

A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION *

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HISTORICAL MATERIAL
Nazarene Headquarters
Education Philosophy of

A "definite philosophy of education" formulated "intelligently and satisfactorily" for the Church of the Nazarene: "the why and what and how of our position in education". It is not an easy assignment. Complete uniformity of operation among our education institutions would be difficult, if not impossible, because of differences in regional standards and educational traditions, in present equipment, in details of incorporation; and finality of definition would seem precluded by the unsettled condition of current education policies--the whole subject is alive and changing.

However, there are 1) The why: certain principles on which we all are one, 2) The what: purposes or goals which we can set up and agree upon, and 3) The how: policies or methods subject to varying conditions, which we can clarify by analysis and discussion. I shall try to arrive at these inductively, and suggest some corollaries which I will term What Then?

A. Principles: The Why. Two obligations are binding upon every honorable institution of learning: 1. to uphold the ideals of the society which supports it, 2. to meet the needs of the community it serves. The first obligation is a permanent one, the second may change somewhat with time; but always if the ideals are right, the two can be harmonized. As supported by the Church of the Nazarene her educational institutions are bound not only to be Christian but to perpetuate and spread the doctrine of Scriptural holiness. As serving the church they are bound to prepare its young people to make the most of their lives--physically, intellectually, culturally, socially, ethically, spiritually, and vocationally.

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I. The ideals of the church as expressed in the charters of the several institutions are twofold: a. A primary emphasis on theology, especially training for the ministry, i.e., the Christian point of view; b. College work of standard quality, i.e., a sound education accoring to the best current pattern. The essential responsibility, then, of the colleges to the ideals of the church is to supply a fusion for Bible holiness with a standard academic program.

II. The specific needs of the constituency are, from the point of view of the church, a. leaders orthodox in belief, spiritual in example, wise in counsel and practically efficient, and b. a laity intelligent, loyal, and earnest, leaders and laity fused in a working unit. We have the young people of our church during the curdial, formative years; the church looks to see intellectual growth with religious stability. From the point of view of the young people and their parents the needs are (in this order): a. training to make a living, b. fellowship with other Christian young people, c. education to make a life. (Most realize the vocational need only; some the social; the development of intellect and character is a need we must both create and satisfy). To give permanent directions to lives, to develop attitudes and abilities, to help young people acquire both self-discipline and skill, both Christian philisophy and professional training--in short, adequate preparation of youth for life and service would seem to sum up the responsibility of the colleges for the needs of the constituency.

B. Purposes or goals: The What.

General. Within the aforesaid limits our charters make us responsible without specific prescription to give "the best in education." We have a broader perspective today than our founders had; almost fifty years of experience help us to envision our goals more clearly. The social conditions of our country have changed, and with them to some extent the young people and their needs. The church has grown, so that there is need of more and varied education for its laity and of more advanced education for its ministry. Two wars have given rise to a re-evaluation of the old educational programs. Our selection of goals must be governed by our first principles of fusing the best in faith with the best in education, and perpetuating the truth of Christian holiness.

We will believe without reserve in our own governing principles. Current educational conditions, philosophies, and suggested programs make plain that our founders builded better than they knew, that we have no major changes to make in defining our purpose.

I. Our theological emphasis is justified and authenticated. Educators are rediscovering the necessity of religion in education. Naturally,

1. the church-related colleges are speaking out: e.g., the address of Roy L. Smith at the recent International Council on Religious Education

(Beliefs are Creative)

"The change overnight from the industrial to the atomic age may doom all values (e.g., gold and coal) except the moral and the spiritual." "The problem of atomic energy is the problem of man himself. Our hope of survival as a race rests with our theology. Our theology creates our civilization (e.g., Japanese, German)." "A fixed faith is the only thing in the world that can outlive time. The Jews alone have survived because they believed in 1) God and the moral order, 2) man made in the image of God (the potentialities of human personality) 3) the sanctity (importance) of the individual. These three beliefs constitute democracy; and all are religious."

America is spiritually illiterate; her education has lacked vitamins. We purpose to produce young people who, knowing something, also believe something.

Dr. J. Glenn Gould in a recent monograph on the function of the holiness college (incorporated as final chapter of The Whole Counsel of God) defined theology as the Queen of the Sciences and demonstrated that the holiness college curriculum was built around theology. We shall be slow to change.

2. Educators at large, heads of the great universities and secular colleges, are groping for this same thing. More stress is being put on courses in religion and religious counselling. President Hutchins of Chicago says that everlasting principles, not data, not facts, not helpful hints constitute the education that will thread a path through the mazes of life. Sound character with trained intelligence will enable citizens to find principles for living. The Harvard Report on General Education points out the need of a unifying principle to interpret and give meaning to facts. The Report on the Education of Youth in America (Conference of 1946):

"If the ultimate aim of education is a good man, the final end of general education is the teaching of goodness"--"a loyalty to the unenforceable."

From Current Trends in Education, 1948:

"General education cannot be called so unless the ultimate questions of human nature, man's moral responsibility and spiritual destiny are raised."

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." One of our educators says well: "Education without God and the Bible is the world's greatest hazard. Education that teaches holiness is the world's greatest asset."

Our first goal: a. While we will maintain a well-equipped theological seminary of standard grade for the preparation of our ministry so far as they can avail themselves of its opportunities,
b. we will not only hold to but strengthen and enlarge the emphasis in our colleges on the theology and experience of Bible holiness in strong courses: 1) for all students, 2) for ministerial students.

c. We will have a Christ-centered program of education. Christ the Truth: The Christian philosophy as the standard of thinking.
Christ the Life: Christian experience as the basis of character.
Christ the Way: The Christian ideal of conduct and service as a practical guide.

II. "The best in secular education", "a sound education"--the phrases call for clarification in the light of current educational theories, and selectivity in the light of our controlling principle. What educational goals fit our needs and our theology?

The main trends appear to be these:

1. A new social emphasis in the face of world needs which calls for preparation to live well and to serve family, community, national, and world groups. (The old superficial theory of adaptation to the mores of the group, with a materialistic emphasis on the immediately expedient, has lost ground in view of world developments.)

Significant in this connection are the current attempts to relate higher education to democracy such as are represented by President Truman's Commission.

2. A new emphasis on and reinterpretation of the liberal arts program as the best preparation for living and serving, in that it is directed to personal wholeness and fitness, mental discipline and intellectual health.

The general background afforded by the academic courses of this program is stressed even as the best type of educational preparation for making a living. Vocational training in the schools assumes that work will be done under the same conditions, geographical and technical. Actually, technical change is so rapid (e.g., new machines) that vocational training alone may prove to be a poor asset. The best place to train for industry is in industry. What education can do is to produce a trained mind. Facts will change; principles abide. So industrialists are pleading for the type of man that only a general education can develop: "If he understands the principles of science involved, he will encounter no difficulty in understanding new applications of scientific laws." (See Report of Third National Conference on Higher Education.)

3. A new emphasis on the individual in education, echoing on the secular plan Paul's goal, "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

The core of our educational system, then, should remain the traditional liberal arts curriculum, so directed and channeled and expended as to meet individual needs and fulfill social responsibility. It is peculiarly adapted to the use of our Christian faith and the achievement of our special goals.

1. Based on the true view of man as a spiritual being, this long-time view of education represents faith in the enduring spiritual values as against the material and merely contemporary: it "tempers the present by the knowledge of the past." It stabilizes and steadies the mind by acquainting it with a common body of knowledge, traditions, and value judgments.

2. Considering man as the climax of God's creation, it gives him preparation for intelligent living by opening doors to the various fields of human experience: the physical world, the social world, the world of his own personal development and self-expression, and, we add, the moral

and spiritual world. These four areas of experience correspond (with the suggested addition) to the divisional groupings of the liberal arts curriculum as commonly organized.

Our major specific goals, as outlined by one of our Nazarene college presidents, adding a physical objective and including the final vocational objective, may well suggest Christian modification of this liberal arts program.

- a/ A grasp of the basic concepts of mathematics and the natural sciences, with special emphasis on the nature of scientific method as dealing with the descriptive and quantitative aspects of the universe, as contrasted with the normative and qualitative aspects which are the concern of philosophy and religion. Our young people need to realize that while scientific men may sometimes be irreligious, in the nature of the case there can never be any conflict between science and religion.
- b. An understanding of the social process, the principles of group life as worked out in the institutions of local, state, national and international governmental bodies, with the purpose of contributing a "sound mind to the body politic."
- c. Ability to weigh and discriminate values. An appreciation for and understanding of the nature of the spiritual life. The character of man's moral and spiritual needs, the essentials of Christian doctrine, and the importance of the Bible in human life must be constantly emphasized not only in the Bible and theology subjects but interwoven throughout the entire curriculum. The personal crisis experiences of regeneration and entire sanctification, and the individual introception of ideals of unselfish and consecrated living so essential for the processes of growth ought to be a major goal of Christian education for each student.
- d. A command of the communications skills, the ability to read and understand and to write and speak the English language clearly, correctly, and forcefully.
- e. Such information as is required for and a lasting appreciation of the importance of physical health. The Christian young person has a life-long task as caretaker of the temple of the Holy Ghost.
- f. The necessary information, skills, attitudes and abilities essential for successful prosecution of some honorable vocation-- a breadwinning skill. It is particularly important that Christian young people come to view the field of a life-work as an opportunity for service to the Kingdom of God--regardless of the so-called "secular" character of the employment.

3. Considering man as a complex personality made in the image of God with the capacity to enrich his personality and expand his social consciousness, it aims not only at transmission of facts but at cultivating of abilities and attitudes (for the Christian college this capacity becomes responsibility to develop Christian character as well as fine personality) by developing:

a. Attitudes--open mindedness to truth (but with the Christian bias); ethical uprightness; gracious tolerance; intelligent, supreme devotion to the will of God and b. Abilities--to understand and interpret others rightly and to cooperate in every good cause; to arrive at definite convictions without becoming dogmatic and coercive; to present one's views with Christian persuasiveness and grace.

III. Tuition at Low Cost

C. Policies suggested for arriving at goals: The How

1. Two years of lower-division (13th and 14th grades) general education introducing students to the various fields of learning (following either the distributional plan of group requirements or some integrated interdepartmental program) and leading to an upper-division major for all who demonstrate capacity; or with special emphases, to certain vocational programs as engineering or nursing.

Possibly side by side with this lower-division curriculum two years of terminal (13th and 14th grades) general education following more "practical" or less academic programs to care for the non-academic type of student. This policy deserves special consideration in view of the recommendation of the President's Commission. As recommended by the President's Commission, democracy implies educational opportunity for the average young person. Higher education should be made available to all who are capable of it; hence the proposals to extend the high school system through the first two years of college.

II. Four years of high-level academic work, providing for major concentration in all fields in which we can qualify to offer standard work, aiming at:

a. Preparation for graduate study in university or seminary.

The church and the world need qualified leaders (ministers, teachers, librarians, psychologists, etc.)

We are responsible to offer the best minds among our young people work of a standard to challenge their powers.

We can furnish the church with a strong laity only by helping our keenest young people keep their faith through the years when they are wrestling with intellectual problems. (They will attend some college; to keep them Nazarene it should be a Nazarene college.)

We should support our seminary by furnishing it students who have a strong educational foundation.

President Conant of Harvard, in his Education in a Divided World, countering the President's Commission report, holds that democracy implies opportunity for the development of individual talent, and recommends government subsidies to educate gifted young people for significant achievement in science and industry and statecraft.

b. Preparation for some professions, as elementary or secondary school teaching, the ministry (for those who will not attend the seminary), industrial chemistry, business administration, journalism and public relations, home economics, etc.

c. Pre-professional (medicine or law) and pre-vocational background.

A general cultural education is now urged by professional associations as preparation for the professions and for industry.

III. Possible directions for development:

a. A junior or general college (13th and 14th grades or 11th through 14th grades); or two-year terminal courses, e.g., in ministerial training, secretarial science, accounting, home economics; or general education programs, in which entrance requirements can be less precise and the curriculum more varied, more popular or "practical", but the quality as high.

(The results of scholastic aptitude tests given to incoming freshmen indicate that a very large percentage of those seeking admission to our college fall below the level which indicates probable success in college and if admitted to the regular program either fail and so suffer a grave psychological hazard or remain to pull down the academic standard, We should do something to meet their need.)

b. Bible schools of secondary level which will educate candidates for ministerial ordination without jeopardizing the quality of instruction into the college classes.

c. Graduate school or graduate work. To quote one of our educators:

"...before we should establish more colleges, one of our colleges should do graduate work. Probably, each of our colleges could sometime do graduate work in some field. Then if each of our schools would do graduate work in different fields, our colleges could be like a great university."

d. Extension programs of adult education (in colleges located in populous areas) in service training for ministers and Christian workers, institutes, lectures, conferences, and the like. Great stress is being laid on adult education as a means of training good citizens--why not good Christian workers?

Not all these goals are immediately realizable; some may not be desirable. Finances may be lacking for developing programs in domestic science or chemistry or radio. Teachers qualified in vision and/or in education may not be available. (The colleges should have working plans for financing advanced study and for indoctrinating their faculty members.)

D. What Then? Some guidelines for educational methods are practicable and deserve consideration. Corollaries of the above.

I. Institutional attitudes worthy of Christian scholarship.

a. Honesty. Respect academic standards. Give any degree or course its full scholastic content. Deserve, rather than seek, academic recognition. Good religion does not take the place of sound education but directs and elevates it. All talk of cultivating attitudes and opinions without giving solid facts on which to base them is sentiment and cant. "A course thin in content is unlikely to provoke depth of thought." Report on Coordination of Professional and General Education, 1948.

b. Cooperation--versus rivalry and competition, among the colleges and between the colleges and the seminary. "Consider one another to provoke to good works." Consider the good of the individual student and of the entire church rather than the immediate profit of the individual institution. Share developments and scholastic finds. Encourage conferences of college faculties. Use and assist the coordination services of the Department of Education to find and furnish strong teachers.

c. Specialization versus attempting to do everything. Prefer effective work in fewer instructional areas to inferior curricula in many fields. No college has men or money to do everything. Recognize one another's fields; the various institutions have particularly strong offerings in different departments. Counsel students accordingly.

d. Limitation of size. Christian atmosphere and Christian fellowship are essential to the realization of our purpose; it is difficult to maintain these in exceedingly large groups. The General Superintendents have recommended 700 as a desirable maximum enrollment.

II. A vision of vitalized Christian education.

Recognition that our basic problem is to relate Christianity vitally to all of the student's life. Habits must be formed, appreciations developed, spiritual principles mingled with practical problems. This will involve:

a. Exposing every student to good Nazarene services, regular and special.

b. Permeating the extra-curricular activities with the Christian spirit. The campus is a laboratory for community living. (We suggest a review of all courses offered and of all extra-curricular activities from the point of view of their essential value to the student.)

c. Viewing and interpreting every course with the Christian bias, testing its supposed values in the light of Calvary and the Christian conscience and Christian service.

d. Planning the curriculum from the Christian point of view (e.g., recognizing four fields of knowledge rather than three, the fourth being that of philosophy and religion.)

e. Finding the right sort of teachers.

III. Thorough indoctrination of the faculty; for the success of any educational program depends on the teacher. Every faculty member, if possible, should possess:

a. A genuine Christian experience to the extent that holiness matters to him. Students learn by life more than by letters.

b. A vision of the possibilities of Christian education and a Christian interpretation of education, so that he does not simply parrot over lectures he has heard in an atheistic classroom. He is responsible to guide, not merely to throw out the fact.

c. A live philosophy of the educative process and ability to impart living knowledge; transmuting facts into meaning, concepts, attitudes and abilities, stimulating discussion and opening doors to understanding as against uninspired lectures and test-book recitation; developing and encouraging intellectual and occasionally practical activity on the part of the student.

d. A definition of the objectives of his department made in harmony with the general objectives of the college. (All this is in line with the current emphasis on improvement of college teaching methods.) (I have in my possession a folder containing a statement made by each of our teachers attempting to analyze what the Christian point of view actually means in his teaching.)

IV. A strengthening and enriching of the theological program, in order to prevent secularization of the colleges, by:

a. Giving courses in theology and Bible a strategic place in the curriculum, required to all students.

b. Giving more practical experience to undergraduate majors in Bible and theology:

c. Correlating closely with the seminary in providing the prerequisites outlined by the National Association of Seminaries.

d. Maintenance and development of the fifth¹/₂ year theological programs where already established, in cooperation and agreement with the seminary program, for students who for various reasons must defer or forego seminary training or else go to liberal graduate or theological schools; and recognition by the seminary of these programs provided the work is of graduate (or professional) quality.

V. In harmony with the current emphasis on individual centered education, a development of student-counselling services, both educational and vocational. (See the Bethany-Peniel program.)

Parents and students trust us to help them find their way to a living. We can do better than we have done.

VI. A clearly defined fine arts policy.

a. Theoretical and, so far as feasible, practical courses of standard academic content in the fine arts. (Results of standardized tests have shown our young people weak in this sort of cultural background.)

b. Employment of legitimate audio-visual aids to compensate for education missed by non-attendance at movies.

VII. Serious consideration of the problem, What shall we do with and for applicants of sub-college level. Reputable standards require the screening of applicants to determine probability of success in a college program.

How high a percentage of high school graduates should go to college? (The report of the President's Commission says about 40 per cent; many educators call this estimate too high.) How provide, without opprobrium, proper education opportunities in the way of vocational training for the technical or home-minded; proper direction for those with neither scholastic nor vocational aptitude who consider college as a field of social or religious activity? (We have a great number of these latter.) Plenty of room is domestic science or music. The only limiting factors are finances, teaching personnel, and the possible effect on institutional standards. Practicable

suggestions are:

- a. A junior college terminal program.
- b. One-year probation, with tentative classification and sub-college or remedial courses.
- c. More effective trained counselling and steering.
- d. Direct contact with high school students to inspire them early with idea of college and incentive of through preparation.
- e. Improvement in admissions procedures with emphasis on individual student interests and aptitudes, weakness and strength.
- f. Early Christian commitments encourages in opening conventions and fall revivals--recognition of the close relation between Christian attitudes and scholastic achievement.

Conclusion:

We should as educators of the Church of the Nazarene recognize the unique opportunity and the consequent responsibility of the Nazarene colleges today. Our task is urgent and critical. We have assets already functioning that are coveted by educational leaders. They emphasize general education as a means of developing the individual personality and promoting social consciousness; we have in addition the motivation of Christ's two great commandments. They emphasize the relating of education to the life of the individual and of the race; we have a multitude of serious-minded young men and women knocking at our doors eager to gain the best in life and give it in unselfish service. They emphasize the personal individual contact of teacher and taught; we have that mutual confidence which is born only of a common Christian fellowship between faculty and students. They were beginning to see the value of religion for developing character and

saving the world and are inviting to their campuses "experts in religion" for conferences; we have every faculty member a potential guide and example. They emphasize development of leadership through participation in civic and social activities; we have organized campus life under close supervision and direction. They ask for a unifying core of belief for general education; we have it in Christ.

We have the machinery set up for a vital fusing of Christianity and education; we have reasonable accreditation; we are trusted by educators and by the church. We will do the job.

Back to our responsibility to the church. Are we to follow the constituency or lead them? Are we to give the young people what they want or what we know they need? The church is made by its educational institutions; they must be ahead of the rank and file in education and also in spiritual fervor. According to one college president, our colleges should not be spiritual hospitals or religious nurseries. They should be training camps for Christian soldiers to prepare for the battles ahead. Are we training "followers" or "leaders"? Both. We are producing the manpower for a world that is to be saved only by character.

-BERTHA MUNRO