



### Clarifying Changes in a Key Latin American University

I'm concerned by some of the casual information provided in the article written

by Dr. Joel Carpenter, "The New Evangelical Universities" (Vol. 25, No. 2, p. 6). The words "and a collegiate venture that the Church of the Nazarene started in 1992 from a pre-existing theological school, but then abandoned", in reference to the Universidad Evangélica de las Américas (UNELA), caused me distress because: 1) There was not such abandonment, but rather a legal and ethical issue that needed to be dealt with; 2) the way how the words are played ("venture" and "abandoned") does not make justice to the denomination efforts and the investment made by her in the theological education endeavor for the entirety of the evangelical church, both in the world and in Costa Rica. 3) I was a key player in working with the leadership of the evangelical church in Costa Rica to transfer "Universidad Nazarena" (the first two letters of UNELA were kept as a reflection of the negotiation that took place) to UNELA. 4) Seminario Nazareno de las Américas (SENDAS) has been more than a "collegiate venture" by the denomination. Without interruption, in its 40 yrs of existence or so, today is more active than ever before in preparing at university level hundreds of ministerial students in the 20 countries of Latin America. As a key instrument to that end, I am very pleased that UNELA exists to fulfill a very important task in God's kingdom. And I am also pleased that a Nazarene professional and ordained minister is the head of UNELA.

In Christ,  
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### Response to "Debt and Training"

I couldn't agree with you (Further Reflections March-April 2003) more that college debt is one of the major factors preventing students from actually getting to the field after catching the vision in college. My wife graduated from a major Christian college with about \$50,000 in school loans. Because we knew that getting overseas was a major priority, we decided that all our financial decisions would be made in light of that goal. Therefore, both of us got jobs out of college and we chose a purposefully simple lifestyle. We bought a used car, a small apartment, didn't eat out a lot, etc. In addition, we decided to use 100% of her salary (after tithing) for debt repayment. As a result, we were able to pay off our debt in less than two years!!!

"Joe"

### Will Donors Support Needed Programs?

Today I was pleased to read in the most recent issue of *Mission Frontiers* [the] article, "Pitfalls of Student Selection in Leadership Training in Russia." I just wanted you to know that I think that it was the best written article in that issue and that I agree with everything that you say in it. Of the four reasons in your partial list, I think that the first is still the main problem. Most "residential" programs of theological education and ministry training are not accessible to those who are actually leading the churches in Russia as pastors and missionaries.

However, I would add another reason to the "short list": potential donors (i.e., individual Christians, churches, and foundations) are mostly indifferent to supporting seriously the kinds of strategies and programs that could/would make such education accessible to those who need it but cannot get it. Therefore, serious ministries of theological education and ministry to church leaders that have families, jobs and ongoing local ministry responsibilities (and so cannot make the time for study in a regular daytime/residential program) are unable to expand and continue to have only a limited impact....)

I cannot say how it is in other fields, but church leadership training is still the main need of the church in Russia. As long as that need is essentially unmet, there will be only a limited fulfillment of the Great Commission among most of the unreached people groups to be found within the borders of the Russian Federation. ...

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### Rethinking Western Influences in Japan and Africa

I'm writing to question a point you make in two separate articles in a recent [Jan-Feb 03] *Mission Frontiers*. It has to do with your use of Japan as an illustration of how the problem of non-growth is that the Western garb of the gospel was never exchanged for the indigenous way of looking at things.

I question the thesis in two ways, unless you have a large amount of data not evident here. The first problem is that my decade-long study of Japanese values and culture led me to believe that much that inhibited growth was precisely the opposite of what you say. Japanese church life from structure to expectations is so thoroughly Japanese I sometimes despair. I can document the cultural patterns that seem to me to inhibit growth--both in society and in the church. The other problem--and I have to leave this one to you since your knowledge and insight are so vast--if the thesis is correct, what's with Africa? Now there's a church that has totally adopted Western ways of doing church, and a church that has grown phenomenally. How does that figure?

Why do I hassle you with this? Since this approach to missiology seems to be one of your "biggies" coming on line, I'd like for it to be based on more than Japan's example, which seems to me flaws your thesis. Your thesis--like so many of your innovations through the years--may prove to be helpful. But it may need refining if not re-thinking.

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