

# **THE “HOLISTIC BENEFITS” OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Adult and Graduate Studies Graduation Banquet  
May 14, 2005  
Dr. E. LeBron Fairbanks**

Congratulations to you, students in the Mount Vernon Nazarene University Adult and Graduate Studies program, who will graduate next week from the university!

Recently I read the book, God on the Quad by Naomi Schafer Riley. She reports in the book on her three-year study of 20 strongly confessional colleges and universities. Students on these campuses, “religiously affiliated colleges and universities” like MVNU, are today considered a “missionary generation” influencing American society, business and government through servant leadership.

In fact, MVNU’s vision statement reads: “Mount Vernon Nazarene University: an academic community of faith shaping Christ-like leaders for lifelong service and global impact.”

Mount Vernon Nazarene University seeks to provide a holistic education as an intentionally Christian teaching university. The university provides the context for a transformative experience through excellent academics, opportunities for service, caring relationships and a nurturing and social environment. MVNU challenges students to achieve their highest potential to become increasingly Christ-like, and to make a difference in their world through lifelong service.

Christian higher education institutions like Mount Vernon Nazarene University strive to educate students in an environment where student values, character formation, integrity, fairness, honesty, service learning and social responsibility are integrated into the learning process. I trust that you have pursued your program of studies in this environment.

If we at MVNU have been successful in our educational mission, you are well prepared for the greater vocation of life and service and are grounded in the qualities of ethics and values. What MVNU's DNA? It is this. We teach the context of Christian ethics and Christian values!

MVNU is passionate about fostering a student culture committed to impacting the world with a "missionary" spirit.

"To seek to learn is to seek to serve" is the motto of MVNU. The university dreams of competent servant leaders with a "faithful intellect" guiding and guarding them as they influence and impact the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Mount Vernon Nazarene University cultivates the creative and active integration of faith and learning where faith, heart, soul and intellect function holistically to empower students. This characterizes the university at her best!

MVNU believes the values and ethics of the servant-leader take on added significance regardless of where they are expressed – the court room, the board room, the classroom, the operating room or the living room. One person can make a difference in this world. You are that person.

The "holistic benefits" of a Christian higher education experience at MVNU. They are many! They are foundational. You have experienced them. Go from this university to significantly impact your home, church, community and the company for whom you work.

I am honored to be your university president. Represent your alma mater well! Grace and peace to you.

E. LeBron Fairbanks