Identity and Relationship
Emerging Models in Higher Education
Church of the Nazarene

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The Church of the Nazarene is now approaching its first centenary. Education has played a pivotal role since the denomination's beginning. Its educational institutions continue to be central to the church's self-understanding and mission. This paper offers an overview of the symbiotic relationship between the Church of the Nazarene and its colleges and universities in the United States. The paper does this by (1) articulating the vision that informs college and university education in the Church of the Nazarene. (2) It presents a historical sketch, and (3) a look at education in the denomination today. Next, the paper (4) discusses the strengths of Nazarene education, (5) projects what can be realistically anticipated in the future, and (6) then examines some of the major challenges that face Nazarene education in America.

I. The Vision that Informs College and University education in the Church of the Nazarene

The vision that informs college and university education in the Church of the Nazarene has two distinguishing dimensions, one *soteriological* and the other *ecclesiological.*

A. The Soteriological Dimension.

The Church of the Nazarene is part of the Wesleyan theological tradition. The Wesleyan estimate of the Christian faith intentionally informs the denomination's

educational enterprise. Characteristic of the Wesleyan tradition is a confidence that the Christian gospel of forgiveness and transformation is intended for all persons, not for a preordained segment of humankind. Also characteristic of Wesleyanism is the belief that long before a person is even aware of it, the gracious God has already reached them and is drawing them to himself.

The Wesleyan branch of the Christian faith is marked by a confidence that a Christian should submit all dimensions of human existence to the process of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Richard Niebuhr was correct in his assessment of John Wesley when he associated Wesley with the fifth of the famous five types, "Christ the transformer of culture." Wesleyans do not understand this to promote either religious imperialism or political domination. Historically they have no interest in religious, political or intellectual coercion. Instead, in their teaching and preaching they characteristically rely upon persuasion by the Holy Spirit. They believe that the most effective apologetic is the convincing work of the Holy Spirit, and human lives that bear the impress of the resurrected and reigning Christ. When properly informed regarding their theological tradition, Wesleyans can bear witness to Christ in accordance with the historic Christian creeds even while living intelligibly in a pluralistic world.

In bearing witness to, and when articulating, their faith, Wesleyans rely upon Scripture preeminently, and upon tradition, reason and experience. Along with the Apostle Paul, they believe that all of our human members, in both their individual and social dimensions, should be continuously submitted to transformation (Rom. 6: 15-23), in harmony with the new humanity that has appeared in Christ.

So Wesleyans characteristically view all persons, the social forms in which they live, and their aesthetic, intellectual, technical and moral pursuits, as lying within the range of the Christian vision. While not being naive about the tenacity of evil in its individual and corporate forms, Wesleyans evince an optimism of grace with reference to cosmic transformation. In this sense they have much in common with the Roman Catholic thinkers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner.

Because they believe that all persons are the objects of divine grace and that its *telos* is comprehensive in scope, Wesleyans respect the dignity and potentiality of all persons without reference to class, gender, ethnicity, etc. We believe that the Gospel of God forever and inviolably establishes the dignity of all persons. We believe that the Gospel dispels all artificial distinctions between persons that have been imposed by ideologies and institutions. To all persons everywhere the full riches of the new humanity apply. With the Apostle Paul, we believe that in Christ old things have passed away and that all things have become new (2 Cor. 5: 17). Christ is the world's future.

To be characteristically Wesleyan is to view the world sacramentally. All of human life can and ought to become a vehicle for receiving and expressing the Holy. The intellect for example, is not to be feared or repressed. Rather, under tutelage by Christ who is the Divine Logos, and who authors the human logos, the mind should be developed and utilized to its full potential in service to God and all of God's creation. The same can be said of aesthetics, technology, commerce, and the political order.

Following directly from this vision is a conviction that to achieve its purpose education must be holistic by design and implementation. John Bowling, President of Olivet Nazarene University, articulates this spirit: "Our mission is not simply to deliver a

certain number of sequential courses so that a student might 'accumulate' an education. Our mission is not the transfer of information. Nor is it indoctrination, for that matter. Out mission is transformation. . . . Transformation rests on the essential issue of who a person is, not just what he or she may know. Our mission recognizes the difference between knowledge and wisdom. . . ."[1]

B. The Ecclesiological Dimension.

The soteriological dimension shows up in the organic relationship between the Church of the Nazarene and its colleges and universities, a relationship that is intentional, not accidental. The denomination believes that its colleges and universities concretely express or embody the church in one of its essential forms, and that education should serve the new humanity of which Christ is the head. The denomination does not "own" colleges and universities that are its functional utilities. Rather, they are, as one denominational leader put it, "the church in education."[2] One university president succinctly captures the denomination's vision by creating and using a hyphenated word to describe the relationship between the Church of the Nazarene and its colleges: "church-university."[3]

Predominantly, from its colleges and universities the denomination receives its lay and clergy leadership. Although numerous persons other than Nazarenes compose the faculties of the educational institutions, most faculty members are Nazarenes. Most of them received their undergraduate degrees from Nazarene schools. Predominantly, Nazarene congregations think that when they send their students to Nazarene schools they are simply entrusting them to another expression of the church. Congregations expect that the colleges and universities will provide educated leaders for the church.

Historically, the pattern and expectations have been confirmed in the denomination's educational experience.

One university professor summarizes the ecclesiological dimension by noting that, "the church helps ground the colleges. . . . The colleges provide creative stimulation for the church. We are in a symbiotic relationship"[4]

II. A Historical Sketch of Nazarene Education

The Church of the Nazarene has its roots in the American Holiness Revival of the late nineteenth century. The Revival occurred in a variety of denominations—principally Methodist. The Revival had to do with a renewal of John Wesley's teaching regarding the holy life. Congregations were affected by the Revival, but its most prominent expression occurred in large camp meetings that freely crossed geographic and denominational lines. Most of the early American Holiness leaders had strong commitments to remain in their own denominations and to renew them from within. Gradually however, "independent bands and congregations arose in response to local situations. They usually included persons who formerly belonged to several different communions. And they coalesced slowly and rather haphazardly into organized denominations."[5] A shared doctrine began to draw together some of the small denominations during the early part of the twentieth century, a process that eventually led to formation of the Church of the Nazarene.

Education was central to the *reason for being* of most of the denominations that preceded the Church of the Nazarene. The need for Christian workers and a desire to foster the doctrine of Christian holiness prompted many to start schools, some of which

were developed on Bible school models and others of which formed as universities. From the beginning the schools in the second group developed as liberal arts colleges. Lay persons played key roles in financing and leading both the liberal arts colleges and the Bible schools. They served on the boards of governance, and as faculty and administrators.

As the groups that sponsored these schools joined with the Church of the Nazarene the schools became part of an embryonic Nazarene educational system. The younger leaders in the denomination "believed that education was the key to the success of their plan. Far from neglecting the colleges they persuaded the Nazarenes to enlarge their support year after year."[6] The individual congregations accepted a heavy financial burden to support their colleges. Statements and actions by church leaders "helped stamp upon the Nazarene mind the idea that the future of the church was bound up with its program of higher education."[7]

Clergy and lay persons, both male and female, filled vital roles as faculty and administrators in the schools. To a large extent they *were* the universities. Their personal commitments and financial sacrifices were responsible for saving the institutions during times of hardship. In 1919, Dr. R.T. Williams, a revered General Superintendent, wrote that faculty members were "making more real sacrifice than any other class of workers in the connection [denomination]."[8] Specific examples of such sacrifice are chronicled in the official histories of Olivet Nazarene University, written by C. S. McClain, and the history of Northwest Nazarene College, written by John Riley.

Traditionally in Nazarene colleges and universities faculty and administrators have dedicated their lives to educating Nazarene young people and to providing a "holy

Christian fellowship of learners." Characteristically, being a faculty member entails not only academic excellence, but also Christian mentoring of the whole learner. Intentional discussions and programs on campuses are designed to achieve the goal of integrating Christian faith and the liberal arts.

A period of consolidation and formalization of the educational system followed the General Assembly of 1919. Educational districts were designed to sustain only one college within their bounds. Institutions were given financial support from the churches in their educational zones. It was agreed that "an institution enjoying official denominational sponsorship would not make systematic campaigns either for funds or students in another's territory."[9]

Recommendations for minimal academic standards for classifying institutions were established. Three factors contributed to the emergence of the Nazarene system of education in the United States: reliable budgeted financial support by local churches; defined geographic territories protected against competition; and high expectations for academic excellence. "At a time when the Bible College movement began to spread across America, early Nazarene colleges adopted a different course. Regardless of the primary aims of a particular school's founders, all were moving (with varying degrees of success) toward the liberal arts college model by 1920."[10]

Six regional liberal arts colleges were established. Today they are Eastern Nazarene College, Quincy, Massachusetts; Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, Idaho; Olivet Nazarene University, Kankakee, Illinois; Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California; Trevecca Nazarene University, Nashville, Tennessee; and Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, Oklahoma. In response to increased numerical

growth, in the 1960's the denomination created two additional liberal arts colleges, MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas and Mount Vernon Nazarene College in Mount Vernon, Ohio. This brought the number of U.S. liberal arts colleges and universities to the current total of eight. In 1945, the denomination created a graduate seminary, Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. In the 1967 Nazarene Bible College, located in Colorado Springs, Colorado opened to prepare non-traditional, adult students for professional ministry. These ten institutions comprise the Nazarene educational system in the United States.

Ingersol's summation of the story of Nazarene higher education notes two striking patterns—lay initiative and significant female leadership:

> At its heart, the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers asserts that all Christians are called to ministry through their baptism. . . . That some of these enterprising laity [in the Church of the Nazarene] were also women should not be surprising, for women played increasingly prominent roles in other aspects of Nazarene life, including the ordained ministry, missions, and evangelism.[11]

The following statement regarding education appears in the current *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. "Historically, Nazarene global ministry has centered around evangelism, compassionate ministry, and education."[12]

Ingersol notes that the statement

> suggests that Nazarenes have regarded education as an integral expression of their worship and as a basic part of their wider ministry in the world. Although initial aims may have differed from place to place, each Nazarene school that was started in the early years of the church expressed something essential about how local Nazarenes saw themselves. In some cases these initial aims expressed a dominant evangelistic and missionary impulse that called for the training of Christian workers. In other cases the new colleges expressed a cultural (or counter-cultural) impulse. But in both cases they expressed a sense of ministry in and to the world.[13]

The relationship between the liberal arts colleges and the church has remained central. "The liberal arts colleges in the U.S. are mature, fully accredited institutions. The institutions recognize their relationship to and dependence upon the church. The General Assembly assigns the districts to each region. The colleges look to the church for funding through the districts. Local congregations in their regions are the colleges' best source of enrollment."[14]

III. Education in the Church of the Nazarene Today

The Nazarene educational system in 2000 AD has a global vision. In addition to the colleges, universities and seminary of the United States, the system includes 47 international institutions of higher education. Nazarenes have founded liberal arts colleges in Kenya and Korea and graduate seminaries in England, Philippines, Costa Rica and Equador. They have created theological colleges, Bible institutes and nursing schools around the world.

The Board of General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene recently emphasized the role of education. They described four *foci* that identify Nazarenes: worship, compassion and evangelism, discipleship, and Christian higher education. The statement reads in part,

> We are committed to Christian education through which men and women are equipped for lives of Christian service. In our seminaries, Bible colleges, colleges, and universities, we are committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the development of Christian character, and the equipping of leaders to accomplish our God-given calling of serving in the church and in the world.[15]

Financial support for and continued enrollment of Nazarene young people in residential institutions evidence the church's commitment to regional colleges and universities. Residential campuses continue to be the most effective means for developing

the whole person in "body, mind and spirit" through participation in a "Christian fellowship of learners." The academic quality of Nazarene colleges and universities has been recognized by regional accrediting agencies, and national rankings like *U.S. News & World Report's* annual review of liberal arts colleges and universities.[16] As the quality of the colleges advances they are attracting an increasing number of students from other denominations. The percentage of students describing themselves as Nazarene has been slowly declining. One challenge of college identity in the future will be to maintain the traditional ethos that Nazarenes have come to expect in their schools.

IV. Identifiable Strengths of the colleges and universities of the Church of the Nazarene

As has been noted in the historical overview, the colleges and universities of the Church of the Nazarene have often walked a difficult road to maturity. What the institutions are today has often been as much the result of trial and error as intentional design. But whatever the pathway, along the way the denomination's colleges and universities have gained identifiable and commendable strengths. Some of them will be discussed here.

1. Among the most important strengths is the historically close relationship between the denomination and its colleges and universities. More correctly, we should speak of the local congregations, for it is here that the tie is most visible.

The Church of the Nazarene in the United States is divided into eight educational regions. A college or university is located on each region. The regions are composed of ecclesiastical districts, each with its own jurisdictional structure. The districts that

compose each region elect the boards of governance (half lay, half clergy) for the college or university in its region. A district superintendent, elected by the district assembly, presides as the jurisdictional head. The district superintendent always serves as a member of the college or university board of governance. Each region is expected to send its college or university students to its designated institution. The colleges and universities explicitly recruit only within their designated region.

Major denominational youth activities on each region occur on the designated college or university campuses. Nazarene youth become accustomed to thinking of that institution as "their college." In various activities on the districts throughout the year representatives of the colleges and universities are present. From early in a student's high school career, the institutions carry on regular correspondence in an effort to cultivate loyalty and eventual entrance. Once each four years the denomination sponsors a North American youth congress at which time students are exposed to the denomination's colleges and universities. A major youth convention also occurs once each four years in conjunction with the denomination's General Assembly. All of the Nazarene colleges and universities are present to showcase their programs and to recruit students.

To each congregation of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States there is assigned an annual education budget, all of which goes to support its regional college or university. The allocation process occurs at an annual district assembly when all denominational budget allocations are assigned to and adopted by congregations. The percentage of allocations actually paid on most regions averages more than 88 %. In 1999 Nazarenes in the United States gave a total of $23,000,000 to support their colleges

and universities by this method alone. Other major financial campaigns appeal to individual donors from Nazarene congregations. With this record of commitment that spans nearly one hundred years, it is clear that the major endowment of Nazarene colleges and universities rests in the local congregations that support them.

Put simply, the colleges and universities of the Church of the Nazarene are part of the soul of the Church of the Nazarene. Just as they have been shaped by the denomination, they have in turn shaped it. The denomination and its educational institutions are actually unthinkable apart from each other. They have so extensively educated the lay and clergy leadership of the denomination that when thinking of himself or herself as a Nazarene, he or she usually includes his or her educational experience in the mix. Will what has been true in the past continue into the future? That is a question the denomination will have to answer in its future life and experience. Indications are that the past is indicative of the future.

2. A second strength of Nazarene colleges and universities is that historically the institutions have concentrated on teaching rather than on research. Although research and publication are strongly encouraged, first and foremost a Nazarene educator is thought of as a teacher. Consequently, students are exposed to a high level of instruction by persons who hold Ph.D.'s in their areas of specialization. Teachers in all the disciplines are expected to participate regularly in their respective professional societies. The institutions provide professional expense accounts for this purpose.

Teacher-student relationships are of premiere importance. Nazarene educators, regardless of their academic discipline, think of their teaching as "ministry." This mind-set is intentionally cultivated. New professors are introduced to this attitude as a part of

their recruitment, hiring and orientation. A person who fails to embrace this philosophy will not likely succeed as a Nazarene educator.

Nazarene educators are expected to concentrate on developing skills as classroom teachers. The colleges and universities intentionally foster programs to insure that this occurs. All Nazarene educators are expected to serve as mentors to students. This happens both formally and informally. Faculty advisement in Nazarene institutions means far more than curriculum advisement. Most Nazarene educators regularly participate in freshman orientation and spiritual formation programs. Once each four years the denomination conducts a "Faith, Learning and Living Conference" for its educators at which time the shared mission of Nazarene higher education is explored and reviewed through papers, seminars, discussions according to one's teaching specialization, information consultation, et. al.

Educators are encouraged to attend the denomination's General Assembly, during which time an education conference occurs. One of the major emphases of the General Assembly is celebrating the role of education and the educator in the denomination.

3. A third major strength is the commitment of Nazarene colleges and universities to the classical Christian tradition. Though denominational in their identification, they are characteristically catholic in spirit. All of the colleges and universities, as is true of the sponsoring denomination, embrace the classical Christian creeds. The early Christian Fathers, the ecumenical creeds, the 16th century Protestant Reformation, and the 18th century evangelical revival in England and America predominantly inform their faculties of religion. They participate in and contribute to their professional societies (e.g., The America Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Literature). They carry on an

extensive conversation with major theological and philosophical currents. And they hope that their students will embrace their commitment to catholic Christianity.

Even though faculty members in other departments are not professional theologians they are expected to embrace the Christian faith in its classical form.

4. A fourth major strength of Nazarene education is that it intentionally attempts to help students develop a religious, moral and social framework for life. What Mark R. Schwehn says of Catholic higher education is equally true of the Church of the Nazarene. We seek to "mobilize the constitutive beliefs of our distinctive tradition to respond flexibly to a world increasingly dominated by global capitalism."[17] To this end the colleges and universities devote extensive resources. Among them are designated personnel who serve as counselors and mentors, required courses in the general education curriculum, programs in spiritual formation, pastors and youth ministers in the college-related churches and informal counseling in professor-teacher settings. The freshman orientation programs are specifically designed to initiate the process.

5. A fifth feature of Nazarene education is its emphasis upon academic excellence. Though not elitist or exclusive in their enrollment practices, Nazarene colleges and universities uniformly urge academic excellence in their students. The schools intentionally cultivate a social environment that rewards excellence and that frowns upon carelessness and mediocrity. Professors are expected to push both themselves and their students to transcend the merely acceptable, and to strive for the best.

Toward this goal, Nazarene institutions intentionally promote holistic education. Across the board, the colleges and universities insist that no single part of the educational

enterprise is complete in itself. Central to its vision of Christian liberal arts education is the conviction that the intellectual, religious, moral, aesthetic, communal/social and recreational dimensions of education must form one integrated whole. Education of the whole person is the goal of education in Nazarene colleges and universities.

V. The Future Shape of the Colleges and Universities of the Church of the Nazarene

A. A Look into the Likely Future

The year 2010 AD will find the Church of the Nazarene engaged in the final stages of developing its International University system.

Let us skip forward to 2010. Each university is part of a multi-campus system of long-established institutions located in eight geographic regions of the United States. The schools are supported with significant educational budgets by 8,000 local congregations, and by their high school graduates that enroll in Nazarene educational programs.

The U.S. university system is also an integral part of a larger global network of schools in forty countries, all of which are inter-related institutions with cooperating, self-governing boards of governance. The boards, half clergy and half lay, are charged with the responsibility of supporting and soliciting support for the schools--financial, moral, religious--and by interactive dialog within the denomination regarding the role of Christian education in the church and for the world.

Collaborative programs and degree offerings shaped according to contextualized and indigenous academic disciplines connect the institutions. Nazarenes found collaboration between its eight U.S. universities and five international campuses to be

economically beneficial. Collaboration has also strengthened their commitment to the denomination and has fostered theological coherency in the denomination. Collaboration has also enriched the multi-cultural and inter-racial make-up of both church and university. Student, faculty, and administration exchange programs have fostered global understanding, a multi-cultural presence on the campuses and have moved the denomination and its educational system in the direction of fulfilling their mission.

Obviously, projections of educational goals into the future involve a great deal of risk. We can plan, but cannot always dictate the shape that education will assume. We do not yet know how technology will change educational delivery systems, what learners will expect of their educational experience, and what they will be willing to pay for an education in a private religious college. Will students be satisfied with technical training, or will they demand a rich Christian liberal arts education?

This much we do know. Nazarene as well as others who engage in Christian liberal arts education will become increasingly aware that individuals and institutions cannot thrive as autonomous and relatively isolated entities. Competition for limited resources, including potential students, will require increased collaboration and cooperation.

In 1996 Nazarene educators began to explore formally the benefits of collaboration through a grant from the Teagel Foundation. In the final report, college and university presidents articulated several assumptions that will provide a basis for future collaborative efforts among their respective institutions. They are as follows:

1. We share a theological tradition, core values, and a common mission.
2. To collaborate formally, institutions need not sacrifice autonomy or individuality.
3. We can learn from other collaborative efforts already in place (i.e., state university systems, Jesuit education, and health care alliances).

4. Theological education, and preparation for Christian ministry—both clergy and lay--is a responsibility of all Nazarene institutions of higher learning.
5. Current and developing technology makes it possible to network in new ways.
6. There are economies of scale that can be achieved only through collaboration.
7. The quality of various programs can be enhanced through networking.[18]

The increasing complexity of our society will require that problem solving be undertaken by teams rather than individuals. Skilled individuals must learn to value the group process and work for common goals. Learners in Nazarene institutions will acquire collaborative skills by observing and participating in multi-disciplinary learning communities led by teams of content specialists and process facilitators. Research and resource skills will also increase as students learn of technological paths for accessing information. Through networks built on high-speed communication systems students in Nazarene institutions will make use of content and process specialists beyond their institutions. Learners will observe institutions working together to solve resource issues for the benefit of all students.

Learners are consumers who will increasingly demand a participatory voice in their own learning. They will look for options in how they receive an education. Institutions that provide multi-delivery options such as resident, non-formal and distance learning, within the same program will benefit most from increased enrollment. Learners will also demand a freer transfer of academic credits between institutions and degree programs. Multi-disciplinary majors tailored to individual interests will become more common.

B. The Role of the Christian University in the Future

The principle role of the Christian university will be to prepare learners to live as Christians in a morally and religiously pluralistic world. This role echoes the words of

S.T. Ludwig who served as the first Executive Secretary, Department of Education, in the Church of the Nazarene:

> The church college has a place in our changing culture. (1) It must seek to preserve the best of our heritage across the ages and unite it to the culture of the present. (2) It must go one step further and seek to change the culture of the present by the power of a new dynamic—a dynamic that is born of a vital relationship with God through Christ, our Savior and Lord. (3) The church college must then go one step beyond that and prepare leadership for a pattern culture that will be more nearly Christ-like in its performance and more nearly Christian in its outlook.[19]

The heritage passed down from the Reformation, "that distinctions in ministry are *functional* only and do not establish a special status for one form over another,"[20] calls for Christian universities to prepare laity and clergy alike for service to the body of Christ. A full range of academic programs will ensure that the needs of the church will be met by competent persons and that Christians will be prepared to live in the public square as contributors and transformers.

In recognition of the cultural richness of our world, universities must provide programs that are inclusive, not exclusive. Christian universities will develop ways to accommodate urban and rural learners, and to enhance cross-cultural exchange between the identifiable cultural groups in the United States.

International learning experiences are highly desirable and expand one's ability to appreciate the contributions made by other cultures. Nazarene institutions will increase opportunities for students to enter and live in diverse cultures, not just to attend a transplanted US university. Learners will be prepared to act as responsible citizens in the world with both an eye and a passion for justice.

The Christian university must develop learners' abilities to reflect critically on the world, on their place in it, and upon their chosen vocations as avenues for service and

transformation. To be able to contribute to their fields, Christian scholars must know how to integrate faith and knowledge, enriching both. They must know how to accomplish this within a Wesleyan framework.

To gain the respect of their Christian and non-Christian colleagues, university faculty and students will have to perform with intellectual and moral credibility. Christian scholars are responsible to the global academic community to present an integrated view of their fields, and of the Christian faith. And they must do so in a way that shows cognizance of the pluralistic world in which they live. Christian scholars and university graduates must provide a moral voice that can help shape and direct scholarly inquiry and the technical application of knowledge.

VI. Challenges that Nazarenes Face in College and University Education

While Nazarenes can with some measure of satisfaction point to their record in education, there is no place to relax. Numerous important challenges present themselves, some of which are more internal to the life of the denomination, some to the colleges and universities themselves, and some of which emerge from the broader culture.

A. Challenges that arise within the denomination.

1. The Church of the Nazarene cannot assume that its traditionally symbiotic relationship between the colleges and universities, and the local congregations will continue. This will occur only intentionally. The sometimes prohibitive costs of private education, and the declining denominational loyalty that affects the Church of the Nazarene even as it does other denominations, place unremitting pressure on the church-university relationship to which Nazarenes have become accustomed.

2. As with some other theologically and socially conservative denominations, the adverse impact of fundamentalism, and the anti-intellectual mind-set that often accompanies it, poses a constant challenge to an approach to education that intends to be intellectually, historically, theologically and culturally responsible and engaging. The Church of the Nazarene, though officially not fundamentalist, nevertheless contains fundamentalist elements among its constituency. Fundamentalist pressure affects education in numerous ways, not the least of which is the teaching of science and the Bible. Nazarene educators face the challenge of working responsibly and creatively within the mixed constituency that is the Church of the Nazarene. So the denomination must never overlook this challenge.

3. The vision of education that Nazarene colleges and universities champion depends heavily upon a critical mass of students willing to embrace as their own, Christian liberal arts education, and the commitments and disciplines that accompany it. The denomination cannot assume that such students in sufficiently large numbers will be willing to shoulder the commitments upon which Nazarene education has traditionally relied. No denomination—certainly including the Church of the Nazarene--is immune to the consumerism, pragmatism, and intellectual and religious superficiality that plague American society. This mood takes a toll on any educational enterprise that attempts to do more than issue degrees when curricula have been completed. It takes a particularly heavy toll on Christian liberal arts education.

The challenge of leading students into a serious engagement with holistic education is immense. The Church of the Nazarene stands to learn from others who face this challenge.

B. Challenges that arise from within the colleges and universities.

Within the institutions there exist tensions that could threaten the traditional liberal arts model to which Nazarenes have been accustomed.

1. What will happen to liberal arts education in a climate that seems to be increasingly market/consumer driven? What Mark Schwehn says of the Catholics is equally true of us, "Like it or not, many of us are becoming market-driven service providers instead of educators."[21] The siren song that often beckons Nazarene education today is sung by education as defined by expediency, immediate gratification, and employment promises. The danger is that the prime mover of education will be the need to maintain a high enrollment, not formation of the whole person through the acquisition and practice of Christian virtues.

2. Traditionally, education in the Church of the Nazarene has had a strong communal influence on students. How will the use of non-traditional delivery systems impact the traditional understanding and achievement of community among faculty and students who together are to be engaged in "faith, learning and living?" Nazarene educators cannot assume that the traditional community values they claim to champion are consonant with just any delivery system.

Degree completion programs—made up of adult learners—have become increasingly important parts of our colleges and universities. Such students are usually productively engaged in employment responsibilities during the day and attend classes in the evenings. Adult learners are only marginally interested or involved in the activities that occur on the residential campus. How will Nazarene schools succeed in introducing degree completion students to their Christian vision of life?

In some cases Nazarene colleges and universities are heavily dependent on funds generated by degree completion. The danger is that the need to survive financially will define the quality of education the institution offers.

3. Already implied is the ever-present pressure that materialism exerts to reduce education to utilitarian and pragmatic ends. Given the financial pressures the colleges and universities face on a regular basis, it is very difficult to turn away qualified students. But if the price paid for financial viability is our educational birthright, then a bankruptcy of soul will follow. Confronting and overcoming this specter will demand clarity of mission and stalwart courage.

4. Although the next challenge isn't new, it needs to be registered. Nazarene colleges, no less than other Christian colleges and universities, run the danger of confusing what is culturally originated with what is truly transcendent--Christian. A Christian college or university can become ideologically strapped just as easily as any other institution. Being "Christian" gives no license to attaching the divine signature to intellectual and cultural provincialism, racism, sexism and political myopia. Christian colleges and universities will always face the challenge of making a love for justice central to their educational enterprise. Paul Tillich warned against misidentifying preliminary concerns as ultimate ones. He also warned that no person and no institution can relax their vigilance. Mark Schwehn makes this point as applicable to Catholic colleges and universities: "If we really mean to be freed from the tyrannies that hold sway over our minds, we must be able, to some degree, to distance ourselves from our own prejudice. . . ."[22]

Practically, this means that Nazarene colleges and universities must give much greater attention to educating minorities and fostering leadership by women in the denomination. Nazarene educators face the task of teaching students how to critique their own social "places and privileges," even while maintaining a love for their church.

B. **Challenges that come from the broader culture**.

1. Pluralisms of numerous kinds will increasingly characterize the emerging postmodern world. Nazarene colleges and universities have been, and continue to be, shaped by the Christian narrative. But their graduates will not live and work only in that narrative. Will the colleges and universities of the denomination teach students the Christian story with sufficient clarity and conviction that they will not be swallowed up in a pluralistic soup? Will Nazarene colleges and universities show students how to live with respect for other narratives, while being able to articulate their own Christian faith with clarity and conviction? Will they be able to counter the nihilism and moral relativism that characterize much of contemporary society? Will Nazarene colleges and universities teach students how to become effective leaders in the public square in a pluralistic world, what Mark Schwehn calls engaging the world of global capitalism "credibly and responsibly"?[23] Addressing this challenge successfully will require fresh thinking throughout the denomination, not just in its colleges and universities.

2. The escalating costs of post-secondary education—private institutions in particular—are proverbial. Boards of governance and administrators in Nazarene colleges and universities share with their counterparts in other Christian schools the unremitting task of funding their institutions. Most Nazarene colleges and universities do not have large endowments. But they do have the strong annual financial support of the

local churches. Nevertheless, the escalating costs associated with faculty salaries, insurance, plant maintenance, building construction, the particularly high costs of some academic programs, etc. present a monumental challenge.

Added to all this is the constant need to increase the number and amount of scholarships for students. More particularly, Nazarene colleges and universities must find ways to serve minority students to whom the Church of the Nazarene ministers. The schools must find ways to open the doors of educational opportunity to minorities even as it has historically done for other economically and even educationally disadvantaged persons. Indeed successfully doing so has been a major accomplishment of Nazarene education in the past.

Conclusion

While Nazarenes can accurately trace the history of their experiment in higher education, the path into the future is uncertain. Although the denomination has a good understanding of the direction in which it wants its institutions to move, unanticipated factors will inevitably enter and alter the equation. Not only will Nazarenes need to collaborate among themselves, they will also need the assistance of their colleagues in other denominational colleges, and from public institutions as well. We are most willing to share what we have learned and in turn seek the wisdom and expertise of others. Our's is an extended hand offering to give, and an extended hand asking to receive. We are catholic by intent and want to become even more so in practice.

NOTES

[1] John Bowling, *The Olivetian*, Vol. 67, No. 4, April-June 2000, 2.

[2] Jerry Porter, General Superintendent, Church of the Nazarene, 2000.

[3] Loren Gresham, Southern Nazarene University, *Southern Light*, April 2000.

[4] An unidentified professor from Southern Nazarene University, reported by Don Dunnington, Academic Vice-President. 2000.

[5] Timothy L. Smith, *Called unto Holiness*, Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962. pp. 28-29.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 322.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 324.

[8] Quoted in Historical studies from the Education Commission of the sixteenth General Assembly, "A Study of the Educational Structure in the Church of the Nazarene," January 1964, p. 17.

[9] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

[10] Stan Ingersol, "Why These Schools? Historical Perspectives on Nazarene Higher Education," a paper presented to The Association of Nazarene Sociologists of Religion, March 1998. Ingersol is the Archivist for the Church of the Nazarene. n.p.

[11] Ibid. n.p.

[12] The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene, 1997-2003, Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House. p. 23.

[13] Ingersol. *op.cit*., n.p.

[14] Report of the Nazarene Education Commission to the 22nd General Assembly, Church of the Nazarene, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 1989, p. 15.

[15] . "A Living Faith: What Nazarenes Believe," a pamphlet published by the International Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO, 1999, p. 13.

[16] "Western Liberal Arts Colleges, Top Schools," *U.S. News & World Report, Inc.*, 8/30/99. Northwest Nazarene University has been listed in the top ten western liberal arts colleges seven years in the 1990's.

[17] Mark R. Schwehn, "The Christian University: Defining the Difference," *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education*, Volume 20, Number 2, Spring 2000, p. 18.

[18] "Assumptions," Report to the Teagle Foundation, August 1998.

[19] S.T. Ludwig, "The Church College in a Changing Culture," *Vital Speeches of Today*, Vol. XVII—No.2, November 1, 1950, p 59.

[20] Al Truesdale, "Cobblers and Magistrates in Ministry," *Holiness Today*. October 1999, p. 4.

[21] Schwehn, p. 20.

[22] Ibid., p. 18.

[23] Ibid., p. 19.