

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION:  
HISTORIC INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION DOCUMENTS CONTINUE TO  
CHALLENGE US

Tammy Condon

Administrative Assistant for Strategic Projects,  
International Board of Education, Church of the Nazarene

In the Church of the Nazarene, with a commitment of more than 100 years of higher education, the concept of “global” education is more than an *en vogue* propaganda. Quality, Christian higher education remains the standard raised beside evangelism and compassion as the heart beat of the denomination (Manual 2005-2009, p. 25).

Currently, 54 Nazarene colleges, universities and seminaries encircle the globe. The International Board of Education (IBOE) for the Church of the Nazarene has the responsibility of providing advocacy, support, evaluation and networking for these institutions. According to Education Commissioner E. LeBron Fairbanks, this system of IBOE schools “is resolute in shaping Christlike disciples and servant-leaders for life-long service and global impact” (<http://www.nazarene.org/education/tabdisplay.aspx>). This is as it should be, as it was at the genesis of our denomination as Phineas Bresee (1915) in his final address at Pasadena College described this work of the educational institutions of the Church of the Nazarene, “to see that our students are led into the holy of holies and filled with all fullness of God” (inside middle column). As it has continued with each generation of educators, with Bertha Munro (1948), Dean of Eastern Nazarene College (1923-1957) stating simply, “We purpose to produce young people who, knowing something, also believe something” (p. 4).

It is a simple mandate – one that has formed a consistent thread through the historic education documents of the Church of the Nazarene which span from Bresee’s 1915 address to Fairbanks’ most recent address to the International Higher Education Council, June 2009. While in practice and in documents, each institution develops and grows indigenously within the context it serves, however, there are clear expectations of Nazarene colleges, universities and seminaries regardless of their location on the planet. Bresee (1915) outlined the guiding principles for the development of our educational institutions as intentionally:

- 1) establishing the Word of God as its foundation which is woven throughout the comprehensive curriculum of each institution
  - 2) incorporating the highest quality scholarship
  - 3) developing the character of students – Godly, holy, transformed character
- (center back).

While General Superintendent J.B. Chapman, speaking to General and District Superintendents in 1944, focused the education portion of his *Nazarene Manifesto* on the development of preachers, especially through the founding of its seminary, it is clear from other education leaders, including Bertha Munro, that there is an important place in Nazarene education for liberal arts institutions built on the foundation of Christian holiness. The thread that flows through each of these documents is that whatever level of

education – primary, high school, college, graduate school or beyond or in ministerial training, vocational training, or liberal arts – it must be Christian at its core, high quality in every aspect of its scholarship, and producing graduates who know Christian holiness as a real and personal experience that becomes an integral part of what they take out into the workplace as they leave the institution.

Most recently, the education commissioner for the Church of the Nazarene, E. LeBron Fairbanks, has inspired the gathering of historical Nazarene documents that will tell the story of Nazarene Global Education and serve as a resource to higher education leaders as they guide their unique institutions down a path that connects all the IBOE schools.

You are invited to participate in this vital collection of historic, international higher education documents for the Church of the Nazarene. First, we want to invite you to visit Dr. Fairbanks' blog <http://nazareneblogs.org/lebronfairbanks/> and read the accumulating collection of documents under the “Higher Ed Docs” tab. Check back often as new documents are added regularly. There are some great papers already on the list including: Paul Bassett's “Re-Wesleyanizing Nazarene Higher Education” and William Greathouse's “Nazarene Theological Education.”

Secondly, after you have looked at the list of documents, begin suggesting other historical documents that you believe fit the category. We are interested in adding documents that describe the establishment, development and key points in the journey of the Nazarene schools globally, including important speeches, such as presidential inaugural addresses.

The point of this exercise is not simply to see what can be collected, but to begin to understand more fully the dynamics of 100 years of international higher education for the Church of the Nazarene. The documents will become a collection to resource, encourage and inspire the next generation of leaders as they continue the fulfillment of the call to Nazarene higher education. As Paul Bassett concluded in his 1985 speech to the Faith, Learning and Living Conference at Point Loma, “We have a splendid heritage, our present finds us reasonably competent and intellectually healthy, our future may just be broader and grander, by the grace of God and for the sake of Christ, than we dare imagine. To whom much has been given, of them much shall be required” (pg. 37).

## References

- Bassett, Paul (1985). "Re-Weslyanizing Nazarene Higher Education" Paper presented at the Faith, Learning and Living Conference, June 18-20, 1985, Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, California.
- Bresee, P. F. (1915). "The Educational Work of the Church of the Nazarene", Last Educational Address of Dr. P. F. Bresee at Pasadena College Chapel, Recognition Day, September 2, 1915. Pasadena, California.
- Chapman, J. B. (1944). "A Nazarene Manifesto", Presented to the Superintendents' Conference, January 5-6, 1944, Kansas City, Missouri.
- Munro, Bertha (1948). "A Philosophy of Education", A discussion prepared for the commission of Education authorized by the Twelfth General Assembly and used as the basis for the preparation of a tentative statement of a philosophy of Education for the Church of the Nazarene.