



RESPONSE TO THE POLE PROJECT

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The integration of church and education is crucial for higher education in the Church of the Nazarene. As an educator and the chief administrator at Korea Nazarene University, I realize my responsibilities and duties before God and the church. The Pole Project is a tool to communicate the church's view on higher education. As a reviewer I need to support our collaborative ideas and develop KNU's educational purpose and church mission to fulfill these statements. It is an honor to participate in this remarkable project.

In response to these written statements of the Pole Project, I feel strongly in favor of the positions held by these authors. Gregg Chenoweth's "Foreword" causes me to recognize that America's Nazarene universities are facing the same challenges as KNU. The fact that we are facing the same issues of

secularization and consumerism is an illustration of the truth that our world has grown smaller. I agree that the students, faculty, staff, administrators, and other groups must embody the core values of the Church of the Nazarene. In education, we should bridge the gap between information and experience to meet the needs of all learners, as learning is a life-long process.



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The ultimate missional goal is to empower students to pursue and serve God in completing His mission.

In response to the core values, we must focus on the same difficult task of guiding students toward spiritual maturity, moving from rational consent to transformation of each student's very being. How we clearly reflect holiness will help our students learn to perfectly love God and their neighbors. Educational institutions support local churches by developing disciples to carry out the mission of God to the world.

Emerging from the Pole Project is an urgent call for Nazarene higher education. Historically, Korean Christian schools, including Korea Nazarene University, began with the same goals. At first, the educational goals were similar between higher education and the church. Both of them were pursuing the same goals in the beginning as were the Pilgrims when they founded a new land in North America. However, as time has gone by, economic changes have influenced the church and higher education with secularization and consumerism. For instance, in Korea, including Korea Nazarene University, universities began to emphasize the areas of study that would allow graduates to find better employment. Thus, the curriculum has been changed to meet economic needs. Even within the Christian education curriculum, non-Christian courses are emphasized. The result of the stream of economic changes is that society has changed radically within

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the family. A low birth rate has influenced educational institutions by decreasing the number of students and has caused a tense atmosphere for educational institutions. Dropping rates of new students and student enrollment are obvious in both secular institutions and church schools. This has caused a crisis in Christian higher education in terms of its identity and the nature of the church. Now educators must emphasize their credentials rather than their Christian testimonies. Economic and societal changes have also influenced government policies, especially for the Ministry of Education in Korea. All institutions in Korea are evaluated by the Ministry of Education. When they evaluate Christian schools, they have started to exclude the religious attributes of the mission schools. Moreover, attending chapel and taking Bible courses are no longer required.



Concerns for integration of the church and education give an alarm to awaken higher education and church leaders to identify where we are now and who we are. I was impressed when Korea Nazarene University was evaluated by IBOE. It re-opened my mind to the fact that the “Nazarene global ministry has centered around evangelism, compassionate ministry, and education”⁶⁴ and should continue its international ministry. KNU is strongly influenced by the Church of the Nazarene to continue emphasizing Nazarene church theology, but it has some weaknesses embodying Wesleyan Holiness doctrines. I agree with Chenoweth that we are bonded as one family, but sometimes I feel like a “gentile” because of my geographical location. It will be great to have many opportunities to be at the table together. ■

ENDNOTE

⁶⁴Church of the Nazarene, *Manual 2005-2009* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2005), 25.

WORK CITED

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