

TELOS

THE DESTINATION FOR NAZARENE HIGHER EDUCATION



Edited by Gregg A. Chenoweth and Barbara M. Ragan

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Kansas City, MO

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FOREWORD

Gregg A. Chenoweth

Pull up to the kitchen table. Let me introduce you. You don't know each other, but should. It's not because those across this table are famous. They have no posse, no brand. You won't see them on an infomercial. But you still ought to know them for an important reason: They are your family. Reader, meet writer. Writer, meet reader.

The church kin may be spread across generations, cultures, and nations, but they are grafted onto the same vine, sharing the same work, representing the tribe—your tribe—in places beyond. This family is not new or small. The Church of the Nazarene is now a century old with 1.7 million members in 160 nations, a denominational diaspora.

The family keeps learning. Since its birth, the denomination established schools everywhere, more than ten in the first decade. The man who titled the denomination “Nazarene” was a dean at the University of Southern California, and a Harvard University panel concluded that the denomination's churches are “inconceivable” apart from its schools.¹ Today, more than 50 educational institutions dot the globe, serving more than 30,000 students.

A little heads-up here: families worry about each other. In the beginning, we were small, strong on mission, but weak on credentials. By age 100, one wonders if we have so credentialed ourselves we've lost the founders' passion. Other denominational schools have gone that way before us. It's legendary. People sometimes lose their faith but keep their jobs.

Concerns abound these days. Consumerism in higher education chips away at our liberal arts' ideals. Theological fundamentalism and theological liberalism encroach on some academic areas. The andragogy demanded for adult student programs rubs against a historic practice with traditionally-aged, residential students. Costs are putting a Nazarene higher education out of reach for too many.

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Under such strain, some detect a fearsome beast: Secularization. Some defend their territory, blasting away with neo-conservatism. Others domesticate the monster, trying to make peace, by changing the proportion of lay and clergy trustees; decreasing the number of general education credits in theology; making chapel optional; loosening campus behavior covenants; or hiring people with stronger paper credentials than testimonies.

So, in December of 2009, a group of chief academic officers—aunts and uncles on the family tree, as it were—decided we ought to have a family meeting, via text, anyway.

This enterprise attempted to articulate the common “center pole” around which we stand, those theological and pedagogical commitments drawing us together. We decided against a focus on the “fence,” those tribal in-group and out-group markers. Once one knows the center, everyone can determine his or her proximity from it.

The result rests in your hands. It’s a family values document for our educational institutions, produced and reviewed by 51 faculty at 16 institutions from six countries. We certainly made use of volumes on the family mantel: a Core Values document for the Church of the Nazarene; a statement from the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* on higher education; a “key documents” collection of about 50 items in the blogosphere by Dr. E. LeBron Fairbanks, Educational Commissioner of the Church of the Nazarene; and several other thought groups’ documents and books. This manuscript widens our collection with a multi-institutional, multi-national declaration of educational aspirations.

It is named *telos* for the Greek term used in the New Testament to address the perfect end, or destination, for which Christians are designed. As Heb. 6:1 says, leave elementary things and go on to *telos*! We achieve this when we are perfectly aimed by God. His anointing completes our consecration and maturity in the faith.² As such, *telos* is unhampered by the limitations of the natural world because it is realized only by God’s grace.³ You might say life is validated by the worthiness of its destination.⁴

So, church family, aim well—end well! We’re not made

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for academic puzzles alone, because that ends in pluralism. Students would receive diplomas without becoming disciples. And we're not aimed for Christian environment alone. That ends in fragmented learning, where students graduate without adopting the Great Commandment to love the Lord with their mind. If we aim toward "faith integration" alone, which faith, which creed, which doctrine? That ends in generic curricula, curricula that "value values," without creed or anchor.

The church manual calls for its educational institutions to produce students with a coherent Wesleyan understanding of life, through all its disciplines. Wesleyanism has been described as *content*—such as prevenient grace, free will, entire sanctification, perfect love—and *process*, those interactive features of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.⁵ The pages further illustrate a *telos* focused on

- God's kingdom now, not remanded only to some abstract, future hope;
- The Holy Spirit's activity in course materials, people, and institutions, not confined to "religious" initiatives;
- Sacred and secular domains held by our omnipresent God;
- Co-laboring with God for an optimism of grace in students—a transformed nature—not forgiveness alone, which focuses on the pessimism of sin;
- Acceptance of the tensions of wide learning, not for mere "engagement" with knowledge, but Christian maturity.

So, the family is talking about where we're headed. It is our aspiration. The conversation itself is a "ministry of imagination,"⁶ hopeful, connected, compassionate talk that practices the presence of God in every situation, on every topic.

The volume is organized into three sections. The first provides theological and epistemological foundations. The second illustrates how those commitments are applied to particular academic disciplines. Finally, four Nazarene educators from various parts of the world balance these North American views with cultural commentary. ■

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ENDNOTES

¹ Jerry T. Lambert, Al T. Truesdale, and Michael W. Vail, "Identity and Relationship: Emerging Models in Higher Education, Church of the Nazarene" (conference presentation, Future

of Religious Colleges sponsored by Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University, October 2000).

²W. T. Purkiser, Richard S. Taylor, and Willard H. Taylor, *God, Man, and Salvation* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1977), 480.

³Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972), 293.

⁴H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith & Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1988), 500.

⁵Timothy J. Crutcher, *The Crucible of Life: The Role of Experience in John Wesley's Theological Method* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2010), 216.

⁶Robert H. Woods Jr. and Paul D. Patton, *Prophetically Incorrect: A Christian Introduction to Media Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 28.

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SECTION ONE
TELOS FOUNDATIONS

ON BEING A CHRISTIAN

by Alan Lyke

CALLED UNTO HOLINESS

Christian Holiness in the Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition and the

Vocation of Nazarene Colleges and Universities

by Mark H. Mann

MISSIO DEI

Wesleyan-Holiness Missional Discipleship

in the Church of the Nazarene's Colleges and Universities

by Mark A. Maddix

WESLEYAN WAYS OF KNOWING AND DOING

by Timothy J. Crutcher

TWO PARTS OF A WHOLE

The Church of the Nazarene and Its Educational Institutions

by Mark C. Mountain

THE LASTING IMPACT OF NAZARENE EDUCATORS

by Linda Alexander

ON BEING A CHRISTIAN

Alan Lyke

[B]ut these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name.

—John 20:31, NASB

What does it mean when we say we are Christians? And how does being Christians impact our calling to be educators? In the process of drawing his gospel to a close, John summarized the essence

of the Christian faith. While we recognize we must listen to the whole of scripture, and we realize that there's more that can be said about being a Christian, if we were asked to sum up what it means to be a Christian with just one verse, the above text would serve us well. Everything that can be said about being a Christian includes this basic invitation and promise: "[Y]ou may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). Though this is familiar territory for us, as effective educators, we need to take some time to review what this key assertion means.

Our Christian journey begins when the Holy Spirit acts upon us, we respond to the tug of the Holy Spirit, and we become spiritually whole. Our Christian faith-life begins when we believe that to be spiritually whole includes belief in the Triune God. This God is the one whose Spirit reveals God's self through creation, through the history of the children of Israel, and ultimately through Jesus and the Body of Christ, the Church. This God is the one who makes it possible for us to recognize and respond to God's self-revelation, the God whose grace gives us the ability to believe.

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Our Christian faith-life progresses when we come to the place where we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, sent by the Father. God graciously sent Jesus, and Jesus fully embodied that grace as he fulfilled His mission in obedience and love. However, the final impact of their actions calls for belief on our part: an embracing of Jesus, an authentic, free response, empowered by the Holy Spirit, so that the life He has in mind for us can be ours. John wrote about this at the beginning of his gospel: “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11). Jesus waited then for them to believe; He waits now for us to believe.

It is important to remember that this believing is more than just rational consent. This believing involves the giving of ourselves to Jesus Christ and includes accepting His forgiveness, taking up His teachings, following His leadings, and being living witnesses of Him as the way, the truth, and the life. This

believing results in our re-creation as believing ones, in the transformation of our very being. This believing results in our being united with others who are part of Christ’s timeless community, in our being birthed into the eternal family of God. Again from John’s gospel, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name . . .” (John 1:12). We become Christians, Christ-like ones, and begin to realize the fullness of the life that comes with being His when we believe in Him.

Our Christian faith-life matures as we continue in our believing in Jesus Christ. We mature through our full surrender to the purifying presence of the Holy Spirit, who now dwells in us. We mature through the enlightening of the scriptures as God speaks to us through His written Word. We mature



through our fellowship with other believers, with whom in community we are the Body of Christ. We mature through our obedience as we follow the leading of the Spirit of Christ. We mature through our trust in Jesus as we face the challenges that come with living in a broken world. We mature through our faith in the promise that God will hear us when we pray. We mature through our hope as we believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will return just as he said he would.

And for those of us who teach in Nazarene colleges and universities, our Christian faith-life also matures as we serve as academics and educators . . . because God has called us to minister in these ways. We teach because we are Christians who are following the path we believe God has called us to take, each of us seeking to critically and creatively discern Christ's truth in all academic disciplines. We mature as we research and teach others what is important to us, what we have studied to understand, and what we are passionate about others knowing. We mature as we are illumined by the Holy Spirit, as we discover with our students what God was and is doing in our fields of study. We mature as disciples as we faithfully teach and learn with our students, growing and living together as a part of the Body of Christ while pursuing our academic disciplines.

As one Nazarene educator put it, "Christian education is faith expressed precisely through learning and living. To believe is to learn and to live; truly to learn and authentically to live is to express faith." The same educator went on to say,

We simply go about our teaching in the calm confidence that today, the Spirit is calling us and all of our students to himself and will use our work to do it. We are confident that God is taking today seriously and taking us and our students seriously. For that reason, we approach our disciplines with discipline and reverence, for they are and they will be means of grace.⁷

So, what does it mean when we say we are Christians? It means we have believed and are believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and our lives reflect the same. And how does our being Christians impact our calling to be educators? It means we have embraced and are embracing our

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God-given vocation, as evidenced by how we apply ourselves to our fields of study and give ourselves to those we teach. Embodying our callings, we fulfill this admonition attributed to St. Teresa of Avila:

Christ has
No body now on earth but yours;
No hands but yours;
No feet but yours;
Yours are the eyes
Through which Christ's compassion for the world
Is to look out;
Yours are the feet
With which he is to go about
Doing good;
Yours are the hands
With which he is to bless now.

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⁷ Paul M. Bassett, Re-Wesleyanizing Nazarene Higher Education. <http://nazareneblogs.org/lebronfairbanks/projects>.

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CALLED UNTO HOLINESS:

Christian Holiness in the Wesleyan-Holiness
Tradition and the Vocation of Nazarene
Colleges and Universities

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There is no doctrine more central to the Church of the Nazarene's tradition and mission than Christian holiness; its propagation is to a large extent the *raison d'être* of our denomination and its institutions of higher education.⁸

Unfortunately, teaching and preaching about sanctification have recently declined. However, it is our contention that the doctrine and experience of Christian holiness are absolutely central to the Christian gospel and must remain central to the mission of Nazarene higher education.

A proper biblical doctrine of holiness begins with the Triune God's holy and creative love, expressed fully in the person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God (John 1:1-14). Through Christ, God created the universe in order to express divine goodness and love. He created human beings in His image that we might reflect divine love through worship of God and care for each other and creation (see Gen. 1-2, esp. 1:26-31). Because of sin, the image of God in humanity is corrupted, impairing our capacity to reflect God's love, with terrible consequences for all of life (Gen. 3:10-19; Rom. 8:19-22). But, through the grace of God, freely given in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and actualized

through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are reconciled to God, the image of God is restored, and our ability to reflect God's love is appropriately renewed (2 Cor. 5:16-20).

As John Wesley recognized, this restoration, or "new creation," comes with some significant complications (see Wesley's sermon "Christian Perfection"). Although redeemed by grace and empowered for Christ-likeness, we remain finite creatures embed-

ded in and profoundly affected by interpersonal relationships, communities, and both social and natural systems; yet we are subject to sin's corruption. This reality defines the great multidimensional challenge and vocation of the Christian and the Church. That is, we are called to be instruments of God's reconciling and sanctifying grace, overcoming sin wherever it might be found. And, as an extension of the Church, Nazarene colleges and universities have a special role to play in this ministry of reconciliation.

The holiness tradition has often spoken of the fulfillment of this ministry in the way that Jesus did: We are to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-34). In these terms, the special role of Nazarene higher education in fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation becomes clear: *Nazarene colleges and universities exist chiefly to form Christians and a Church that will more perfectly love God and neighbor, including all of creation* (Rom. 8:21-23). Every aspect of the Christian university should ultimately serve this aim!

We affirm that all truth is God's; that God has endowed us with minds to inquire and reason critically; and that there



is no topic, idea, or question that cannot be addressed within the community of Christian faith, and especially within a Christian college or university. Indeed, Christ calls us to



love God with our *whole minds* and therefore undertake the most open and wide-ranging educational inquiry imaginable, trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

What we advocate are not institutions of higher learning that restrict edu-

cational opportunities because of their holiness mission, but instead institutions that *pursue an appropriate ordering of their activities around their core mission*. That is, we do not understand the *telos* of education to be learning itself nor the formation of persons who will make more money, achieve greater professional success, or be more effective servants to society in some vague, ultimately vacuous, sense. Rather, we wish our students to study scripture and theology that they might understand the vibrancy of their spiritual heritage and better hear the Word of God spoken through scripture and tradition; to study the natural sciences that they might find a deeper appreciation for the wonder and richness of creation; to study the social sciences that they might have a better understanding of the complexity and contingency of the social world we inhabit and the extent to which it has been corrupted by sin; to study the humanities that they might develop a deeper appreciation for the human experience of both sin and grace and develop the ability to think critically and communicate effectively; to study the arts that they might find their imaginations inspired and discover means for lifting the human spirit

in its celebration of the Author of creativity; and so on, all of which will empower them for life-long service *within and for Christ's Church*.

We also affirm that holiness universities must treat education as comprehensive and integrative. The incarnation, in which the eternal Word of God has become flesh and entered fully into creation, brings together the multidimensionality of life into a complete whole, as does the Greatest Commandment. The task of Christian education is not merely that of expanding the mind or the spirit, but both intertwined with care of the body. In the same sense that overemphasizing disciplinary distinctives distorts the true unity of creation and practically undermines the educational process, the sharp bifurcation of mind and heart, of classroom and chapel, is caustic to the integrated whole of the person and life and therefore should be foreign to the aims of a holiness education.

Finally, with John Wesley we affirm that there are a great number of corporate and individual practices that Jesus' disciples should deliberately undertake through which God's sanctifying grace works—what Wesley called the “means of grace”—including chiefly faithful and regular practice of the sacraments; corporate worship; participation in small groups; study and reading of scripture; works of mercy and compassion; self-denial; and education. We contend that our colleges and universities will fulfill their great calling only when they are understood to be covenantal communities in which *every* aspect of institutional life is treated as a potential means of grace.⁹ ■

ENDNOTES

⁸ Church of the Nazarene, *Manual 2009-13* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 2009), 5-6.

⁹ See also Mark Maddix's essay, footnote 2.

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