

# **TEACHING CREATIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY BY USING AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

## **Panel Presentation**

**Friday, July 14**

Wilbur Brannon: We have a great window of opportunity in the Church of the Nazarene to develop ministers in a whole new paradigm. I want to say a little bit more about that after we get through hearing from these people from various parts of the country, telling us a little bit about the way that they use resources that are available to them and what those resources might be. We can learn from them. I want to make it as spontaneous as I can and let them speak just as they feel it coming out of their heart and so I'd just like to leave it open to each of you and I think Greg has passed out something. Do you want to make any comment on that, Greg?

Greg: Probably you're looking at me and saying, what in the world is he wearing there? He's got a short-sleeved shirt on. Is he crazy? I'll just stand up so you can see a little better. This shirt is an object lesson. It has fingers that are all by themselves. They are disconnected, kind of dried up, and shriveled. They can't do anything. Here you'll notice there's a hand with some pieces of gold in the palm. This shirt illustrates that if you work by yourself, you can't do much, but the whole hand together, the five fingers, can gather something of value—in this case, the gold stones. This shirt then can become a good illustration or object lesson of 1 Corinthians 12, the body of Christ and how each part has an important role to play. I wore this shirt as I went around and drummed up support amongst locals for a Work & Witness team that was coming and I said, "Hey, they're one finger. They can't do it themselves. They need you to come and to pitch in and to work alongside them and help build this building," and so it became an effective lesson.

Brannon: Wonderful! And please take note of what he has passed out. Someone want to pick up on that?

Demerzier Charles: It seems to mean in teaching, it's important that we know the context in which we are working. Sometimes we have more resources than we know. Sometimes we don't have any resources. In my case, when I arrived in Rwanda, I assumed because they were French-speaking countries I was going to function very well. It wasn't the case. I went and talked to a Catholic priest. I'm a black missionary. He was a black missionary. He gave me a book. He told me, you may come to my library anytime. And I studied in the book. I did better than expected. I knew there was a Catholic seminary I could go to make further copies. I knew that I could talk to him about the history of the country, how the people. He gave me a book of proverbs, which in Haiti, we have a little proverbs that I can use to teach. He told me also, if you want to teach, an idea—a very serious idea—find out who is the leader in your group, in your class, and talk to him. If he buys your idea, he will pass it along.

Brannon: We don't have to go down the line. Who . . .

Cookie: One of the things that I noticed when I arrived in Guatemala was that it's obviously a very major Catholic country. It's so Catholic that in the city called Antigua, which is about 45 minutes from the capitol, they had built 37 different convents, churches, major Catholic churches. They did that over about 150 years and then they were all destroyed.

When we're studying the history of the church, instead of just getting our students to Antigua, Guatemala and walking around and looking at some those ruins asking how they were built and

who built them and why they built them and what they built them for? My teachers would rather write things on an overhead projector. It doesn't mean I want my students to be Catholic.

So I would say be creative. Look at the country and find out what they have. Use the things that are there. Get to know your students, know their names, who they are, where they came from, what they eat, how they sit, how they sleep and then get into their hearts and lives. And use the things that are around you and let them know beyond all, you are interested in them. Everybody likes to know that somebody else cares about him or her, I don't care what culture you come from.

Brannon: Excellent. Very good.

Male: My background in design tells me that texture and color and light and sound and smell and all these other things which make us feel like we're a part of something that's going on, we need to be using those in theological education as well. We shouldn't just leave them to a kindergarten class. In fact, if I had my way, I guess I would take all my teachers and put them back through a kindergarten class because there, I think we actually start to know what it means to be engaged in active learning. And we tend to think the older we get, the more refined and dignified we need to be, but I think it's good to get our students in places where all their senses are awakened. If they need to get their hands dirty and bruise their knees and smell an unpleasant smell or a wonderful smell . . . I feel like one of the main things in bringing creativity into the arena of theological education is to try to restore the wonder of learning to people. A lot of the people who are in our local churches are people who have lost wonder. They've lost what it means to deal with the stuff of mystery, which our faith is all about, so anything that can engage them in that again is a worthy venture, however extreme it may be—in my mind. So I think that I'll start with that. I think to awaken the senses is really important.

Brannon: Excellent. Good. Luis?

Luis: Some years ago when I assumed my responsibility in our seminary in Quito, I sat down with our faculty to discuss a lot of resources and projects. But we came to the realization that the subsidies or the monies that we received for our seminary was very little in comparison to what we wanted to do. After some prayer, and seeking other ways to find resources, we heard the voice of the Lord. He said, “What do you have in your hands?” We realized we had a beautiful campus that we were not using the way we should have been using it. We have a saying in our country “Sometimes we act like beggars sitting in a golden seat.”

We had a beautiful campus. We made this brochure that some of you have in your hands. We decided to rent it out to other Christian organizations that would be willing to use it. Somebody told us that this material was too pretty and that we were wasting our money but we did not believe that. We started sharing it with other churches. And the first time it was rented, we recouped the \$4,000 we spent out to publish the brochure. That was 1997. Since then we’ve completed a lot of projects that otherwise we would have been unable to carry out. It not only has given us economical resources, but our seminary is well known in the city of Quito. But the most important thing is that our residential students have found jobs and we have had resources so they can work. Praise the Lord.

Brannon: Wonderful. Who else? Diane, are you ready?

Diane: How many of you have heard of the website, the Wesley Center? Many of you have not. It’s located on NNU’s campus. It is a website that you can come to and download whatever you need in terms of Wesley books. It has literally hundreds and hundreds of texts that are at your

disposal. If for some reason you don't have Internet capability but you have capacity to use a CD ROM, we will sell that to you, very cheaply. Wesley and holiness works, \$35 U.S. dollars. And if for some reason that would be a problem for you and just let me know and I will take care of that for you.

One other thing I'll just let you know about and that I don't know that anyone here actually knows about because it has just come into being. Northwest Nazarene University has decided to start a master's degree in theology, completely on the Internet so there's no residential component to it whatsoever. You can get an M.A. if you live somewhere else in the world. You never need to set foot on our campus. And we're real excited about that and if you want to know more, ask Gary Waller or me but in September, we're having our first class and in the spring, our second class. So if that would meet some of these needs of persons who need a master's level degree but can't come to a different place, we're trying to make that a service that we have.

One comment I would just make is that we have much to learn from you. We are so over-resourced and so pressured to use all of the best and latest technology that sometimes I think we can lose sight of the purpose of education in terms of being truly personal. I'm excited to hear of creative ways to operate without resources because I think those of us who are over-resourced need to be reminded what it's all about.

Brannon: Great. We haven't heard from you, David.

David: The booklet you've got is a list of some of the resources that we've found useful. Though we're technically a first-world country, there are lots of areas that we don't have the money to buy books. We have areas of extension that don't have internet access so you'll see we have CDs we can put in a case and cart with us and have a library at a very cheap rate. We also

have maps and chart booklets that we can take. They're very cheap and we can do a lot of teaching with those. At the very back of that resource is a list of books. Each book contains a vast amount of information. In some of our extension centers, we might just take one or two books with us and actually have quite a broad amount of information.

We're also working very hard in trying to translate what we do in the classroom into pastoral practice. This year we've started a 300-hour program that is compulsory for all of our ministerial students. It is a college/pastor/mentor/student/church support program that operates in terms of 41 competencies that the pastor demonstrates and the student watches. The pastor does it and the student participates. The student does most of it. The pastor watches and finally the student is released to go off and do it by himself. The 41 competencies are in areas of worship, administration, pastoral care, evangelism, and personal and family development. It can be done 300 hours straight through, spread over one year, two years, or three years. Some of our students do it after graduation. All it needs is one single photocopied book and the pastor, the student, a small congregation or support team and one of the college personnel. It's a master apprenticeship model and we're finding that very, very useful.

The Baptist church in Queensland spent \$60,000 developing this program. We bought the right to use their program and to modify it for the Church of the Nazarene. We have the right to sell it to anybody on the same basis that we got it. If you're interested in looking at that kind of thing any time, we'll be glad to help you out.

Brannon: How many have heard of the Centennial Initiative? Would you raise your hand? Most of you have. Dr. Roger Hahn at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City is the director of that program. The purpose is to have up-to-date, current theological thought for use in developing texts that can be used in our schools. It's a major project of updating all of our

textbooks, particularly those that relate to theology, church history, and the practice of ministry. If you are interested in knowing more about that, contact Dr. Hahn.

I would also like to add something that NPH demonstrated at the February Centennial Initiative meeting. They can take an out-of-print book and through outsourcing, reprint that book on demand, at the equivalent cost of what it would normally be. If you have a textbook that you are using that is no longer in print and you want copies of it, it would behoove you to contact Hardy Weathers or someone from NPH to find out what they could do.

John Haines: I really believe that imagination is a treasure. Our first encounter of God is as creator. We're told we were made in His image. I was made to be a creator of things, to use my imagination. One book that I have found really, really valuable in this area is by Maria Harris, called *Teaching and Religious Imagination*. It's now out of print, unfortunately, but it is in some of the good theological libraries. I'm of the opinion that this book should be in the hands of every Nazarene educator everywhere

Another book is *Managing Today's University*. It is an excellent book in regard to the structures and infrastructures of colleges, universities and how to keep them going.

I have a great affection for ancient cultures. One of the things I've learned in studying ancient cultures is that they always used things that could be in the hands to teach. So a couple suggestions that I offer are things like using rope or twine or torn fabric to weave the primary lessons of a course into a strong phylactery of commitment to the truths learned in that course. It's a visual aid. It's something that engages a student in actually working through the lessons of the course and gives them something to forever remind them of the lessons learned. The same would be true of a tribal leader's ancient walking staff where the story of the tribe or the story of

the tradition is normally passed down orally, would be inscribed, carved or written around that staff. I don't know too many cultures, even in advanced cultures and civilizations, that are not basically story cultures. I think we do ourselves and our students a great disservice to discount the value of story in teaching and learning.

Where I can get access to video players I use a lot of video segments in teaching to illustrate some point. I brought a video that I would like to show when this is finished tonight. It's a six-video series called "From the Earth to the Moon." It was produced by Tom Hanks. It's an excellent series about the whole story of going to the moon and walking on it. There is one episode that tells how, in the later days of Apollo, they decided that the classroom experience of the astronauts was not paying off. It was not doing what it was meant to do. They decided to go and become field geologists under a very, very creative teacher. This whole episode is about how they were going and walking out of the classroom and getting into the field, getting their hands dirty with what they were to learn so that when they were those many, many, many miles away, they could talk what they saw and describe it in such a way that people who had no way to see it would be able to know exactly what they were looking at. I think that's a valuable lesson for us in theological education. Videos are a wonderful tool.

Brannon: Thank you. Demerzier, you had talked about parables and story telling.

Demerzier: Most of you know that the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition is a small piece in the theological pie. We don't find textbooks very often. We don't have commentaries very often. As teachers, we have to use textbooks or commentaries from different editions. It is our job then to figure out how to do it without betraying the Wesleyan tradition. One of the ways we use it in Rwanda and Congo is to figure out the cultural understanding for the covenant . . . I was teaching about covenants and talked to people about how the tribes covenant together.

They told me the story of a long time ago in Rwanda, if a clan is going to marry somebody in another clan, the fathers will get together and they will cut each other with a knife. Then they will take the blood from one clan to the other clan and that will mean then the two can get married. They can never fight. I used that story to explain the concept of covenant between God and us. I used the story first, referring to the cultural background of the student. They never forgot that when we talked about the concept of the covenant and the Bible, because we used the story they knew.

Brannon: Greg, go ahead. You were about ready to say something, too.

Greg: To piggyback on the story idea, the story is told that long, long ago, God lived nearer to men. But one day there was a Guynayan woman who had her wooden mortar and her wooden pestle and she was pounding out fufu, which is like a yam/plantain kind of thing. She hit into the sky because the sky was low. That was where God lived and God got upset with her. He said, “You shouldn’t do that. I’m going to move away where you cannot hit me.” So God moved up, up, up farther away and the woman was sad. She said to others around, “We need to be able to get up to God.” They placed all the wooden mortars that they could find in a pile. They almost got up to heaven but it wasn’t quite far enough. They lacked one wooden mortar. They looked everywhere but they couldn’t find the one last one that would get them back up to where God was now.

Finally, out of desperation, the woman said to the children, “Take one of those off the bottom and put it up there on top.” They pulled it out. The whole pile came crashing down and many children were killed. It’s an illustration, from the African understanding, yes, God exists. He’s way up there somewhere but He’s so high and so hard to understand. He’s beyond reach. We

might call that hyper-transcendence or something like that from a theological point of view. But it gives the African concept of God, which is that we need some sort of go-betweens, ancestors or spirits perhaps.

David: One of the things that we've done quite a bit is role-playing. Teaching about weddings, funerals, baptisms and all the rest of it is fine, but many pastors don't do their first ones until they're actually in the church. We've made a good use of role-playing. We have a wedding. We have a funeral. We have a baptism. We also take our students down to the local morgue. We take them to the crematorium. We take them to the hospital. For many in our culture, they never see a dead body and they're never around those sorts of areas. We take them into jails. We take them into mental institutions so that they can see and experience and be involved in these things in a relatively safe environment. They role-play it when we come back. We get them to role-play situations in hospitals, mental homes and in prisons. We're finding that a very useful teaching tool.

Brannon. Great. I was wondering if there's any question that you'd like to address to any of them from what they have said so far.

Cookie: I filled in for a teacher for a few semesters in teaching Old Testament. It was the first or second day of classes. All the male students had on ties. I, of course, was not wearing my tie that day. And I said to them, "Ties? Why are you wearing ties?" They said, "Well, we're starting our practicum this year. We're going to be pastors. We have to wear ties because we don't have to get dirty and be the laborers."

I'm reading through the syllabus and saying, "We're going to be studying the law. We're going to be studying covenant," etc. A young Indian student said, "Law? What law are we going to be

studying? The law that you grew up under?” I said, “No, Tomas, we’re going to be studying the law from the Old Testament.”

When we got to covenant he said to me, “What in the world would a covenant be? You guys don’t really make serious covenants like we do.” Now he knows. He’s just making fun because he had broken the covenant, by not becoming a Mayan priest like his father and grandfather. I said, “Okay, let’s make a covenant.” He got everybody to say, “Let’s make a covenant with Cookie. Let’s make an agreement. Let’s do something.”

So I said, “You guys promise to wear ties every day for the next semester and I will promise to . . . Tomas spoke up and said, “You’ll take us all out to eat to a nice—the nicest—restaurant in Guatemala City.” So I’m thinking, they’re never going to keep the covenant. I said, “bien necho—shake hands.” And they of course wore ties every day for the rest of the semester. I tried to pay the girls, one of the female students, to go into their rooms and steal their ties. She wouldn’t do that. I tried to cut their ties apart with scissors. They wouldn’t let me do that. At the end of the semester, I had to pay dearly to take them to the nicest restaurant in the country.

But amazingly enough, when that student came back to start another class a couple of years later, he said, “You know, it was kind of silly to do that covenant thing, wasn’t it? But spiritually, we need to make sure our covenant with God is just that lived out.” That wasn’t a thought-out, creative idea but it is something the students will never forget. Look for those opportunities.

Greg: We’ve all learned in church history about when St. Patrick went to Ireland, he looked around for an illustration of the Trinity. He found the three-leafed clover and took that to illustrate God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We don’t have three-leaf clover in Cote d’Ivoire. We have bananas. One day I was eating my breakfast and I had a banana. I

must not have been too hungry because I started playing with my food; you know the things you tell your kids not to do. I took the banana and started rolling it between my fingers. It came apart in my hand into three equal parts – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Brannon: All right. That’s a good illustration. Plenty of bananas around. Okay. Any other question? I don’t want to take much time but I do have something that I’d like to emphasize that has to do with all of you who are teaching ministerial students. It’s a statement out of the *Manual*. It’s in English that I have. I don’t know how it translates into Spanish and some of the other vernacular languages but it is a strong statement and I’d like to read it right out of the *Manual* so you know how it reads. It’s part of the paragraph 424.3

The last sentence under competency reads: “Graduation from the Course of Study requires the partnering of the educational provider with a local church to direct students in ministerial practices and competency development.” Now that’s not a passive statement. That is a requirement. They may graduate from your program in your institution or they may graduate from your extension program or through your Internet program but they are not to be graduated from the Course of Study unless there’s a partnering that takes place between the educational provider and a local church. These two entities are required to get together and collaborate with one another to direct the students in ministerial practices and competency development.

Now that’s not to come at the end of one’s educational program. This is something that must take place while the educational process is going on. I’m saying that this is the lynchpin that holds the whole new paradigm of ministerial preparation as we now have it in the *Manual* together. If we do not take this seriously, if we pass over it, ignore it, evade it, dismiss it, or act like it’s not there, we might as well shove our sourcebooks on the shelves, let them gather dust and keep doing it the same old way we’ve always been doing it.

The thing that makes this approach to ministerial development work is when we begin at the earliest stages of a person's recognition of God's call upon his life and the pastor or a mentoring faculty member, whoever it is that is sensitively perceiving God's work in that person's life in the form and the shape of a call upon his life for ministry, needs to begin mentoring and helping that person clarify that person's call and connect the gifts and the graces that they are demonstrating with the categories and roles of ministry that are expressed in the *Manual* so that they begin to understand what direction they ought to take in the development of their ministry. This is a requirement. This puts the ministerial studies board in a new role. This puts the education system in a new role. This puts your institutions in a new role that you haven't had or expected before.

There was a time when we could say when a person was sensing a call to preach, go to college. When you graduate, they'll prepare you for ministry and then we'll put you in the church. That time is gone, at least in the United States. It's not happening that way. We've got to recognize the responsibility of helping to shape that person in the context of the congregational life of a mentoring and learning and teaching congregation so that they begin to understand what God is saying to them. And while they're in the process of learning concepts in the classroom, cognitive learning is taking place at the same time experiential learning is taking place, while they apply the knowledge that is gained in books and lectures and classroom experience in the actual practice of ministry. And what they learn in the practice of ministry informs the classroom how this concept is working or how it should be adjusted.

Now I don't know if I can make it any plainer than that or not, but I'm saying that these things must come together. There has to be a partnering between these two environments. The best that's in the environment of the learning . . . or the teaching institution must be connected with

the best that's in a congregational environment where there is a learning and mentoring environment by a pastor and a group of laity—by the way, laity make good mentors as well as pastors—and these two environments come together and connect so that the person who is being formed in ministry, from the beginning . . . issues raised must be at the beginning of the call so that as they move through the process of being prepared and being developed.

I make a distinction between clergy preparation and ministerial development. Ministerial development includes educational preparation but educational preparation is not the only thing that's necessary for ministerial development. It means that we must . . . by the way, LeBron, I'm passionate about this. And by the way, it's been mandated by the *Manual*. But Mike tells me that we have the job of simply persuading of our constituency what we already believe in and I believe we can get a buy-in if everybody will understand that we must be on the same page here and make sure that there is a connection that must take place.

I like to see, in my mind, the vision of a transit system where there are two tracks. There is the conceptual track. There is the field experience track. And there are the cross ties that hold those two tracks parallel and each is dynamic and working together. I get excited about this. The cross ties represent the dynamic, creative energy that takes place between what happens in the classroom and what happens in the congregational life and in the community life of which the church must impact. And then underneath is the roadbed, the foundation of character formation, so that you have the four Cs right there in one visual—character, content, competency and context. It's the context of the dynamic, creative energy that takes place there.

Well, I don't want to rub it in the ground but I hope that you can get my passion. I say that we've got to do this. We cannot compromise at this point, but the thing that ties in with that is that fact that you as educators are under obligation under God, not just to see what's going on in

their head but what's going on in their heart. There are three things that I told the General Superintendents last week about the new Course of Study that I feel have to be across the curriculum and as we're developing modules that can be applied internationally, at multi-levels, we want to make sure that there are three things that are in each of those modules—the partnering that I've been talking about, spiritual formation is another thing. It's not as though we categorize someone as good, bad or indifferent by one choice they make, but it's by the observation of what's taking place in the development of that person and helping to guide them to be Christlike and to help them understand what it means to apply holiness in practical ways, to let love come out and express itself in ways that we heard about this morning, so that we are in the process of developing character as we're developing minds.

And the third thing is we must teach with a purpose and I feel, at least from my perspective representing the credentialing side of ministerial development that goes right along with the track of educational preparation. You can't move along one track without moving along the other track at the same time. And I'm saying that we must spend time deliberating on the purpose of ministerial development and from my perspective—I'm ready to be corrected anytime—but from my perspective at this point, the purpose of developing ministers, both in the classroom and in the environment of a learning and teach congregation, is to be missional. We must prepare people of God to be . . . to sense that they are on God's mission. It's not our mission.

We've understood missionary in a way that has distanced our responsibility to what it means to be on mission. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I'm sending you." And so I'm telling my people and the pastors that I work with that it's your responsibility, not only to be a man on mission, but to lead your congregation in mission. It's God's mission and Jesus came with a mission, saying, "The kingdom of God is here." That's good news. Enter it. Rejoice with it and let's proclaim it wherever we go. So I'm saying to you, let's make sure that in the passion that

we express in our classroom, we're not just talking to the head but we're seeing that hearts are developed and we're seeing spiritual formation take place and we're pressing upon them the vision of a mission that all of us must be on in accomplishing God's will for our lives. And that concludes our time together.