

UNIVERSITY OF THE NATIONS: A NEW KIND OF ANIMAL

by David Joel Hamilton; edited by Dawn Gauslin

Have you ever met someone who said to you, "I don't believe in God!?" And when you asked that person what the characteristics were of the god they didn't believe in, their description was so inaccurate that you replied, "I don't believe in *that* God either!" Just as those people need a new understanding of what God is like, so we need a new, God-given understanding of "university."

What comes to mind when you hear the word "camel"? Humps? Knobby knees? Big lips? What if God created a new camel, with different characteristics? What if it had *no* humps? And what if its lips were replaced with a long trunk? It would be strange looking and unfamiliar.

Regarding the concept of "university," God needs a new animal for a new time--one with different infrastructures, facilities, models, systems and curriculum than those which the traditional concept of university conjures up. Things that were, will not be; things that were not, will be.

What is the purpose of the traditional university? Education. Training. To get a degree. To secure a job. To attain a position. But for what? Generally, it is for *money*. Education and a degree equip the person to move up the social ladder to make economic gains, especially in the developing world.

For example, Santiago, Chile has more medical doctors than they can employ and utilize. In contrast, the islands of southern Chile have no medical care and are in dire need of even the most basic medical treatments. Will the doctors of Santiago go to meet the needs of southern Chile? No, because it is not financially advantageous. Instead, they attempt to get more education to specialize in areas which will hopefully grant even more economic gain.

Some people *do* go to university for humanitarian or Christian causes. But what they receive from a traditional university is incomplete and lacking the proper Biblical foundations to sustain them in the real-life traumas of a refugee camp or AIDS hospice.

How is U of N different than the traditional university?

1. **The University of the Nations is global**, with more than 300 different kinds of courses offered in 60+ languages and held at 330 locations in 120+ nations worldwide.¹ U of N has a requirement that its graduates study on two different continents in order to help students relate to the global village of the 21st century.

¹Statistics updated from September 1997 U of N Workshop in Seoul Korea and April and July 1998 reports by Loren Cunningham to the U of N campus in Lausanne, Switzerland.
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The University of the Nations has not sought accreditation under any one country's system. Because it is a truly global university, it is important that it should not come under the regulations of any nation. To comply with the accreditation requirements or restrictions of one country could bind the growth and development of the U of N in other nations. Rather, as Harvard University did, the U of N would prefer to set a new model and standard of excellence.

2. **The University of the Nations is modular.** Students take one three-month course which concentrates within one intensive area of study rather than studying a multitude of topics all at the same time. The modular approach involves greater focus and produces an increased learning curve.
3. **The University of the Nations integrates theory with practice.** Students apply what they have learned in the classroom through an internship or field assignment. U of N believes in *doing* then teaching rather than *hearing* then teaching.
4. **The University of the Nations utilizes visiting professors.** Rather than having only an in-house faculty, the U of N benefits from the diversity and richness of inviting instructors to come directly from involvement in their field of expertise to share first-hand with students. This leads to a higher quality education with less stagnation. It is also more cost efficient, because there is a smaller resident faculty.
5. **The University of the Nations is rooted within a Biblical Christian world view.** A Biblical basis and perspective is the foundation stone for viewing all of life and learning.

For example, for a fine arts course, one could teach the same basic content in terms of curriculum and skills training as a traditional university, add on a chapel program once or twice a week and call it "Christian education." But at a U of N fine arts course, students would begin by looking at God, the creator and author of all beauty. They would then study the Biblical basis and value of beauty within His economy. This might be followed by a focus on art history from a Christian perspective--how Christianity influenced the arts; how ungodly influences warped artistic expression, etc. Then, with this foundation and perspective, the teaching of practical skills could be integrated.

6. **The University of the Nations focuses on seven spheres of influence within society through its seven colleges:**

Family	College/Faculty of Counseling and Health Care
Church	College/Faculty of Christian Ministries
Education	College/Faculty of Education
Media	College/Faculty of Communication
Arts	College/Faculty of the Arts
Government	College/Faculty of Humanities and International Studies
Business	College/Faculty of Science and Technology

7. **The University of the Nations experience starts with a Discipleship Training School,** which serves as the gateway to an education through University of the Nations or service in Youth With A Mission. The DTS/CDTS begins with the foundations of Christian character and life and follows the scriptural injunction in 2 Peter 1:5-8, "...make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What is the purpose of University of the Nations? The motive is not financial gain, but to touch the lives of people in need of God's touch; not to improve our own lot in life, but to serve others in order that they might improve.

U of N is different because it exists for a different reason--to equip people to do the work of God. To give them "passport skills" to serve in countries they cannot enter as traditional missionaries, or to serve in arenas of society where they could not serve without the qualifying tools to do so.

The Great Commission must always be at the center of the U of N:

Mark 16:15	GO	and PREACH	to INDIVIDUALS
Matt 28:19-20	GO	and DISCIPLE	all NATIONS

This is the dual challenge in God's heart. He wants us to preach to every individual and make disciples of all nations (note: it says *of* all nations, not just *in* all nations). We are to reach individuals with the Gospel so they in turn can be salt and light, shaping every sphere of society. U of N is called to equip people to convert the individual *and* transform society so that "the kingdom of this world may become the Kingdom of our Lord" (Revelation 11:15). It is a tool to accomplish God's age-old dream.

Some of us succeeded in the educational systems of the world; some of us did not. Most of us were hurt through the non-Biblical values of the world's system.

When Juan Carrasco, a Latin YWAMer working in North Africa, heard the description of the U of N as a new kind of animal "like a camel with no humps but with an added trunk," he commented, "You know, I went for a camel ride the other day and it was *very* uncomfortable and awkward. How good to know that God is giving *us* a camel with no humps!"

University of the Nations is a new university--a multiplier for missions--where students are not squeezed into society's mold, but they are shaped into God's destiny for them as individuals in order to reach all of society.