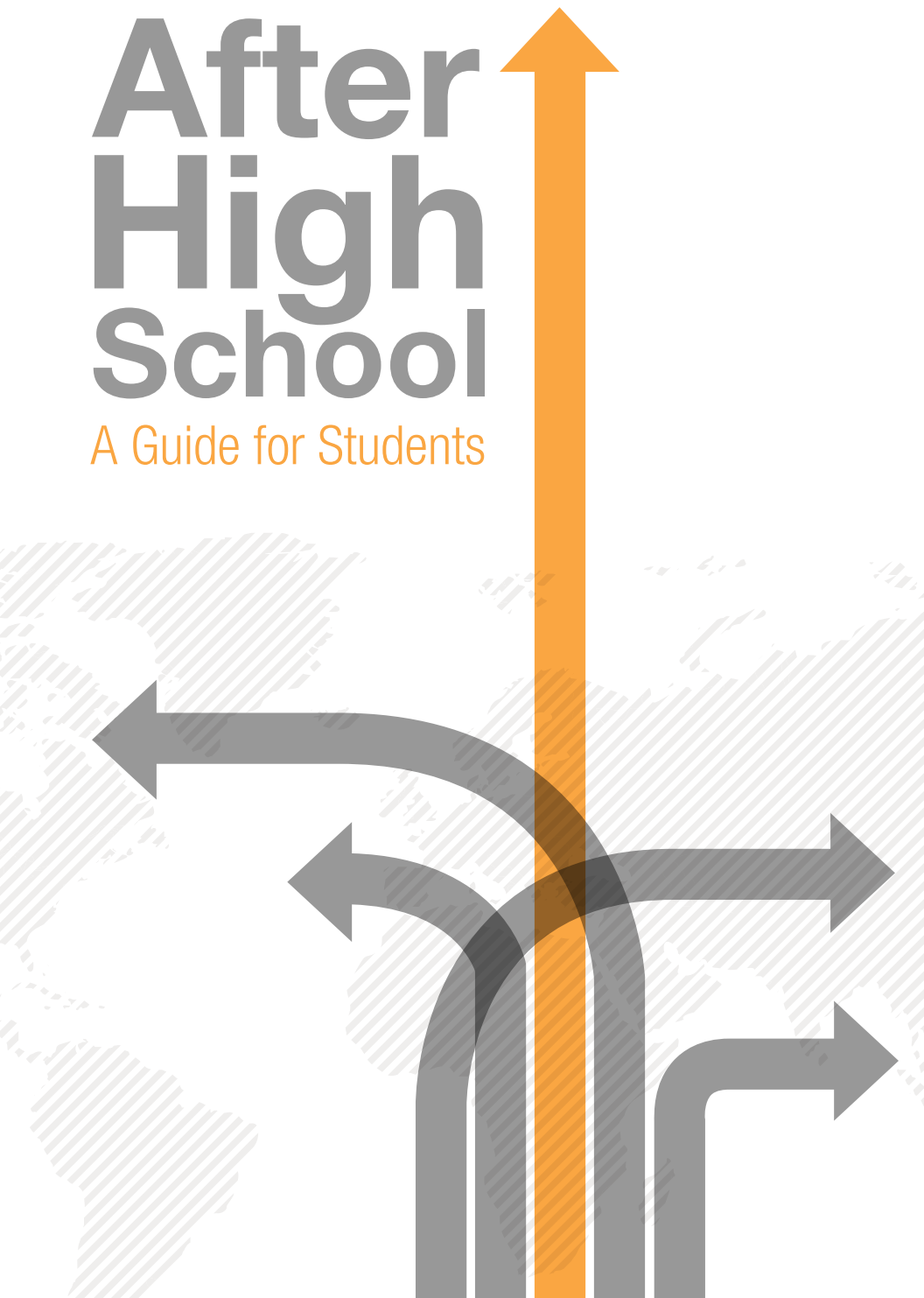


After High School

A Guide for Students





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INTRODUCTION

“What do you want to do with your life?”

If this question makes you cringe or raises your anxiety, **After High School - A Guide For Students** was designed for you!

CBOQ Youth has created this resource to assist you in clarifying direction, considering options, creatively managing costs, connecting with God away from home and offering practical helps to partner with your parents in decision making.

In partnership with your parents and your local church, we hope this resource will provide valuable insights and direction for this important stage in your journey!

Your friends at CBOQ Youth

P.S. Please forward any feedback, questions or suggestions to:
cboqyouth@baptist.ca.

Editor's Note: The original document was created by Rev. Steve Brown, former CBOQ director of youth discipleship and mission.



Clarifying Direction

“What do you want to do with your life?”

If you are like many students, making a decision about what direction to take after high school may be one of your biggest life decisions to date. This decision also happens in the midst of a number of competing and significant pressures - the number of choices, competition, rising costs, and pressures from society, parents, friends, and culture.

Despite all the choices and options, there are generally just three big life decisions...

The first one is: **Who/what is your master?** In other words, who or what do you follow in life? Some people will choose to follow Jesus, others will choose to follow their own path or another religious/life philosophy or be mastered by a person, addiction, or possession.

Followers of Christ and those on a spiritual quest should reflect on the exclusive level of commitment Jesus shared in Luke 9:23-24:

“If anyone would come after me, they must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”

Luke 9:23-24

This exclusive level of commitment continues on for the entire life of a Christian. In other words, *being a Christian isn't a moment of surrender, but a commitment to a lifetime of surrender.*

The second big decision is: **What is my mission?** Or, what do you give your life to? In John 4:34, Jesus made it clear that his life mission was to “do the will of him who sent me...” Although that ‘big picture’ mission is true for all followers of Christ, how to discern and live out that ‘big picture’ in our daily life and vocation is the question many people wrestle with – and this is the question we will work through in this resource.

The third big decision is: **Who will be your spouse?** Or, whom do you spend your life with? For many people, this question relates to the type of person you will marry. For others who will live life as a single person, this question involves the type of community to which you belong. Although this third question may be heavy on your mind, we won't have time to deal with it in this resource – sorry!

In trying to discern and live out your mission in life, let's look at **Nine Common Myths About God's Roadmap For Your Life**. By contrasting common but mistaken views against truth, you will learn some timeless principles for discerning God's mission for your life and making future decisions. Rather than giving specific advice (which is impossible to do in a booklet, since everyone who reads it is unique), applying these principles to your situation and context will help clarify God's direction for your future.

Nine Common Myths About God's Roadmap For Your Life



Myth #1 - God doesn't care what I do...

God does care what you do in life because He cares deeply about you! To illustrate His care, Matthew 10:30 says that *"And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."* If God cares so much about you that He has the hairs on your head numbered, then He also cares about decisions you make and directions you take. This same principle is reinforced by Ephesians 1:4 (God choosing you before the creation of the world), John 3:16 (God loving you so much that He would give His only Son), John 10:10 (God's desire that we have abundant life) and Psalm 139 (God's intimate involvement in our creation, His active and real presence in our lives, etc.).

Myth #2 - My choice won't make a difference...

Our choices are important – to God, to others and for ourselves. For example, take Queen Esther's dilemma of putting her life on the line for her people or watching her people be exterminated. During Esther's 'moment of decision', her cousin Mordecai reminds her, *"And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this."* (Esther 4:14). In other words, Mordecai was saying, "Esther, this is your moment! This is the reason you are Queen – to take a stand and save your people."

Although the circumstances may be different, each of us will have 'moments of decision' that impact God, others and ourselves.

"If you ever think one life doesn't make a difference, think about trying to fall asleep in a room with ONE mosquito."

(loosely quoted from Ghandi)

Myth #3 - God's biggest concerns about me are my school and job choice...

God is concerned about your school and job choice. However, God is not so concerned with the specific school or job but rather who you will be in those places. In other words, God has concerns about you that are bigger than these specific decisions. For example, God is concerned about...

Intimacy – Your Relationship With God (Matthew 22:37-39). Both the Old and New Testaments chronicle God's pursuit of a relationship with his people. The Greatest Commandment is based on God's main thing – intimate and complete relationship with his people.

Starting or developing this relationship is the first and main priority in God's plan for your life – this is what's eternal – all other decisions are temporary and secondary.

Character - God desires that our character be transformed into the character of Christ. (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

Community – God loves community and He commands us to live in the context of community. Specifically, God's community is based in the local church. Therefore, God desires us to be connected to and serving in a local church. (Romans 12:3-8)

Ministry – Each Jesus follower has gifts, talents, time and experience that are to be used for ministry – furthering God's Kingdom. (1Cor. 4:2)

So, when we ask God about which school to go to and which program to apply for, God might respond, "Those are important questions, but first let's talk about our relationship – the intimacy, your character transformation, your connection with Jesus – the church and how you are serving me in ministry." Thankfully, we don't have to be perfect in all these areas before God can use or direct us – **but remember God's perspective on what's really important.**

Myth #4 - There's always a perfect, straight path...

Do you believe that God has one perfect straight path for your life? Although there is some truth to the statement, let's challenge the 'straight path' idea. For example, look at Joseph's life (Genesis 37ff)– sold into slavery by his brothers, thrown into prison and eventually elevated to a position of great power by Pharaoh. Try Moses' life (Exodus 2ff) – given away by his mother, rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, murdered a man, spent years in the desert tending sheep, then called by God to lead His people out of Egypt to the promised land. These types of examples fill the Bible and Christian life. The point is that God may take us on what seems like detours, but He can use the lessons and foundations of those 'detours' for future responsibilities. The application is not to seek out 'detours' but to know God can use the past and what seems unexplainable for His glory.

Myth #5 - There is always one right answer...

Many of us desire to know God's direction. We pray something similar to, "God, should I go to _____ and take business or go to _____ and study English?" God may answer clearly or He may not.

Questions like these don't necessarily have a right or wrong answer. For instance, what if we want to obey God in how we dress? We agree with God's 'right and wrong' principle that we dress with modesty. But, what about the details within that – which colour socks does God want us to wear? Well, we could prayerfully wait and seek counsel on our sock choice or we could see this decision as a 'right or left' decision – where we are given responsible freedom to make a choice. Note: By definition, 'right or left' decisions are never contrary to God's Word.

For application to your direction after high school, God may guide us through principles in His Word, by the Holy Spirit directly, through wise godly counsel and make the direction clear. Or, God could see this choice as being one where you have responsible freedom to use your minds and make a right or left decision based on your interests, goals and resources. In other words, you choose. We need to keep in mind that God's main focus is that we walk in relationship with Him, etc. Remember too that if we do choose incorrectly, God is not unable to re-direct us.

Myth #6 - God is mute...

Have you ever prayed or hoped that God would make His will perfectly clear? Often, people pray for God's direction but never take time to listen. Other times, people very patiently and intently listen but don't hear anything. As a result, some people are led to believe that God is mute – that He cannot talk or communicate.

However, if you study the Bible you will encounter example after example of God communicating to his people. He's used angels, dreams, visions, audible voice, and a burning bush to name just a few means of communication. Although we may not have had these experiences, we also shouldn't rule them out.

Also, Jesus indicated that he has given us a guide in life – the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said, "*But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth...*". (John 16:13) The Holy Spirit can communicate as in previous examples or through God's Word – the Bible, the counsel of others, circumstances and our conscience.

If you are seeking God's direction, we are told to ask God for wisdom. As James 1:5-6 records, "*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him/her.*" After asking, we need to listen. Taking a regular Sabbath time for reflection is a

great discipline that helps listening. Also, the practice of journaling your prayers can help you discover God's direction over time.

Seeking counsel from wise people is important! As Proverbs 12:15 states, *"The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise person listens to advice."* (Proverbs 12:15). Who are 2-3 wise and godly counsellors in your life that you could talk with about your decisions?

What about a pastor, youth worker, Christian adult mentor or relative? Be sure to avoid gathering counsellors around you who only tell you what you want to hear.

Warning on 'FLEECES': In Judges 6, Gideon asks God to confirm His plan through a test – making a wool fleece wet and then dry. Although God did respond in this case, God doesn't have to answer 'fleeces' or tests that we make for Him. In fact, in Luke 1 when Zechariah was told that he and Elizabeth were to have a son – John the Baptist, Zechariah asked the angel to confirm God's already clear call. Gabriel, the angel was offended by Zechariah's demand and made him mute until John's birth.

The application for us is this: making tests for God to confirm His will isn't a sure thing – in fact, it may offend God or lead to His silence.

Myth #7 - God will reveal His Master Plan for our entire life all at once...

If God would tell you today would you want to know His specific Master Plan for your entire life? Although some people like a sense of 'control' about the details of their future, most people would likely be overwhelmed at God's intentions for the future. Also, if we knew all the details of the road ahead, we would lose our sense of anticipation, dependence and even obedience to God.

As a result, although God has clearly shared the 'big picture' of the future in the Bible, He often works on a 'need to know' basis on the details of life. Take Mary's story for example (see Luke 1). God told her that she would conceive a very special son, but He didn't tell her all that this son would be or do – for her good and for others, it was on a 'need to know basis'. Sometimes God may limit our understanding for our own good, to depend on Him and to give us choice in obedience.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

Psalm 119:105

Myth #8 - God is just one priority among many...

An adult mentor once asked a university student: "Are you a student who happens to be a Christian or a Christian who happens to be a student?" In other words, this leader was asking me, "What's your main thing – being a

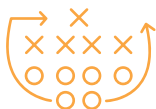
Christian or being a student?” That student realized God was neither first nor central to everything else. From God’s perspective, if He is just one of many influencing factors, why should He direct us to a specific place - especially if the only person we are representing is ourselves? That student remembered that **our life mission is to represent Him – wherever we go and whatever we do.**

To apply this truth - that our life mission is to represent God – why are you choosing your career choice? Is it out of pressure from family, friends or church? Is it out of desire for money, safety, security or prestige? Is it just out of your own interest? Following Christ means putting Him first and central to everything else. Our primary motivation to enter into a profession shouldn’t be pressure or a desire for things or self-interest, but a commitment first and foremost to serve Christ through that profession.

Myth #9 - Life Begins When We Finish School...

Have you ever consciously or subconsciously said, “When I’m done _____ , then I will _____ with God.” Often, in the pressures of academics and life, students say, “When I’m done school, then I will get serious with God (or have time of intimacy with God, or give my resources to God, etc.). This temptation takes God out of our present and puts Him off until some time in the future. Unfortunately, by making a habit now (to put God off), we are setting the foundation for a habit later (we keep putting God off).

God desires that we have an intimate relationship with Him NOW. He desires that our character be transformed NOW. He desires that we are part of a local church NOW. He desires that we serve Him whatever we are doing and wherever we are doing it NOW. Practising this habit NOW will make our days eternally significant both now and in the future.



Strategies for Discerning God's Roadmap...

The following are helpful tips as you prepare for and make decisions...

Preparing for Decisions...

Get More Information and Get It Early – A wise old saying is, “a problem well-defined is half solved.” To define a problem or issue, we need good information. If you are trying to make future plans about your education, get as much information as you can on programs, prerequisites, schools, etc. See p.26 for more examples.

Try, Learn, Experiment – If you think you want to be a _____, then learn more about this vocation through co-op or volunteer or summer work experiences, having a coffee with someone who is linked to this occupation, etc.

Keep Your Options Open – Sometimes we make decisions in the present that influence future options. For instance, if you stop taking science courses after grade 10 biology, the likelihood of becoming a medical doctor is much more difficult. It's important to look ahead at how our decisions today impact our future options.

Develop Personal Mission Statement and Values (life roles) – Developing a life mission statement or at least clarifying your values in life can help give direction to your life and decisions.

For Moments Of Decision...

Sleep/Rest – Sleep helps us to think well and act with more clarity and less stress. If you are weary, add 1-2 hours of extra sleep each night for several days. You may be amazed at how the real issues and direction begin to crystallize after good rest.

Get Away to Reflect – It can be hard to make long-term decisions when we live in the midst of relentless short-term pressures and distractions. Get away for an afternoon, a day or a weekend. The change of scenery and quiet will help you to get a new and clear perspective.

Although this may sound strange, a daytime walk through a cemetery can also help to put your decision into perspective. This walk can demonstrate that your decision isn't as important as you thought or it can help you decide “do I want to look back on my life and have chosen this...”.

Personal Gifting, Personality and History – Re-reading your journals or reflecting on your gifting, personality and history can help you understand how God may have been lining up your past for your future. For example, Steve Brown recalls, “As I was trying to discern God’s call as a pastor, I looked back on my life. During that reflection, I discovered that even while not a follower of Christ, God was preparing me as a communicator (in high school on student council, at business school) and then as a follower of Christ (travelling with a well-known Christian communicator). Seeing this trend in my past helped me to see God directing me in the future to communicating His truth vocationally”.

Key Questions – Ask yourself the following...

- How clear has God been? How hard have you been listening?
- What are your real motives?
- How does this impact Intimacy, Character, Community, Ministry?
- How does this decision line-up with your life/ministry mission?
- How does this decision line-up with your values?
- Counsel: What have your godly and wise counsellors shared?
- Which path seems to best fit your gifting and personality?
- Can you see God lining up your history? Re-read Journals

Decision Tools

- **Write It Down** – Sometimes the simple act of writing down your thoughts, options, etc. can bring clarity
- **Pros/Cons List** – Get a piece of paper, write the decision at the top, divide the paper in two – one side being the ‘pros’ or benefits and the other side being the ‘cons’ or costs. Honestly list the benefits and costs. This process can help us compare, reflect and prioritize.
- **Clarity Council** – Ask 3-6 wise and godly counsellors to join you for a time of prayer and input. Share your situation/decision, pray together and hear their input. Beyond this decision, you should seek to keep connected to these counsellors – keeping them updated, asking for prayer and input.



Communicating with Parents...

You may or may not have a clear sense of your future direction, but how can you best communicate these plans with your parents? Here are some tips:

- **Understand Your Parent/Guardian's Investment**

Your parents may or may not tell you how they used to change your diapers, sacrificed to be parents and all they have done for you over your childhood years. Whether you've heard that too many times or not, remember that in most cases your parents/guardians have invested greatly in you. As a result, whether they show it well or not, they care deeply about your future.

- **Respect Parent Experience, Wisdom and Opinion**

Your parents/guardian have years of life experience and wisdom from making good choices and not-so-good choices. Try to see their opinion as a benefit to you and/or at least respect their opinion (even when its different from your own). Be very certain of God's direction if you choose to act contrary to your parents' wisdom.

- **Establish Parent Biases**

Everyone has biases – including parents. Often, our biases are based on our own life experiences and values. For instance, if your parents felt they should have gone right to college after high school rather than work, then they may encourage you to go directly to college, etc. In any case, it's important to try to discern the biases of your parents and to separate the wisdom from the bias.

- **Build Credibility**

In seeking support from anyone on anything, you need credibility. Credibility is especially important if you are seeking to do something that you know isn't a favourite plan of your parents. To develop credibility you should demonstrate by example over time your interest and commitment to a certain direction. Also, gather good information, develop a reasonable plan and invest yourself (financially, time, etc.) in the plan.

- **Communicate**

Decisions about your future are adult decisions, so you need to communicate like an adult. This means making undisrupted time to discuss your passion and plans with your parents. Try to have a foundation of credibility, good information, a reasonable plan and demonstrate how you are investing yourself.

- **Pray for Parents**

Being a parent/guardian isn't easy. Pray for and encourage your parents as often as you can. Pray too that God would prepare them and give them wisdom as they communicate with you about your future. Pray that God would give your parents and yourself unity in your direction.

• Follow Your Master

Ultimately, followers of Christ must follow Christ – whatever the costs. If you are clear on God's call for your life, have humbly, respectfully and credibly communicated with your parents, this may mean respectfully agreeing to disagree with your parents about your future direction.



Creatively Manage Costs

Postsecondary education is costly. Based on a small survey of undergraduate students, all were expected to have some level of debt by graduation ranging from \$3000 to \$21,000, averaging \$10,500 per person. Then, there is the added possibility of additional education for advanced degrees plus the potential of marriage to another student who has their own debt load.

Since debt can be a stranglehold, listed below are a number of ideas to creatively manage education costs:

Start Saving Early - A number of savings programs are available for parents, grandparents and students to start saving early. Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) can also provide some matching government contributions. It's never too early or too late to start saving.

Employment Options - Without a doubt, high school students have significant academic, developmental, church and extracurricular opportunities and responsibilities. Therefore, students need to balance part-time work during the school year.

However, students can generate and save money through part-time jobs or summer jobs.

University/College students can often also find part-time employment—sometimes on campus. Senior students often work as Teacher Assistants or Residence Dons/Advisors.

Also, to avoid the debt trap, some students must consider taking time away from academics to earn money for school expenses. This time away from academics can be a great opportunity for ministry, personal growth, etc.

Scholarships

CBOQ Youth Scholarships

Through the legacy of the Baptist Leadership Education Centre, a limited number of scholarships in the amount of \$500.00 are available to young adults who are pursuing undergraduate post-secondary education — 'to live a life of

impact – wherever they are and whatever they do'. (More information available at www.cboqyouth.ca.)

Other Scholarship Connections

www.studentawards.com: provides an on-line database with search engine connected to many educational institutions.

Also check-out: www.canlearn.ca

<http://loranscholar.ca/apply/>

MacLean's Guide to Canadian Universities contains a detailed listing of available scholarships through universities.

Other possible sources:

- Your parents' workplace or union (many offer scholarships for various programs)
- Your high school or workplace
- Various community groups and service clubs

Other creative ways of raising funds:

- Your church community or family could pledge monthly support (i.e. \$50/month/sponsor)
- Internship at a church



Connecting with God Away From Home

The changes and pressures associated with college/university life (like dealing with newly surfaced faith doubts, temptations, new freedoms, academic pressures and new surrounding) make staying connected to God one of the great challenges for students.

Listed below are some practical suggestions to help you stay connected with God during the college/university years:

Local Church Connection - There is simply no substitute for the local church. Followers of Jesus need to be connected to a local church. To assist pastors, parents and students, CBOQ Youth is available to provide contact information for CBOQ churches in college/university/work settings.

Simply email: cboqyouth@baptist.ca and take some steps to connect with a local church ahead of moving.

Internships and Slingshots - CBOQ Youth seeks to train, provide relational connections and opportunities to serve in ministry at a number of ministry events (i.e. Blizzard and Avalanche retreats in winter). For more information, contact cboqyouth@baptist.ca.



Christian Options

“Great Questions to Ask Before Choosing A School” (p. 26) is a great help in trying to determine the kind of school that would be best for you.

With the question, “Should I go to a Christian or Secular School?”, there are arguments and proponents on both sides. Some of the major points to consider are:

Christian schools can provide opportunities to develop a stronger foundation in God’s Word and receive education from a Christian worldview. Christian schools can be a ‘safer’ environment where answers are easier to find, mentors are available and can be a great preparation for the marketplace or secular academic institutions.

Proponents of secular education would argue that there are tremendous opportunities for living out your faith in the real and tough world of a university or college campus. Also, although Christian educational institutions are making great strides, some would argue that the transferability and marketability of many secular degrees is greater than a degree from a Christian institution.

In terms of researching specific schools, ministries and programs, the following resources may be helpful:

- The website www.campusstarter.com provides a portal to connect with Christian colleges as well as share information about the Christian universities and colleges.
- For information on Canadian universities and colleges, pick up a copy of MacLean’s Guide to Canadian Universities. This guide ranks universities, provides facts and figures on programs, behind the scenes info on campus life, financial tips and a primer for international students. A similar guide is available at most bookstores for colleges.

What’s the difference between Bible Colleges and Christian Liberal Arts Universities?

The basic difference is the type of diploma you end up with. Bible Colleges offer certificates or Bachelor degrees that are recognized within specific circles (e.g. Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges). Christian Liberal Arts Universities

offer programs in both religious studies and “secular” fields (e.g. psychology, literature, math) whose degrees are recognized by most secular institutions. Be aware of requirements for post-graduate education if that is a concern to you!

Why Consider a 1-Year Program?

Various reasons exist in support of 1-year programs:

- to personal growth as a Christian
- to stretch one's personal horizons
- to find greater input into future direction
- to give a year to God in personal service
- to take a break from academics and experience a different locale (culture, geography, etc.)

Different 1-year programs meet different needs. If you're considering this, then see what fits best.

- Will the distance from home be a benefit to me?
- Will this help to stretch me?



Great Questions to Ask Before Choosing a School

Before You Start

Though it seems the deadlines for applications press you to make decisions quickly, take every effort to be well prepared to meet the goal set by God. Don't be over anxious in trying to get there too quickly. Instead, make sure you prepare yourself well, including being prepared as a whole person (academic, career, spiritual and emotional preparation). Also, you're not alone in this journey. Talk with God, your parents, your friends and anyone else you trust in this whole process. Consider asking a Christian adult to be a mentor in this process with you. CBOQ Youth has resources for mentoring at cboqyouth.ca/postsecondary.

Here are some considerations in your decision-making:

List All Your Important Factors

In other words, what's important to you? A school's reputation? The program they offer? The size of the community? Tuition costs? Personal growth? A risky, boundary expanding experience? Does the school help you to meet

your intended goal? Are you athletic? Do they provide solid athletic resources? How are the food services and other services? If it is a secular university, investigate Christian organizations on campus (like InterVarsity, Asian Christian organizations, etc.) If you can't get to the school location some schools have virtual tours on their website.

Regardless, begin researching through websites and other literature. Ask your family and friends how they made their decisions. Use resources such as MacLean's Guide to Canadian Universities to get some helpful tips.

Start Asking Questions

While you are researching, start asking questions about some of the following issues:

Graduate Opinions

Those who actually went there have unique insights on a school's reputation. Start asking:

- Do you know anyone who went to that school?
- What did they get out of their year?
- What are they doing now?
- What are the possibilities open to me if I go there too?

Program

In choosing a school, one of the most important factors is the type of program that the school offers. This will be the most influential factor in deciding where to go, so take some extra time and prayer on this matter. Start asking:

- What will I get out of this?
- How does this help me to accomplish my life goals?
- Is this the best program to meet my goals?
- Would different schools or experiences help me better?
- How will this prepare me for what God wants me to do?

Residence and Community life

The school or program you attend will probably also become home to you for at least 8 months of the year. Obviously, you want to feel welcomed and at home. We recommend you take a campus tour to see.

Faculty

You may not think of this, but faculty is about as important as the program you're in. Who teaches you will influence your learning and your education. A student who graduates, whether it is from a 1, 2 or 4 year program will be 'imprinted' by their teachers. So choose your teachers well. Start asking:

- Who will be teaching me?
- Do I respect the instructors?

- Are the instructors qualified to teach the courses I want to take?
- What is the instructor's world view/faith perspective?
- Will they be open and understanding of my faith and faith related questions in their class?
- Can I learn best in an environment that is open to my faith related questions?
- Can I learn in an environment that is opposed to my faith based answers?

Academic Requirements

It is important that you are aware of the academic requirements of a program, though exceptions are often allowed.

- Do you need to have a certain average? Do you have it?
- Do different programs require different requirements?
- Are you willing to accept a different program if you are not accepted into your first choice?
- Does the school offer the opportunity to begin "on probation"?

Career Goals

Ultimately your ministry involves your vocation. Start asking:

- Is this degree/program enough to prepare me for what I want to do with my life?
- Will anyone hire me with just this degree?
- What education do others who are doing what I want to do have?
- Are there opportunities to gain practical experience while I am studying?

Accreditation/Recognition

Where can your chosen program take you after you finish? This is where accreditation and recognition of your credits and diploma come into play. Start asking:

- What can I do with my diploma when I'm finished?
- Can I transfer into another school or programme?
- Am I taking this course for academic purposes or for the experience and personal growth?
- If I decide to pursue a masters degree can I do a masters level studies with my degree?

Tuition Cost

Money, though it is not the most important thing, will factor into your decision. Start asking:

- How will I pay for this?
- Does the school offer any assistance, scholarships, employment opportunities?

- Will student assistance programs (government scholarships, bursaries or loans) be applicable?
- Will the career I intend on beginning after school justify the cost of education?

Size

The size of an institution is critical. While large schools are often seen as a disadvantage, size does often indicate choice. Larger schools are able to offer programs that smaller schools cannot for economic reasons. Sometimes large schools offer more specialization. However, sometimes smaller schools also specialize, and most often provide smaller classroom settings with more personal help from staff. Start asking:

- What kind of environment am I looking for?
- Do I want to be in a place with thousands of other people or do I want a smaller school?

Location

The school's location can make a great difference. Start asking:

- Is it within a comfortable distance?
- How far am I willing to travel to get what I feel I need and desire?
- Am I comfortable in an urban, suburban or rural setting?

Campus Tours

One great way of checking out a campus is by visiting them, whether on one of their scheduled open houses or just contacting them for a visit. Check out their facilities and residences, sit in on a class, and chat with faculty and definitely with students. See what they think of the school. Ask about shortcomings (because there are bound to be some). Also determine if the students who are at the school are similar to you – are they pursuing similar interests?

You've Begun Answering the Questions

So now you have an idea of what you're looking for. Most university and college applications are due in November. Each Bible College has their own deadline, so ask them. Now you'll need to start preparing to go wherever God leads you. That includes keeping your grades up, making sure you send in everything the school requires for admissions, and preparing financially to pay for it all. There are lots of scholarships and assistance out there. This booklet contains a few resources. Check with your high school to see what they offer.

CBOQ Youth is a resource available to you alongside your youth leader. We are here to offer assistance as you prayerfully consider your next steps.



APPENDIX: HOW CHURCHES (both sending and receiving) CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS

Sending Church

Too often, the busyness of church life and the unpredictable schedules of young adults make them unintentionally, 'out of sight, out of mind.' You can encourage your local church to provide on-going ministry to students heading to college/university, the workplace or ministry training.

Here are some practical ideas:

Commission

Whether they're going away for school or staying home to work, this is a new chapter in their life. One way to continue their faith development and to mark this new chapter is to commission them into another different faith community for the next few months. Encourage them to approach it like a cross-cultural missionary, to learn from this second family and to return with new insights that could be helpful in your church's ministries. CBOQ Youth has a template for a memo of understanding to help establish that relationship with the receiving church.

Bulletin Board

Create a young adults bulletin board in your church. Include a picture, short information update and contact information for each student in your congregation.

Pray

From the pulpit, in small groups, Sunday School, youth ministry, prayer meeting—pray for individual students in their new learning, ministry and challenges.

Encourage

Students love email, mail and encouragement packages. Remind students that you are praying for and thinking about them.

One critical time for students is during exams (often mid/late October, early December, mid/late February, early April). What a great encouragement and

testimony for students to receive an encouragement package! This could include: encouragement card, fun snacks, hot chocolate/tea, personal items (toothbrush, toothpaste, food coupons, etc.),

Communicate

Send church updates by email or mail. You could include a message CD/mp3. Online meeting places like Google Hangout, Facetime or Skype allow for real-time “face to face” conversations.

Celebrate

You can celebrate the return of students at Christmas break and end of April. Your creativity is your limit - you could host a “What’s it been like?” night with food provided. This would allow students to connect with old friends and may surface some areas for follow-up ministry. High school seniors may also benefit from hearing “What’s it been like?” through Sunday school or a special small group.

Receiving Church

If your church is located near a university or college, there are a number of possible ministry connections.

Here are some ideas:

Register with CBOQ Youth

Let us know how your church ministers to young adults, your services, location, ministry opportunities, contact information, etc. We will happily pass the information on to interested students. Email: cboqyouth@baptist.ca

Sharing Ministry - Partner with area churches to develop combined ministry to/with young adults.

Love Students - Our churches need to be sanctuaries in a challenging new world. Many students spell “LOVE” as “FOOD”. Since Sunday afternoons are a downtime for most students, could your congregation organize a post-service meal or have families ‘adopt’ students for meals, laundry, etc.?

What are some practical ways you can use your resources to reach out to students? Free parking, photocopying, free laundry, help moving, etc.?

International students and long-distance students have special needs at holidays. You could contact your local university or college Student Affairs or Student Union to help make some connections.

Internships— Although they may have limited time, many students have significant gifts and ministry experience. Internships could expand your ministry, connect a student in their area of giftedness and provide them with some financial assistance to offset their mounting debt loads. What 5 hr/week ministry opportunities are there for students in your midst?

“What do you want to do with your life?”

Does this question make you cringe? For many students, making this giant decision happens in the midst of a number of competing and significant pressures: from the number of choices available, competition, rising costs, and pressures from society, parents, friends, and culture.

After High School - A Guide for Students

is designed to assist students thinking about their future:

- Clarify Direction for the Future
- Communicate Well With Parents
- Creatively Manage Costs
- Connect with God Away From Home
- Consider Christian Options

ABOUT CBOQ YOUTH

CBOQ Youth seeks to serve God by developing and mobilizing our churches as they encourage today's youth in following Jesus. We believe that post-secondary decisions are an important part of that discipleship journey.

For more information see www.cboqyouth.ca.

