

The Oxford Affirmation

Oxford, England, 1995

Preamble

The following affirmation summarizes the sense of the body of Nazarene educators reflecting the worldwide educational interests of the Church of the Nazarene who participated in the Oxford Conferences of 1995.¹ While this document is not a definitive manifesto, it does reflect the group's collective vision of the shape and direction of Nazarene higher education as we seek to serve Christ and His church in the 21st century. It is not a comprehensive, systematic treatment of these issues, but a snapshot of dreams and concerns raised by the body. It is an attempt to articulate the current thinking of the group as it appropriates our educational heritage and shapes our vision for the future. We affirm the following theses:

Theses

The responsibility for Nazarene ministerial preparation is shared by all Nazarene institutions of higher education who offer such training, the Office of Pastoral Ministries, and the various Boards of Ministerial Studies.

The gifts needed for the understanding, analysis, design, and implementation of a Nazarene global strategy and system of education are endowed in the body of leaders God has chosen to lead His Church into the 21st century.

All higher educational institutions of the church are equal partners within the International Board of Education. We affirm both the diversity and the kinship of our institutions. No attempt should be made to make all Nazarene educational institutions identical; each should be enabled to become the best possible institution in fulfillment of its unique mission.

All educational entities must be committed to equipping all the people of God for ministry to the whole Church in its mission to the world.

The institutions of the International Board of Education will be more effective as they are integrated more fully into a global network of inter-related institutions with the goal of moving beyond network to an integrated system of education.

Our mission requires multi-level education, from certificate to doctoral programs delivered in multiple settings and delivery systems including various forms of distance education along with campus-based programs.

Nazarene education must take advantage of modern technology in resourcing and delivering theological education.

¹ The Consultation on Institutional Development for Theological Education in the Two Thirds World, June 26 to July 7, 1995, sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and the Theological and Religious Studies Consortium in Oxford, England, which was the occasion for the Oxford Consultation on Global Strategy for Nazarene Higher Education sponsored by the International Board of Education.

Missionaries, regional educators, pastors, and other ministers have a need and desire for appropriate orientation, continuing education, and programs for personal and professional development.

Nazarene institutions around the world long for reciprocal sharing of resources and professionals from other countries and institutions. This resourcing can be done without invading institutional autonomy, while facilitating institutional development and the movement of institutions from primary dependence on World Mission Division funding.

While committed to our primary task of serving Christ through the Church of the Nazarene, we also affirm the importance of serving the broader needs of the holiness movement, of serving and being served by others in the Body of Christ, and of understanding our responsibility to influence the whole church and the academy with the witness of Christian holiness.

As participants in the inter-denominational Oxford Conference for Theological Education in the Two Thirds World, we reaffirm our common faith and mission with all those who honor Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The time has come for the Church of the Nazarene to take hold of the vast creative potential that is available in the worldwide educational interests of the church to enhance our service to Christ and His Church in new and challenging ways.

Conclusion

We are convinced that the realization of these theses can best be accomplished through the Resource Institute for International Education as a service of the International Board of Education and its member institutions. The integrative philosophy which underpins the operations of the Resource Institute for International Education as proposed by the International Board of Education, World Mission Division, Church Growth Division, and Nazarene Theological Seminary (Kansas City), is the best way to maximize the diverse resources and to serve the diverse needs of the Church. We heartily commend the vision of those who have established this entity. To enhance this process, we have given careful attention to refining the document proposing the Resource Institute for International Education and commend it to the Board of Directors for their careful consideration.

Participants:

Kent Brower	Dean, Nazarene Theological College	Manchester, England
Wilbur W. Brannon	Director, Pastoral Ministries	Kansas City, MO USA
Humberto F. Bullon	Professor, Universidad Nazarena	San Jose, Costa Rica
Ted Esselstyn	Regional Education Director, Africa Region	Roodepoort, South Africa
LeBron Fairbanks	President, Mount Vernon Nazarene College	Mt. Vernon, OH USA
Charles Gailey	Director, School of World Mission and Evangelism, NTS	Kansas City, MO USA
John Haines	Director, Eastern Mediterranean Nazarene Bible College; Eurasia Region, RED ²	Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Larry Kromer	Professor, European Nazarene Bible College	Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Jerry Lambert	Education Commissioner	Kansas City, MO USA
John M. Nielson	President, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary; Asia-Pacific Region, RED	Manila, Philippines
Christian Sarmiento	Pres., S. Amer. Naz. Theological Sem.; SAM Region, RED	Quito, Ecuador
Roy Stults	Theological Education Coordinator, World Mission Div.	Kansas City, MO USA
Dwight Swanson	Professor, European Nazarene Bible College	Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Al Truesdale	Professor, Nazarene Theological Seminary	Kansas City, MO USA
Gordon Wetmore	President, Nazarene Theological Seminary	Kansas City, MO USA

² RED = Regional Education Director

