

THE PLACE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE DISCIPLING OF NATIONS

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Lets start with the words of Jesus expressed in the Great Commission. I like the way one of our students in the Communications department related these words in the Great Commission to the University of the Nations (U of N) in a poster as seen on the overhead transparency. It states:

WITH AN ASSIGNMENT LIKE THIS . . .

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Matthew 28:19,20

YOU NEED A UNIVERSITY LIKE THIS:

UNIVERSITY OF THE NATIONS

Tonight we want to focus on the role of the U of N in this awesome commission. First, let's meditate on the words of our Lord in Matthew 28:18-20 for a moment.

A question we have asked from the beginning of planning for YWAM's university is how to respond to the great commission. The concern is the primary theme of this U of N workshop. We started the workshop on the first night with Loren Cunningham's challenge to 'go for it' and maintain the vision. Also he related together with Mark Anderson how the U of N could demonstrate the concept of Discipling communities as an adjunct of Impact World Tours. The plan could conceivably impact millions. We need to seek the Lord about this method. Whatever methods are confirmed we must obey and remember the last part of Matthew 28:20 when Jesus said 'and lo, I am with you always; even to the end of the age'.

The university was called into being by the Lord to help in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is our mandate!

One thing that still surprises me is how some of our students and staff respond when asked how they perceive the University of the Nations. They give answers, which many of you probably

have heard, 'Oh, that is the teaching arm of YWAM'. Teaching courses is certainly an important part of the university. My own feeling, however, is that if our understanding of the university is limited to teaching courses we will not do a great job in the discipling of the nations. Teaching courses is only one part of our mandate. So, what is the university? How do we define "university"? Does it differ from other universities? One of the definitions for university states that it is: "a community of scholars, that provides tertiary education, research and development programs that are related to most areas of society". That is a fairly good definition of a university, but what does it really mean?

Having been involved with universities for over 50 years, I've experienced various ways that universities influence nations. For better or worse, they are discipling nations. Universities not only educate and train future leaders of nations for all of the professions. They also are actively involved directly and indirectly in projects and programs that influence nations' worldviews, policies and institutions. Perhaps by my recalling some things I've learned and personally experienced in universities will help you broaden your understanding of their very significant impact on nations. I pray that as you listen the Holy Spirit will enhance your vision for the U of N.

The first experience I had was in an excellent university before World War 2. At that time I thought universities were primarily to give courses and degrees so students would be prepared for various professions. Universities also represented big-time sports. Since I like football and other sports I thought they were important factors in universities. Actually after my first year at the university I found most courses rather boring, and I learned more ways not to teach than how to teach. However, my worldview was being shaped both within and outside of courses.

One experience that happened between my junior and senior years had a significant impact on my thinking about education. I took a six-weeks short course, filled with only two of us who were regular students. The others were already-trained professionals who were returning in the summer for an advanced short course. I found that the whole atmosphere was different. The participants were not worried about grades. They were very anxious to learn something new. We enjoyed friendly relationships between the students while studying intently but in a relaxed atmosphere. They wanted to help each other, share their experiences and understanding of the course content. This course opened my eyes to the great importance of the learning environment. During my last year in undergraduate school I did senior research, which also gave me new insight and some of the new opportunities in 4 years at the university to be creative.

The USA had now entered WW2, and I began to consider what would be next. My university degree turned out to be a very important passport to my next experiences. To my surprise the Navy offered me a direct commission as an officer, even though I had no military background. I mention this particular time period, because it impacted my life in such a major way and gave me a new understanding of universities, courses, research, and development and related field

experience. My Navy orders read: Report to Princeton University for 2 months and then go to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). It was at MIT that I had my eyes really opened about education. A five-months module of classroom and practical laboratory work shaped my understanding of what could be accomplished in a short time. I would like to call out some of the characteristics of the course module I experienced at MIT, which was held in a high-security isolated building. The Navy had called on MIT professors and those from other universities to put together a program to train radar officers. Note that the universities had become focal points to meet national emergencies, which had arisen. The university contributed not only ideas, teaching materials and personnel, but introduced an unorthodox and effective way of teaching. They used what I call today a top-down approach. They gave an overview of radar and why it was so significant. They told us about the battles being fought and the way radar was influencing the results right at the moment they talked about it. They impressed on us that that how well we listened could be a matter of life and death for many personnel. It was an effective way of getting our attention.

At present we are in another significant battle. It is a spiritual battle, and it is becoming more intense all the time. How well we listen and obey will be a matter of life and death for many. Perhaps some of the principles that were used by the MIT module would be good for us to consider. It shouldn't be too hard to relate to the principles because they are similar to some principles that are being used in our U of N course modules today. Very intense class room modules and hands-on experience wherever possible, followed immediately by a related assignment. In mentioning the intense course modules, I know several of the people here tonight kid me about the concept. Our Navy module was six days a week and often day and night. Yes, it was a time of emergencies, but in reality we are also in a time of emergencies today. We had four hours of lectures in the morning with only a five-minute break. In the afternoon we gained hands-on experience with systems, the radar systems aboard ships and airplanes. Another aspect was a spirit of unity that was developed because of the strong sense of purpose and recognizing we were all in this together. My field assignment module was a sea assignment for about 18 months aboard destroyers in the Pacific. Skills learned in the classroom were quickly applied at sea. In addition, it was now necessary to learn quickly new things not covered in classroom studies, and adapt what was learned to unusually difficult situations.

An even more important lesson was learned by divine revelation. In the midst of battle I learned that God amazingly reaches out with grace, even speaking audibly. No longer was the 23rd Psalm a memory passage in Sunday school, but the Lord assuring me that though I was through the valley of the Shadow of death, I need fear no evil because He is with me. And a follow-up lesson that He can point to specific passages in His word. In my situation it was to forever dispel questions that developed during my undergraduate university studies. In a profound supernatural way He pointed me to John 14:6 to the words of Jesus "I am the way, the truth and the Life; No one comes to the Father, but through me". A gift of faith, His faith, given in the midst of battle in the Pacific Ocean, in His classroom. Yes, He can give us insight and understanding way beyond

anything we can study or read about. Imagine a university that provides an environment where in every course module, program and field assignment the Spirit of the living God can impart in us His wisdom, His faith, His words and directions.

In less than four years my university Bachelors degree had opened doors and given me a passport into the most intense learning period of my life. Universities were experienced as focal points for responding to nations' felt needs. Intense modular education systems provided skills that could be applied quickly to critical situations. Divine revelation was experienced in profound ways that a lifetime of study could not provide.

Following WW2 I went back to graduate school to work on doctoral studies and also work as a teaching assistant. Again I gained further understanding in what universities do and can do. One of the first things that impressed me was in my teaching assignment. There was a tremendous learning environment because we did have an amazing group of students. The war veterans returned to school and they were motivated to learn. The attitude of the students provided a dynamic learning environment. These students had the desire to help each other, and then were thankful for the opportunity to be in the university. I am hopeful that we can maintain such an environment in all our schools. For the most part I think we do. I have had little concern in the past couple years, of the attitude of some of the students. Perhaps we are not always recognizing the need to develop an atmosphere rich in relationships and dealing in reality and providing the opportunities for revelation. We must be careful about the leaning environment. Are we providing environments in which the Holy Spirit is continuously welcome and not shut out because of our techniques or content?

Another benefit I experienced in graduate school is the wealth of resources that are available, and the expertise that is available from many professionals' disciplines. The overall environment that generally exists stimulates creative thinking. I believe that God wants all of to use our creative gifting. A good university should provide exciting and stimulating environments that lead to drawing out of students their creative gifting.

Following my doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin I joined the staff at the University of Illinois. Again I began to learn new things about universities. Teaching was an important part, creating new courses to fill new needs. Research was equally important. Because of developing new courses and doing innovative research many opportunities were opened to me for consulting in industries and government and taking part on national and international committees. Widespread interaction with other major ways. These activities give universities to influence opportunities to disciple nations. Working with research students every day gives the staff opportunities for one-on-one relationships. Indeed, the kind of relationships, which we want between our students and staff. The one-on-one for 10 to 30 minutes can often be more significant than several hours of lectures. In general, I found the combination of teaching, research and development and publications to provide opportunities for university staff and students to

influence policies, to show how to meet felt needs of people groups, and to take part in cutting edge R & D that can impact the future.

Another point concerns prototypes. I certainly found over my years of university research and development that you can spend months and years trying to relate certain concepts, methods and systems to people, but they often don't understand until you demonstrate with prototypes. Your words mean different things, because of misinterpretation or misunderstanding. But once people see a prototype in operation, they can understand what you have been trying to say for years. In a university it is often possible to follow from a concept stage into your prototypes, and then into some kind of production stage, that can impact a whole area in society. In the U of N, we want to have several prototypes that demonstrate the discipling of nations. People groups can look at them and say OK, we know what you mean, and will move forward to multiply the discipling of their nations. I hope that during this conference, regardless of what College/Faculty or Centre you are part of, you will be thinking about prototypes, even making plans to work with others to implement one in specific nation.

The educational resources at a university are normally tremendous. They cover the past and latest developments. The various types of educational resources such as journals, books, videos, Internet, interactive systems, and curricula are generally available. However, they usually lack certain ingredients that we envision for the U of N. I want to share some things on this point because it was in 1974 that YWAM had a very important prayer meeting in Hilo, Hawaii, in which the Lord gave those present a vision and prophecy that YWAM would develop educational resources that would impact every area of society, every age level and in every culture. Those of you, who have written books and experienced how long it takes to write one book, know immediately that such a huge vision is nearly impossible to implement. Because it is so 'humanly impossible' I believe that God would give such a vision to YWAM. The Lord has seen that YWAM has been faithful for many years to tackle the 'impossible'. He saw that here is a group that He can trust.

It might seem that we almost buried the awesome challenge to develop educational resources in an all-encompassing way. Only a few dozen books have been published by YWAMers, and although very good they certainly are barely a start in the educational resource vision. We have a long way to go. However, I believe that what has been happening in the U of N in the last 15 to 17 years, is the building of a foundation that can provide nations with Biblical-based resources in many areas. Our Colleges/Faculties and Centres, which do relate to most areas of society, have been listening carefully to the Lord, and they are receiving revelation, insight and understanding of what and how to communicate in the different cultures, nations, and age levels. I believe that the launching of new educational resource developments is on the horizon. The different types of educational resources could dramatically influence nations and be major factors in their discipling.

So another function of the university, is not just to teach the courses to students that they have in front of them, but to develop the materials and the ways of presenting them so they can spread worldwide and literally impact every area of society. One thing I learned in designing commercial equipment, writing books and even in publishing journal articles, is that instead of impacting only a few hundreds or thousands in the classroom in which you are lecturing, others may take your easily available materials and use them in their context or in their particular culture to influence their nations. So readily available educational resources should be a high priority for the University of the Nations. Seventeen years ago, about 6 months after we started planning the first U of N prototype campus, I believe that the Lord said that YWAM's university would develop the foundations for educational resources that would meet the criteria given in the Hilo prayer meeting in 1974. The university was to be an educational resource to the nations and develop educational materials that would be applicable and multiplied worldwide.

Again, I want to reiterate the need for providing the proper environment for education and creativity. Let's keep in mind that we have the responsibility to release the creativity of the students. If we do release them they will help create the resources needed in the nations. Peter Adams mentioned in his talk that we must stand up for truth and not withdraw. In university work we often find, especially as one receives revelation and impartation from the Holy Spirit that some people feel you have gone of the deep end. New ideas and methods can bring strong opposition. Loren and I can attest to that. But even the opposition can be used by the Lord. When I left research and teaching at the stimulating creative atmosphere, the university thought I had lost it. But the word went around and interestingly when I traveled to speak at universities in other parts of the world, many professors and students would come and ask, "why are you leaving U of I, what is it you believe?" and they would sometimes spend hours asking me detailed questions on what I believe. Previously when I would bring up what I believe, I would usually get a polite but quick response that they had another appointment to meet with somebody. The Lord has mysterious ways of working in our lives.

That brings us up to YWAM's university in late 1977 and planning meetings in 1978. During this period I learned many new things about universities. The Lord provided revelation through staff and friends of YWAM in all areas. Certainly this was to be a university founded on the Word of the Lord, confirmed in dozens of different ways, from people in other YWAM ministries and ministries from outside of YWAM. We recognized that U of N is to be His University, a University of the Spirit, a discipler of nations. We quickly understood that regardless of how many of us would work on the university, how much background and experience all of us might have, even if we could pay salaries that would attract the world leaders including professors from Harvard, Oxford, and various places, we couldn't put together the university the Lord wanted. So line-by-line, precept-by-precept, we have gained understanding of what the Lord wants for the U of N. And I believe revelation will continue until He returns. And all of you in the audience tonight, are some of the answers of what the Lord wants. The Lord is calling hundreds and thousands more into the U of N. And I trust that the Lord will give you an understanding and

insight on the part that he wants you to play in the University of the Nations, perhaps something way beyond your present calling to the university. Maybe it will be a revitalizing of the dreams you've had but have buried because of the apparent impossibilities. I know there are some projects, school, and programs impressed on us implemented in God's perfect timing.

In conclusion, a few features of the U of N that we must keep in mind, include without adequate time for discussing:

1. The integration of evangelism and reformation that other speakers have already mentioned.
2. The development of Biblical-based educational resources, which can be used worldwide at all levels of education. This is a major responsibility that we have as a university.
3. Multi-generational relationships-genuine interaction of the generations. We don't want to isolate our students, staff or the students' families. We desire synergy. In universities it is traditional to separate students, but we want the U of N to operate in community as extended families.
4. U of N is to operate worldwide in multi cultures with unity and diversity. During the first years that we were praying for guidance about the university, even during the forty days of prayer and fasting, the Lord continuously called us back to love passages in the scriptures. We need to review those passages frequently so as to maintain unity.
5. The dynamic of students from many nations and cultures working together is to be maintained.
6. We are to develop, test and refine prototypes that reflect the character of Christ.
7. The University of the Nations is the Lord's university. We must be alert to His voice and obey His directions. Every class, every hour, every moment should be open to teaching from the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we in the U of N have been given an exciting opportunity to serve in the Great Commission. It is our mandate. Awesome! But let's not forget our Lord's promise in Matthew 28:20 " . . . And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."