

# Africa Speaks

*An Anthology  
of the  
Africa Nazarene  
Theology Conference  
2003*

Compiled and Edited by Linda Braaten

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## **FORWARD**

“The world is shrinking” is an often repeated statement. CNN delivers news from around the world to our living rooms. The Web allows instant access to current events and on-line shopping. A press conference announcing the winner of the bid to host the 2010 Soccer World Cup is viewed simultaneously in Amsterdam, Johannesburg, Nairobi, London, and Kansas City. Satellite link ups for computers, and cell phones are common in many parts of the world. Fast food restaurants such as McDonald’s are found in Moscow, Johannesburg, and New York. Non-stop flights make it possible to be in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire in the morning and Atlanta, Georgia later the same day. The world is shrinking.

What does that mean to those of us who are educators and theologians in the Church of the Nazarene?

In my mind, it means that we can no longer say we are an International Church without inviting representatives from all regions to give voice to our emerging philosophy of education and a discourse on our theology and doctrine.

It means that the significant challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene must be acknowledged and discussed by the global church, not just the church in North America:

- The church is experiencing rapid global growth in the context of rising educational expectations.
- The opening of many new world areas has created a critical need for pastors where we have no educational structures in place.
- Expanded areas of ministry demand new contextualized textbooks and library materials for ministerial preparation beyond our current resources.
- The mission philosophy of the church includes a conscious effort to develop strong indigenous leadership. This requires that emerging leaders be firmly grounded theologically and Biblically and that they have resources and competency to preserve the heritage of the church.

With this in mind, the 2002 Global Theology Conference, Church of the Nazarene was convened in Guatemala City in April 2002. Representatives from the Church around the world were invited to take part in a conversation, as members of the church and citizens of the world.

- The conversation considered the implications of proclaiming the gospel faithfully in the present age, without abandoning the heritage that shaped our past, and with the awareness of cultural diversity.
- The conversation was to help us clarify who we are as the Church of the Nazarene, with an understanding of how our past has influenced our denomination at present, looking forward to a future faithful to who we are and to the hope God has inspired within us.
- The conversation focused on topics relevant to our mission, memory, holiness, and hope. Formal papers were prepared and read in advance. Groups of twelve to twenty theologians dialogued together on each topic area. Men and women, academics and pastors, church leaders and laity, North Americans and Africans all took part in the conversation.

The representatives from Africa region had a voice, and used it in their cohort groups and in combined sessions. They led worship and invited others to continue the conversation over meals and while walking between sessions. And they continued the dialogue as they returned to Africa and their places of service. It was clear. The conversation must continue all the way to the local church and pastor. An Africa Nazarene Theology Conference was needed to make it possible for the entire church of Africa to take part in the conversation.

This book contains the papers that guided the conversation. I was there, and let me assure you that the conversation was often intense and sometimes painful. Issues were raised and honest exchange took place amongst church leaders who have devoted their lives to the service of Christ and the entire denomination. We talked about the practices of holiness; about how the church gives hope to the community; about our calling to be witnesses in the world.

As you read the pages of this anthology, my prayer is that what began as a global conversation will continue in the Church in Africa and that you will learn ways to better serve your congregations and communities as the agents of change and of God's love and care.

It is my privilege to be a member of this great global church and a partner with you in ministry.

Dr Jerry D Lambert  
Education Commissioner  
International Board of Education  
Church of the Nazarene

## **INTRODUCTION**

When some of us talked about the possibility of a theology conference for Africa Region, it all seemed like a dream that might be beyond our lifetime. Little did we know that this dream would be a reality in November 2003 when the first ever theology conference for Africa Region was held at the Good News Convention Centre at Nazarene Theological College in Johannesburg, South Africa. The invitation was for the Nazarenes of Africa to “Come now, let us reason together...” (Isaiah 1:18).

It all started in April 2002 with the African representation that attended the Global Theology Conference in Guatemala. The experience was such that we came back inspired and challenged to make it a reality for Africa Region. We are grateful to the leadership – Regional Director Dr J Fred Huff, Regional Education Coordinator Dr Ken Walker, and Education Commissioner, IBOE Dr Jerry Lambert who helped facilitate the way forward. From this point on, a host of individuals, primarily Africans were involved to make the dream come true.

A meeting was called in May 2003 with as many representatives who attended the global conference as possible to reflect on our experiences and forge the way for a theology conference in Africa. It was agreed that the general format to be followed would be similar to that of the Global Theology Conference. A Planning Committee was appointed which assigned working committees to organize the conference: Logistics, Selection, Worship, and Programme Committees.

As Chair of the Selection Committee, I had the great fortune to work with the planning committee, field directors, and district superintendents to find writers for the conference, and then with each of the writers. Nominations were made based on the criteria, which was simple: faculty, pastors, missionaries, administrators, alumni, graduate students, and lay leaders; women, men, active or retired, and from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Nazarenes in good standing with the Church who were trained in, with a strong interest in, and/or good examples of practitioners of theology, were especially preferred. Themes and guidelines were given to the nominees.

Excitement increased in spite of the challenges we experienced with communication. Papers came in. More and more people got involved as more sub-committees and working groups were appointed for various responsibilities. Papers that better addressed the themes were selected for presentation while the others constituted selected readings. Responses were solicited. All of the written papers were edited, formatted, translated, and made available to the participants

either in hard copy or through the web site before the conference with the aid of our field education coordinators, 53 papers in all.

Accommodations were booked and the menu set. The necessary equipment was scheduled. Worship was organized by fields, with devotions from the different parts of Africa. The programme was finalized. Participants were arranged in small groups of 10 to 12 for increased individual involvement in discussions. Each small group had a leader, a cross-cultural communications facilitator, and a secretary. Moderators were selected to lead the plenary sessions. French and Portuguese interpreters were solicited so that all participants would have clear understanding.

Little did the organizers realize how much the African Nazarenes wanted to reason and talk, and that is what they did! At the end, affirmations were drawn and presented. Africa had spoken! She had started reasoning together and thus had spoken. That is what this book is all about. A collection of thoughts put to paper and discussed at this first ever theology conference on Africa Region.

Space and time will not allow me to individually express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all those who contributed in different ways towards making this experience possible. However, special appreciation is due to the following: field education coordinators: Ramby Campbell, James Craig, Russ Frazier, Joe Lilema, Russ Lovett, Karen McKinley, and Margaret Scott, and their field sub-selection committees; the theme selection committee chairs: Enoch Litswele, Mashangu Maluleka, Wally Marais, and their committees; the editorial committee members: Karen Campbell, Sonya Daniels, and Emma Fetters; Steve Doerr and the translation committees: Dany Gomis and the French language team, Daniel Monteiro and the Portuguese language team; the moderators: Patrick Thomas, Odette Pinheiro, Samuel Daka, and Mashangu Maluleka; the affirmation team members: Eugénio Duarte, Enoch Litswele, Odette Pinheiro, and Patrick Thomas on Holiness; Hendrik Vorster, Samuel Daka, Leah Marangu, and Walter Motaung on Hope; Chanshi Chanda, Wally Marais, Collen Magagula, Chariot Shongwe, and Paulo Sueia on Great Commission; all of the writers and respondents; the small group facilitators; and to the moderators, for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to making the conference a success.

This book marks the beginning of a conversation that we trust will be ongoing among the Nazarenes on the Africa Region.

Rev Daphne Mathebula  
Selection Committee Chair  
Lecturer, Nazarene Theological College (NTC)  
Muldersdrift, South Africa

## PREFACE

The first Africa Theology Conference sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene was “a resounding success by all standards” according to one of the participants. It was certainly a special time never to be forgotten. “Come now, let us reason together!” was the motto chosen for this conference. It is interesting that the *New Revised Standard Version* translates the same passage, “Come now, let us argue it out.” There was no arguing at this conference, only reasoning. The discussions were cordial, collegial, stimulating, and challenging, as groups of 10-12 delegates deliberated on important issues of the church in Africa. It is believed that from these discussions came issues that will formulate direction for future theology conferences. Affirmations from each of the major themes have also been compiled and included in this anthology. These affirmations have already been helpful in assisting the Association of Nazarene Educational Systems in Africa (ANESA) in developing a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for education entitled: *Looking to the Future: 2005-2010*.

There were special guests and speakers in attendance at the conference. Dr Jim Bond, General Superintendent in jurisdiction of the Africa Region Church of the Nazarene, affirmed his support of the conference as he gave the opening address, *Sound the Trumpet*, a challenging message on holiness in which he emphasized the need for the prophet to communicate clearly the message and for Christlikeness to be present in the life of every believer. He proclaimed boldly, “I believe the trumpet must blast forth the glorious good news of Jesus, His power to save from all sin, to sanctify wholly, restore within us His own blessed image, and enable us to live Jesus-like in this present world.” He continued, “It is time to sound the trumpet... by making sure the trumpet is finely tuned, making sure we are all playing the same song and we must do it now!”.

Dr William Greathouse, Church Patriarch of Theology, and General Superintendent Emeritus in the Church of the Nazarene graced this conference with his presence and preaching. He presented the keynote address entitled: *Sanctification and the Christus Victor Motif in Wesleyan Theology*. Beginning with a summary of Gustaf Aulen’s classical view of the atonement entitled *Christus Victor*, and moving through the Epistles, especially Romans; and culminating with insightful observations in the work of Wesley, Greathouse demonstrated historically and biblically that the exalted view of God’s complete work in Christ for us becomes “his victory in us by the indwelling Spirit” (Romans 8:1-11). This he explained was accomplished by three stages: conversion, entire sanctification, and glorification. Dr Greathouse stated, “Christ’s victory thus becomes blessed reality in entire sanctification, in the perfecting of our love. This

separation of the soul from sin to God is ‘the final object God has in mind in crucifying the old man’”.

This was the mature thought of a Wesley/biblical scholar who has witnessed past eccentricities of the holiness movement as well as some contemporary expressions that seem to miss this powerful Bible truth and thus move away from both the Scriptures and Wesley. With emphasis on faith in what God has done for us in Christ and the necessity of a complete break with sin and putting oneself wholly at the disposal of God, Greathouse presaged the emphasis of the conference, which was the practice of the doctrine of holiness in life. These emphases were also stressed in his sermons. His availability to answer questions and to dialogue with everyone warmed the hearts of all participants.

Africans were invited to present papers on the themes of Holiness, Hope, and Great Commission. Other Africans were then invited to respond to the papers presented. And Africans led the conference. Over 150 participated in this theology conference convened at the Good News Conference Center in Johannesburg, South Africa. Participants included pastors, district superintendents, educators, and laymen. It was a time for Africa to speak and Africa did just that. All of the papers presented at the conference are included in this anthology. There are other papers included here listed as *Selected Readings* that were written for the conference but were not included in the discussions because of time constraints.

The theme of Holiness was explored more from a practical approach than from a theological one. The door was open for the presenters to write in any direction of their choosing but it seemed there was more interest in presenting and discussing holiness for practical living than for a theological understanding of it. Three primary important issues were explored as they relate to holiness. These were “tongues”, “culture”, and “polygamy”. Although no specific conclusions were drawn, there were some statements presented by the holiness affirmation team. (1) It was pointed out that “this phenomenon [speaking in unknown tongues] was remarkably absent from the ministry of Jesus” and that the evidence of the Holy Spirit is the “purification of the heart that is made known by the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25) in the life of the believer...” (2) The conference affirmed that “God’s standards are Christlikeness and holiness within the framework of all cultures” and that Christ is the transformer of culture. Jesus did not reject his own culture nor was he a slave to it. We must learn to understand the reasons behind certain cultural practices and distinguish between what is good, bad, or neutral as it relates to each cultural context. (3) Perhaps the one single issue that was the most discussed was that of polygamy. The interest in this issue points out just how much it is a part of the African culture. Neither polygamy nor serial polygamy (divorcing one wife and taking another and perhaps divorcing a second wife and

taking a third) is the answer for holiness people. A general consensus prevailed that this issue needs further study and discussion by Africans. The affirmation team has requested the Regional Advisory Council to appoint a Commission comprised of men and women, lay and clergy to study this issue and formulate an official position.

The theme of Hope was of great interest to all as the conference discussed the problems of Africa that negate against hope... civil war, strife, drought, floods, AIDS, and poverty. Solutions to these problems seem to continue to evade everyone in Africa. But it was declared that the Church must be the agent through which hope reaches the people. The conference suggested that any solution would demand a holistic approach. Education was pointed out to be the most important part of this approach. The Church needs to empower Africans with knowledge, competencies, and technical skills that will assist them in finding ways to help themselves. The church needs to instil a sense of ownership and responsibility into its people. And the church needs to partner and network with others in seeking ways to offer hope. The affirmation team stated clearly, “We affirm that God has ordained the Church to be the instrument for bringing hope to the people of Africa and that the local church must be the hope for the community in which it exists”.

The Great Commission theme resounded with the message that the local church is the key to spreading the gospel and establishing people of God in the faith. All were encouraged to use all the tools, including the JESUS Film, that are available to the local church for purposes of evangelism and teaching. Evangelism includes making our people aware of social issues and injustices along with the responsibility to do something about it, again supporting the idea of a holistic ministry. The traditional methods of evangelism must continue to find a place within the local church with its focus on the message of salvation and a changed heart preached by the evangelist and prophet.

Another important theme of the conference was Memory with an emphasis on the history of missions in Africa. Dr Enoch Litswele, Assistant to the Regional Director, presented a paper entitled: *Memory of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa*, challenging Africans to write the history of the church in Africa. Dr Litswele said, “Most, if not all, of what has been written is from the eyes of missionaries. These are valuable perspectives but Africans see things differently. We need to record what we have seen and what we know.” All hearts responded positively to his plea.

Enthusiastic response was given to the *Affirmation Statements* presented by each affirmation team. As these statements were presented one by one, it was obvious that Africa was indeed speaking. We believe that this book, *Africa Speaks: An Anthology of the Africa Nazarene Theology Conference 2003* will serve as a

## *Preface*

milestone event in the life of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa challenging everyone to continue to speak and write.

Of course, for a conference such as this to take place, there must be dedicated individuals who will take on and carry out the specific responsibilities. There are many who contributed to the overall 'success' of the conference. I would like to offer my heartfelt appreciation to the Planning Committee members: Linda Braaten, J Ramby Campbell, Filimao Chambo, Enoch Litswele, Collen Magagula, Daphne Mathebula, Salatiel Munedzimwe, Paulo Sueia, Patrick Thomas, and Hendrik Vorster for the unending hours of preparation given to this first theology conference in Africa. Ms Braaten worked with all of the committees as needed and as the executive editor for the papers and this anthology, along with Mrs Peggy deJager from my office. Rev Campbell chaired the Logistics Committee, Rev Chambo was Programme Committee Chair, Rev Mathebula chaired our Selection Committee, and Mr Munedzimwe was the Worship Committee chair. Each of them worked with members of their respective fields to contribute to the diversity and involvement of as many individuals as possible in the conference. I count it a privilege to have collaborated with them.

We are especially indebted to Dr Greathouse, Dr Bond, Dr Lambert, and Dr Huff for making the conference a priority and for the great contributions they made.

Many others, too many to mention, dedicated their time and talent to the conference. To each of those individuals I express my most sincere appreciation. Without you, we would not be able to present *Africa Speaks* as a living testimony to our efforts and to our ongoing commitment to build God's Kingdom in Africa.

Dr P Ken Walker  
Planning Committee Chair  
Regional Education Coordinator for Africa  
Nazarene Education Services  
Johannesburg, South Africa

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

The papers contained in this Anthology were written for the Africa Nazarene Theology Conference 2003. In preparing the documents for print, I have re-read each of the papers, and been impressed once again on how important it is for the Africa Church of the Nazarene to continue the dialogue which began in Guatemala City in 2002 and continued on the continent of Africa in 2003. As you reflect on what has been written on these pages, would you consider a written response of what God places on your heart? The more individuals who become actively involved in the discourse, the more God can work to move the Church in Africa to a position of greater strength and power in the areas of Holiness, Hope, Memory, and the Great Commission. You are invited to send your additional reflections in written form to Nazarene Education Services (NES) for review. Selected responses may be included on the NES Web Site.

Although a major portion of the writings is by African authors who are gifted in as many as 12 to 16 languages and dialects of Africa, others who have lived and worked for the Church in Africa as missionaries, Nazarenes in Volunteer Service and educators have contributed.

It is important to note that many of the papers were written in either French or Portuguese and translated so that participants would be able to read and respond in their language - English, French, or Portuguese.

A copy of this Anthology is planned for publication in French later in 2004. A Portuguese copy is scheduled for publication in early 2005.

It is anticipated that all readers, not only those who were present at the Africa Nazarene Theology Conference 2003, will find new insights into the themes presented, and will gain a greater appreciation for the African writers who were willing to tackle the task of writing so that their voice would be heard at the theology conference.

It is also our hope that even more Africans will be challenged to write about the topics presented here and others that are important to the growing church in Africa.

Linda D Braaten  
Planning Committee  
Resource Development Coordinator  
Nazarene Education Services  
Johannesburg, South Africa



## **Part 1: OPENING ADDRESS**

### **1**

#### **Sound the Trumpet**

Dr Jim Bond  
General Superintendent

We have just heard the familiar tune, “Called Unto Holiness”, played on a slightly out of tune trumpet. I wish I could have jumped into your mind to know what you were experiencing.

The dissonance of an out of tune trumpet is an annoying distraction - the sound is harsh and jarring to the ear and perplexing to the mind. What am I hearing? Does this guy know the instrument is out of tune? You are embarrassed for him - and all of us? Because of what you were hearing you probably did not think of the text or the melody of this great hymn. The out of tune trumpet caused us to forfeit a moment of inspiration in uniting us afresh in our common cause and challenge. Incidentally Jim Buchanan and Dinah Huff know the trumpet is out of tune. Jim did this at my request - and to his embarrassment! And Dinah agreed to accompany him. It sets the stage for my text: “If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?” (I Corinthians 14:1-12).

As you can see, my text is smack dab in the middle of Paul’s address of perhaps the thorniest of many thorny issues that had arisen in the Corinthian Church. The issue is - glossolalia (speaking in tongues).

In addressing the problem, Paul juxtaposes the spiritual gift of prophecy against the gift of tongues. He acknowledges both as gifts of the Spirit: he minces no words in stating that prophecy is the superior gift. He characterizes tongues as edifying oneself. By contrast he who prophesies edifies the Church (v. 4).

Therefore he admonishes the Corinthians to “eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy” (v. 1). And in verse 12 he says, “Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church”. How does one “edify” or “build-up” the church through the gift

of prophesy? What does it mean to be “prophetic”?

Historically, prophetism has related to an understanding of God’s role and activity in the human situation. That Divine role has normally been understood, interpreted, and announced by one who is called a prophet. As a prophet one exercises two main functions:

- 1) “Sees - apprehends that which is not normally apparent - that which is revealed by God, and
- 2) “Speaks forth” - proclaims that which he has seen - that which God has shown him.

I view prophets as people who:

- 1) Think critically - reading the times, understanding the Church, listening to God, and
- 2) Act catalytically - speaking for God to move people, particularly the people of God, to accomplish God’s purpose.

Walter Brueggeman in *The Prophetic Imagination* states, “the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us”. The key word is alternative. Prophets provide a different view of things.

As “seers” they see things through Divinely enlightened eyes.

They perceive alternative ways of accomplishing mission.

They live on the edge.

They are risk takers.

They are pathfinders for the Church.

They dare to stand up and say, “Follow me as I follow Christ”.

They persevere, even when misunderstood.

By exercising their gift of prophesy, they “edify” the Church.

Listen to Paul in verse 3, “But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.” That is the three-fold way the prophet edifies the community of faith. Then Paul gives real insight into how the prophet gets the message and how he/she proclaims it. Listen again to verse 6, “Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?”

Paul gives us a definitive word about how the prophet gets his message - “revelation” or “knowledge”. It may come as a direct revelation from God - the prophet has truth that has been given to him from God. It may come through knowledge - the process of discovering truth through study and human experience which is essentially non-supernatural. So through revelation and/or knowledge the prophet gets the message. How does he communicate the message? Through “prophecy or word of instruction” - through preaching and teaching (kerygma and didache).

Then Paul gives some vivid illustrations regarding **the need for the prophet to communicate clearly the message.**

The flute and the harp were well-known musical instruments but the music from these instruments is senseless sounds unless they are played very precisely, giving careful attention to pitch, tone, and time. “How will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes?” (verse 7). And then Paul states almost wistfully “If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?” Ladies and gentlemen, it is the responsibility of the prophets in the Church to ensure that the Trumpet sounds a clear call - and we are a collection of the Church’s prophets!

My friends and colleagues in ministry, I suggest to you:

1. Our trumpets must be finely tuned.
2. We must be trumpeting the same tune.
3. Leaders must trumpet the church to action **now.**

## **I. OUR TRUMPETS MUST BE FINELY TUNED**

I’m reminded of Lloyd Douglas telling the story of the old violin teacher.

“What is the good news today, my friend?”

Putting his violin down, the old man stepped over to the tuning fork suspended on a silk cord and struck it a smart blow with a padded mallet. As he did so, he said, “There’s the good news today. That, my friend, is A. It was A all day yesterday. It will be A all day tomorrow, next week and for a thousand years. The tenor next door flats his notes and the piano across the hall is out of tune. There is noise all around me but that, my friend, is A.”

When the gospel trumpet is out of tune, we must bring it to the tuning fork. What is our tuning fork? The everlasting truth of God revealed to us in

Jesus the Son of God - the Living Word - And the everlasting truth of God as recorded for us in the Book of God - the written word.

I suppose that for us Wesleyans, the tuning fork is truth made known through the composite of tradition, reason, experience, and, of course, of supreme importance, the Holy Scriptures (the Wesley quadrilateral).

Are our trumpets sounding a clear call today? Are our trumpets making uncertain sounds? Are they out of tune? If so (and I fear some may be), we need to bring them to the tuning fork to make sure that they are sounding a clear call. The prophets' trumpet can get out of tune so subtly, so easily and one can keep blowing the out-of-tune trumpet, unaware that he is not sounding pure, crystal clear notes.

Let me illustrate. You've seen the popular bumper sticker - "Christians Aren't Perfect, Just Forgiven". Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy* challenges this because he contends that it says that forgiveness alone is what Christianity is all about - It says you can have a faith in Christ that brings forgiveness "while in every other respect your life is no different from that of others who have no faith in Christ at all". He questions - "Can we seriously believe that God would establish a plan of forgiveness that leaves human nature untouched? Can we believe that being saved is all forgiveness and has nothing to do with the kind of persons we are? Are we to suppose that in fact Jesus has no substantial impact on our "real lives"?" So, for Willard, the Gospel has been reduced to the "Gospel of Sin Management" - We have come to the place where the Christian message is thought to be essentially concerned only with how to deal with sin. And Willard lays the blame at the feet of the Church's prophets - This condition is "the natural consequence of the basic message as it is heard today". The trumpet is not sounding a clear call. The trumpet is out of tune. To be sure, forgiveness and justification are a vital aspect of the Gospel message. But the problem is, for Willard, that justification has taken the place of regeneration.

How well are we doing? Is our trumpet well tuned? Are all the valves working? What can we Wesleyan prophets reasonably expect to happen in the lives of people who actually hear and believe the message we proclaim? Forgiveness only? Transformation? Is the trumpet hitting clear, distinguishable notes from our pulpits? If so, it is trumpeting intelligibly the full-orbed Gospel message which includes justification and

regeneration.

I suspect that we are doing fairly well in our proclamation of initial salvation. I hear wonderful reports of conversions at District Assemblies. At the Central California District Assembly - Doug Samples reported that he asked a new convert from Bakersfield First Church "How much has Jesus changed your life?" His reply was, "Darn near total". Miracles - Signs of the power of God in Jesus Christ to transform human life.

That great Quaker woman who lived a century ago, Hannah Whitall Smith, gives a marvellous testimony. After she came to discover that Jesus becomes for us our "wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30,31) that God in Christ has been implanted in our hearts and lives so that God's qualities become our qualities: This is the way she describes it. "What had come to me now was a discovery and in no sense an attainment. I had not become a better woman than I was before, but I found out that Christ was a better Saviour than I thought he was".

We are doing fairly well proclaiming initial salvation.

If the trumpet is not sounding the **full** gospel message - prevenient grace, justification, regeneration, entire sanctification, - all for the purpose of shaping us into God's own moral image - and enabling us to live Christlike lives in this present world -then we need to bring the trumpet back to the tuning fork. Anything less than the full gospel message is not enough - we must be utilizing all the valves of the instrument and they must be accurately tuned. Our trumpets must be finely tuned.

## **II. WE MUST BE TRUMPETING THE SAME TUNE**

"How will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes" (verse 7). I assume we would concur that our most important treasure is the doctrinal truth which John Wesley labelled "Christian Perfection" or "Perfect Love". This is, to quote Wesley, "the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appears to have raised us up". If that is true, then the proclamation of this doctrinal truth is why we exist and ultimately, the spreading of the gospel of Christian holiness should be more important to us than any of our denominations individually or all of us collectively. Our doctrinal truth is more important than growing or preserving denominations. We do not exist to perpetuate

denominations but to proclaim the liberating message of full salvation and to do it in language that is understandable so that its truth may be grasped and lived in this present generation.

The message and its proclamation must be our primary purpose and if it is, then I pray that God will restore to us prophets a fiery passion in its proclamation so that we might be God's instruments to ignite a mighty conflagration of holy fire among the holiness people around the world.

The importance of theologically literate pastors and laity and the enfleshment of holiness theology in our lives is not simply an ideal or luxury - it is essential in preserving the integrity of the gospel and the fidelity of the church and enabling us to be true to our God-given mission.

How well are we doing in our proclamation? I am confident that in many quarters we are doing quite well - but frankly, I am a little apprehensive about how well we are doing generally. I fear that we are not all trumpeting the same tune. My concerns are based primarily on three issues. 1) Everything I read, hear, and observe about modern culture informs me that people today eschew doctrinal preaching. It is not popular to preach doctrine, which means that for our pastors, it is easier and more acceptable to preach a nice, genteel, non-offensive gospel - a "kinder, gentler" gospel - the "gospel of sin management". No one is immune not even Holiness preachers from this subtle temptation to preach to people "what their itching ears want to hear" (II Timothy 4:3). But if that is the tact we choose, if we fall victim to this temptation, we forfeit our doctrinal distinctiveness.

2) There is confusion among us as to what constitutes authentic holiness preaching. I suspect that one could go into many of our churches today and hear an old-timer say, "Our pastor never preaches holiness" and the pastor would say, "Why I preach holiness almost every Sunday". Truth is that both may be correct - The old-timer is talking about entire sanctification as a second definite work of divine grace and its instantaneousness in experience. The pastor is talking about the process of Christian holiness and advancement in Christlikeness. My concern is that in earlier days we probably emphasized the (secondness) crisis experience to the neglect of the process and realizing our error, the pendulum has swung to the other pole. The fact is we need both kinds of preaching. We must have balance in solid, sound, practical, biblical, doctrinal preaching / teaching which

emphasizes both crisis and process. 3) The discussion among our scholars as to whether we should adhere to classical Wesleyan theology or follow the Wesleyan holiness traditions that have come out of Early American Methodism. Now I do not think that the discussion is bad for us. There must always be a place for open and honest debate among our scholars. I will defend that. My concern is the ultimate impact of this discussion upon our preachers who come from our educational institutions and enter our pulpits. It hit me with tremendous force that through my “growing up” days in the Church of the Nazarene, through my college and seminary training, my thought was shaped largely by the Wesleyan holiness tradition. Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS) was founded in 1945 with no courses focusing exclusively on Wesley and his theology - and that continued for 23 years! We had no such courses until William Greathouse became president of NTS in 1968. I attended NTS 1959-1962 so I was schooled largely in the Wesleyan holiness tradition / early American Methodism. Frankly, this is essentially the way I believed and preached though I have been profoundly influenced by Wesley studies since my NTS days.

Let me say that I think it is prudent to allow for both traditions in our theology, recognizing that it may make for some differences in the way it is preached. The Church of the Nazarene “Articles of Faith” makes such provision. In 1984 the Board of General Superintendents ruled that either view may be taught. My concern is what effect is this having on our preaching. I doubt that anything is more critically important to us today than the Proclamation of this glorious doctrine.

I believe in this glorious doctrine.

- 1) Biblical
- 2) Greatest saints of the church testify to it
- 3) It meets the deepest need of the human heart.
- 4) I believe I have experienced it.

As a 5-year-old child, I opened the door of my heart to Jesus. As a 15 year old, I gave my whole life to Jesus. I believe that I was entirely sanctified at that time. How do I know? My knowledge obviously was very limited but I was walking in the light that I had and I yielded my whole life to Jesus to the best of my knowledge. True, the witness of the Spirit within has ebbed and flowed like the ocean tides over the years. True, that the commitment

in the depths of my being has often been flawed (less than perfect) as it was lived out at the surface of my life. But I testify tonight that for 50 years now, my soul “has been rooted and fixed in God” - and it is my faith this moment I am being cleansed by the blood of Jesus and I am being filled by the very Spirit of God Himself in Jesus Christ. I testify to it to the glory and honour of the One who is my Life. If you are living in this glorious relationship you want to proclaim to the world so that all may know the joy and life and hope that is ours in Jesus.

How do we proclaim this glorious message of full salvation? I do not believe that this perfection language is well suited to grab the attention of a post-modern (post Christian) era that is supposedly doctrinally disinterested. That’s not the “up-front” language that will attract, in fact I fear that it will repel. Perfection language may be utilized effectively in the discipling process but probably not in evangelism. We have to get the attention of the worldlings. It is an incomparable challenge. How do we do it? How can we best communicate the doctrine of Christian Holiness? By the proclamation of our best message - the winsome, wonderful, irresistibly compelling Jesus who is the true light that gives light to every man coming into the world -Jesus who is already faithfully witnessing in every heart through the Holy Spirit. “We preach Jesus” - The Jesus who came to reconcile the world unto Himself, who said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself”. We preach Jesus “who has become for us wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption” (I Corinthians 1:31).

We preach Jesus! And I believe the best way to communicate holiness today is to preach holiness as Jesus likeness. That is the message that people can understand in every age. Jesus came into this world for salvific purposes but he also came to model and teach the life for which we were created - Christlikeness is the essence of holiness.

We believe this involves an experience in initial salvation, a second definite work of grace in which the sinful self / ego bias is cleansed and Jesus is enthroned as Sovereign Lord and we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We spend the rest of our days in obedience and faith, daring to believe with the Apostle Paul that we “are being transformed into the image of Christ with ever - increasing glory” (II Corinthians 3:18).

When the trumpet is finely tuned, all the valves are functioning, and we are

all playing the same tune, the trumpet flows with the most incredible music this world has ever heard - it is glorious, melodious music - Music that vibrates with living hope because it addresses the deepest needs of empty lives, smashed dreams, and broken hearts. I believe the trumpet must blast forth the glorious good news of Jesus, His power to save from all sin, to sanctify wholly, restore within us His own blessed image, and enable us to live Jesus-like in this present world. We all need to be trumpeting the same tune and I believe that is the tune we need to be playing!

### **III. NOW IS THE TIME TO TRUMPET THE CHURCH TO ACTION**

The trumpet in the Bible is often engaged to sound the call to action. Judges 6:34 “Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and he blew a trumpet, summoning the people to follow him”. Gideon reduced his warriors down to 300 to go against the “Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples who settled in the valley, thick as locusts. The camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore” (Judges 7:12). But in the middle of the night, Gideon and his little band surrounded them, broke their pitchers and blew their trumpets and God routed / destroyed the enemy before their very eyes.

And how about Joshua and the battle of Jericho?

“When the trumpets sounded and the people gave a loud shout, the walls collapsed”.

Folks, it is time to sound the trumpets, calling the people to follow us. We are the leaders; it is our responsibility to lead. How?

- 1) Make sure the trumpet is finely tuned.
- 2) Make sure we are all playing the same song.
- 3) And we must do it now.

We can no longer tolerate dissonance in the trumpets. We can no longer tolerate confusion over the tune we are to play. If the trumpet is not sounding clearly our message, then our prophetic ministry is muted - To put it in the context of I Corinthians 14 we are no better than those who publicly speak in tongues without interpretation - they feel good themselves but they do no one else any good. We may feel really good about our preaching / teaching like those who speak in tongues. But if the message is not being trumpeted clearly, it ultimately will fail to “edify” or “build-up” the church. What do we do? Where do we go from here? An

edict from the Board of General Superintendents or District Superintendents is not the answer. Instead of nit picking over exotic Wesley issues - Focus on bringing unity to the message and its proclamation.

- 1) Call a summit meeting of leaders and our scholars / our professors and our practitioners.
- 2) Consider Wesley's annual conferences. Can it work in the context of our district assemblies?
- 3) We must work more intentionally with all our ministers during the credentialing and ordination process to ensure that they know and understand our doctrines, are experiencing them, and can proclaim them clearly.
- 4) We leaders must lead the way in modelling the living and proclamation of the doctrines.

### **CONCLUSION:**

I conclude with a great quote from Al Trusdale and Bonnie Perry's book, *A Dangerous Hope*.

Let the Church be a people that heralds the gospel of true hope in this world so pitifully broken by false hope. Let the Church live in the hope that advances the Kingdom of God in His good creation. Let there be holy living through the meaning and power of the gospel. May we be people who live in, and live out, the dangerous Christian hope by placing all of life in the gospel's promises. And may we live under the Holy Spirit's comprehensive cleansing, empowerment, and governance. Amen

And may God help us as the prophets of the Church to put the fine tuned trumpet of gospel truth to our mouths and trumpet the complete message of God's salvific activity in Jesus for therein is our one and only message.

## **Part 2: KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

### **2**

#### **Sanctification and the Christus Victor Motif in Wesleyan Theology**

Dr William M Greathouse  
General Superintendent Emeritus

Gustaf Aulen's *Christus Victor*<sup>1</sup> ranks as one of the most influential works on the atonement to appear in our time. Aulen calls for a thorough revision of the traditional account of the history of the idea of the atonement to give fresh emphasis to a view of Christ's work which he describes as the "dramatic" motif. Its central theme is the idea of the atonement as a divine conflict and victory in which Christ--Christus Victor--enlists and vanquishes Satan, sin, and death.<sup>2</sup> He insists that this dramatic understanding of Christ's work is a true doctrine of atonement because in this act God reconciles the world to himself.<sup>3</sup> Although Christ's death is at the heart of redemption, the Cross presupposes the Incarnation, for it was the Son of God in the flesh who met and vanquished evil.<sup>4</sup> It also embraces the resurrection and ascension, for by raising his Son from the dead to his own right hand God fulfilled the conditions for the promised gift of the Spirit by which Christ's historic victory is mediated to believers.<sup>5</sup> The Cross also envisions the consummation of redemption when God will send his Son a second time to raise and glorify us with him.<sup>6</sup>

This view of Christ's work Aulen calls "the classic idea" of the atonement. He sees it as the dominant idea of the New Testament.<sup>7</sup> Thus it did not spring into being in the early church or arrive as an importation from some

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<sup>1</sup> Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), translated by A. G. Hebert.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 20-21, 41-44.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 22, 31-32, 44

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 61-80.

outside source.

It was, in fact, the ruling idea of the atonement for the first thousand years of Christian history. In the Middle Ages it was gradually ousted from its place in the theological teaching of the church, but it survived still in her devotional language and in her art. It confronts us again, more vigorously and profoundly expressed than ever before, in Martin Luther, and it constituted an important part of his expression of the Christian faith. It has therefore every right to claim the title of the classic idea of the atonement.<sup>8</sup>

Aulen has done the church a service in rescuing the dramatic view of Christ's work and restoring it to its rightful place as a New Testament account of the atonement.

In the traditional understanding of the history of the idea of the atonement the Christus Victor teaching has been slighted, if not rejected outright, along with the ransom theory which grew out of it.<sup>9</sup> Aulen shows how the New Testament does indeed see Christ's work as a divine conquest of evil. Moreover, he seems to have successfully demonstrated that this is a view of atonement and not merely a doctrine of salvation. Furthermore, this representation of Christ's redemptive work preserves the biblical teaching that the atonement is from beginning to end the work of God.<sup>10</sup> It also dynamically fuses the objective and subjective features of this work. Such a viewpoint provides a sound basis for pointing up weaknesses in both the Anselmic and Abelardian theories.

It may be questioned, however, whether any one view of the atonement can be rightly titled "classic." The New Testament regards Christ's work in at least three ways: as propitiation, as redemption, and as reconciliation. As sinners we are guilty and exposed to the wrath of God; in Christ God propitiates his wrath and expiates our guilt. As sinners we are in bondage to Satan and sin; Christ's redemptive act delivers us from bondage and sets us at liberty. As sinners we are alienated and estranged from God; we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. The Christus Victor motif elucidates the second representation of the atonement. While Aulen

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> It was Origen (185-254 A.D.) who converted the Christus Victor idea into a theory of a ransom paid to Satan.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18

maintains that the other two ideas may be fully subsumed under this one view,<sup>11</sup> it may be questioned that the dramatic motif adequately embraces the notions of propitiation and reconciliation. Strong biblical and experiential reasons seem to have given rise to the emphases of Anselm and Abelard. A truly classic doctrine of atonement includes both the ideas of satisfaction and of revelation as well as of that of redemption. Whatever weaknesses we may find in the Anselmic and Abelardian theories, we cannot deny that they voice two distinct scriptural perspectives. It is a question whether these viewpoints can be fully expressed in the Christus Victor doctrine.

In spite of these questions, Christus Victor is a view of Christ's work that highlights the atonement as the destruction of sin that makes possible true sanctification and perfection. While it may be too much to claim that it provides the entire framework for explaining Christ's work, it does give Wesleyan theology a significant biblical and historical basis for developing a thoroughgoing Christological doctrine of sanctification. The Christus Victor idea "directs attention not primarily to the punishment and the other consequences of sin, but to sin itself. It is sin itself which is overcome by Christ, and annihilated; it is from the power of sin itself that man is set free."<sup>12</sup> In Christ God has sanctified the race; this sanctification is accomplished within us as Christ comes to indwell us in the Spirit. "The classic idea of salvation is that the victory which Christ gained once for all is continued in the work of the Holy Spirit, and its fruits reaped."<sup>13</sup>

### CHRIST'S VICTORY FOR US

The atonement has several facets. Viewed from the standpoint of human guilt and our deep need for pardon and acceptance, Christ crucified is God's perfect oblation making possible our justification (Romans 3:21-26; 1 Corinthians 1:30b). Seen from the perspective of our enmity toward God and our profound yearning for restored fellowship, Christ provides reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 2:11-22). Again, perceived from the angle of humankind's bondage to evil, Christ crucified is the conqueror of Satan, sin, and death. It is this third point of view--Christus Victor--which Aulen sees as dominant until Anselm, and it is this

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<sup>11</sup> *Christus Victor*, 71-73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote on 148; cf. pages 22-25.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

understanding of Christ's work that furnishes the most solid basis for a dynamic biblical doctrine of sanctification.

This view presupposes that it was only by meeting the forces of evil on their own ground, only, that is, by getting into history where they were entrenched, that Christ could break their power.<sup>14</sup> He partook of flesh and blood that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:13-14). In his final effort to destroy the Prince of Life (Jesus Christ) the devil overextended and thus defeated himself (John 12:31; cf. 16:11; 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 1 John 2:8). God the Father "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over him in him (Christ)" (Colossians 2:15 RSV).

Christus Victor, moreover, not only defeated Satan; he destroyed sin itself. "The reason the Son of God was manifested was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8 RSV). John means that Christ came to destroy the principle of lawlessness (*anomia*--1 John 3:4), which was the devil's chief work in humankind.

Paul gives the fullest treatment of sanctification within the context of Romans 5:12-8:39. Particularly critical to this idea are Romans 6:6 and 8:3. First, Romans 6:6--"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (KJV). Knowing what? This, that in and with the death of Jesus on Calvary we were provisionally crucified also, so that we might be delivered from sin for a life of love-service to God. Paul puts the same idea slightly differently in 2 Corinthians--"For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and was raised" (5:14-15 RSV).

Two definitions are in order with reference to Romans 6:6: "our old man" (*ho palaios hemen anthropos*) and "the body of sin" (*to soma tes hamartias*). The first expression must be understood in the light of Romans 5:12-14; the second, of Romans 7:14-25. Both must be defined in terms of these two contexts. Here are two concepts that describe different aspects of human sinfulness. "Our old man" is therefore "Adam, and

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<sup>14</sup> James S. Stewart, *A Faith to Proclaim* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 94.

ourselves in Adam."<sup>15</sup>

"The body of sin" should be taken as the possessive genitive: "sin's body," or "the body of which sin has taken possession, 'the body that is so apt to be the instrument of its own carnal impulses.'"<sup>16</sup> Indwelt by sin (*he hamartia*)<sup>17</sup> I am hopelessly divided against myself and reduced to moral impotence (Romans 7:14-25). Paul's other term for this sin-dominated body is "flesh" (*sarx*--Romans 7:18; cf. 8:8).<sup>18</sup>

Now, Paul says, "Our old man was crucified with Christ, so that sin's body (i.e., *sarx*, the flesh) might be destroyed, that henceforth we might not be enslaved by sin." Karl Barth has vividly paraphrased Paul:

This is our knowledge of Jesus Christ on which our faith is founded--that the "old man," i.e. we ourselves as God's enemies, have been crucified and killed in and with the crucifixion of the man Jesus at Golgotha, so that the "body" (i.e., the subject, the person needed for the doing) of sin, the man who can sin and will sin and shall sin has been removed, destroyed, done away with, is simply no longer there (and has therefore not merely been "made powerless").<sup>19</sup>

Whatever Barth may allow by this, his words give true expression of Paul's declaration. As a new man in Christ I am to hear the gospel saying to me that my old self in Adam has been crucified with Christ in order that my total person may be liberated from sin, so that I may serve God in "righteousness for sanctification" (Romans 6:19 RSV). This is the whole meaning of Romans 6.

Romans 8:3 relates this to the incarnation. Christ's victory could be won only in the flesh. But there, where sin had established its rule, Christus Victor routed it decisively. "For God has done what the law, weakened by

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<sup>15</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 125.

<sup>16</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), 158.

<sup>17</sup> The key term for sin in Romans 5:12--8:10, literally "the sin" principle, which occurs at least 28 times..

<sup>18</sup> As "body" (*soma*) is my total self concretely expressed, so "flesh" (*sarx*) is my whole person alienated from God and therefore subjected to my own creaturehood and sin.

<sup>19</sup> Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), 69.

the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh ("sin's flesh" or "sin-dominated flesh"), and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh" (NRSV). "Condemned" means more than to register disapproval; the law does that. Christ "'pronounced the doom of sin.' Sin was henceforth deposed from its autocratic power."<sup>20</sup> "By his life of perfect obedience, and his victorious death and resurrection," C H Dodd comments, "the reign of sin over human nature has been broken."<sup>21</sup> The Son of God "'condemned' that 'sin' which was 'in' our 'flesh,'" Wesley asserts, "gave sentence that sin should be destroyed and the believer wholly delivered from it" (Romans 8:3, *Explanatory Notes*). On the very ground

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<sup>20</sup> C. Anderson Scott, "Romans," *The Abingdon Bible Commentary* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929), 1153.

<sup>21</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), 93. "As Origen noted, we human beings have 'the flesh of sin,' but the Son had the 'likeness of sinful flesh.' He came in a form like us in that he became a member of the sin-oriented human race; he experienced the effects of sin and suffered death, the result of sin, as one 'cursed' by the law (Gal. 3:12). Thus in his own person he coped with the power of sin. Paul's use of the phrase *sarx hamartias* denoted not the guilty human condition, but the proneness of humanity made of flesh that is oriented to sin" (Fitzmyer, "Romans" in *Anchor Bible*, 33:485). "Those who believe that it was fallen human nature which was assumed have even more cause than had the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism to see the whole of Christ's life on earth as having redemptive significance; for, in this view [which was espoused by the early church fathers], Christ's life before His actual ministry and death was not just a standing where unfallen Adam had stood without yielding to the temptation to which Adam succumbed, but a matter of starting from where we start, subjected to all the evil pressures which we inherit and using the altogether unpromising and unsuitable material of our corrupt nature to work out a perfect sinless obedience" (C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:383, footnote 2). Colin Gunton concurs: "To bear fallen flesh is necessary if Jesus is to complete the work to which he was called. What is important soteriologically was that Jesus was enabled to resist temptation, not by some immanent conditioning, but by virtue of his obedience to the guidance of the Spirit." (*Christ and Creation*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992], 54). For us, gaining mastery over fallen flesh requires that we be born again, Jesus needed no second birth--his conception and birth by the Spirit enabled him to live without sinning "[God] with the view to the destruction of sin," Gregory of Nyssa wrote, "was blended with human nature, like a sun as it were making his dwelling in a murky cave and by His presence dissipating the darkness by means of His light. For though He took our filth upon Himself, yet He is not Himself defiled by the pollution, but in His own self He purifies the filth" (*Antirrhetic adv. Apollinaris*, 26). Jesus' assumption of our fallen flesh was the *sine qua non* of our redemption, for "'He could heal only what he assumed" (Gregory of Nazianzus). *He became what we are that we might become what he is*. Such was the dominating theme of the Christology of the orthodox Fathers who fashioned the ecumenical creeds.

where sin had established itself--in human flesh--the Son of God has vanquished sin and potentially sanctified our human existence!

### CHRIST'S VICTORY IN US

Christ's victory for us becomes his victory in us by the indwelling Spirit (Romans 8:1-11). Christ's victory is reproduced in us. In the Holy Spirit, Christ for us becomes Christ in us, recapitulating in our history his triumph over sin. This is the meaning of Christus Victor for sanctification.<sup>22</sup> Every demon we meet is foredoomed in Christ. Sin itself has lost its power for the believer in whom Christ dwells. "Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world... and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith... We know that anyone born of God does not sin, but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him" (1 John 4:4; 5:4, 18 RSV).

This victory is given to us in three stages--in conversion, in entire sanctification, and in glorification.

Victory over sin begins in conversion. This is the clear teaching of Romans 6:1-11. This is our knowledge of the gospel--that we ourselves have been crucified in the person of Christ crucified. Paul insists that we grasp the truth that this has already happened to us "in principle" in our justification and regeneration. "For he who has died is freed from sin" (6:6). But in order to reap the full benefits of God's provision we must furnish what Godet calls "moral cooperation." "The believer understands that the final object which God has in view in crucifying the old man (v. 6) is to realize the life of the Risen One (vv. 8, 9), and he enters actively into the divine thought."<sup>23</sup>

To "enter actively into the divine thought" and thereby realize true sanctification involves:

1. A faith-knowledge that God has actually accomplished the

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<sup>22</sup> The first Adam disobeyed God and died; the last Adam died rather than disobey him, becoming "obedient unto death--even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him" (Philippians 2:8-9 NRSV). And "being ... exalted at the right hand of the God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out" the Spirit upon yielded believers, *reproducing in us the very holiness of Christ!* (Acts 2:33). Thus the glorified Christ, through the gift of the Pentecostal Spirit, fulfils the New Covenant promise of entire sanctification (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-27).

<sup>23</sup> F. Godet, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), 244.

destruction of sin in Christ crucified and resurrected, and that in my conversion I have embraced his death to sin and with him have been raised to "newness of life" in which I am no longer sin's slave, and

2. A complete break with sin (Romans 6:12-13a) and a putting of myself absolutely at God's disposal in a critical act of consecration (6:13a, 19) so that I may begin to realize the full life of the Risen Lord in me.

We have already provisionally died with Christ through our participation in his crucifixion; now we must permit that death to reach to the very depths of our being as we cease from self and begin to live wholly to God. The death of the "old man" is thus a process initiated by conversion and realized in entire sanctification. "In principle" we die with Christ in justification; in full reality we die with him when we yield up ourselves to God as Jesus gave up his spirit to the Father on the cross. Here Wesley has a guiding word:

A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant, he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin till it is separated from his soul; and in that instant, he lives the full life of love. So the change wrought when the soul died to sin is of a different kind and infinitely greater than any before, and than he can conceive, till he experiences it. Yet he still grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity.<sup>24</sup>

Christ's victory thus becomes blessed reality in entire sanctification, in the perfecting of our love. This separation of the soul from sin to God is "the final object God has in mind in crucifying the old man" (Romans 6). Viewed positively, this act of God is life in the Spirit (Romans 8). Christ re-enacts in us the sanctification he accomplished in the atonement. By his perfect obedience and victorious death and resurrection he provisionally expelled sin from human experience; now he comes in the Spirit to dwell and reign in us and thereby work in us the loving obedience which fulfils the "just requirement" of the law (Romans 8:4--Gr. *dikaioma*). Thus Christ himself becomes our sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30c). "For in him the

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<sup>24</sup> John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, reprint), 62.

whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him" (Colossians 2:9-10 RSV). This fulness, however, is not a private, mystical, quietistic union with Christ. It is social; it is life in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 2:21-2:7; 4:4-16; Colossians 3:1-4, 11-17; cf. Hebrews 2:10-13). In the Body of Christ--the *koinonia* of the Spirit--we discover the full meaning of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:21-29).

To put the matter in fullest perspective we must add one further word. Christ's victory is complete but not final. We have been "saved in hope"--the hope of resurrection and glorification with Christ (Romans 8:17-15; 1 Corinthians 15:22-28; Philippians 3:12-21). Meanwhile our sanctification has the character of spiritual warfare in which our victory over sin is assured as we permit Christ to live moment-by-moment in us (John 15:1-6; Ephesians 6:10-15; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:18-23; Romans 8:12-13, 26-39; Romans 13:11-14; Hebrews 7:25). This is the practical meaning of Christus Victor for a theology of holiness. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"--over the dominion of sin in conversion, over sin itself in sanctification, over the racial consequences of sin in glorification.

### WESLEY AND CHRISTUS VICTOR

John Deschner has pointed out the relevance of Christus Victor for Wesley's doctrine of sanctification:

The grand theme of Wesleyan Atonement is Christ's bearing our guilt and punishment on the cross. This atonement is Wesley's ground for man's entire salvation, his sanctification, as well as his justification. But alongside this judicial scheme of thought there is also in Wesley a pervasive tendency to view Christ's work on Good Friday and Easter, but also today and in the future, in terms of a military victory for us over sin and evil. Much attention has been given to the power of the Holy Spirit in Wesley's doctrine of sanctification. It needs to be more clearly recognized that the sanctifying spirit is the spirit of the victorious as well as the suffering Christ.<sup>25</sup>

Wesley's *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* make it abundantly

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<sup>25</sup> John Deschner, *Wesley's Christology* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1960), 116.

clear that he both knew and appreciated the Christus Victor idea, and three of his Standard Sermons deal with this theme.<sup>26</sup> However, Wesley does not take full advantage of the implications of this view for his doctrine of holiness. "It may well be that this is a weakness in his doctrine of sanctification," Colin Williams observes. "There is a stress on a conscious individual relationship with Christ, and little emphasis is given to the need for the repetition of Christ's victory in us."<sup>27</sup> Such a view of sanctification, however, is present in Wesley, although it is not consistently pressed. Other elements of Wesley's thought rival this idea and thereby rob Wesley's doctrine of the Christocentricity that marks the New Testament teaching of sanctification. A clarification of Wesleyan theology at this point should give new power and relevance to its holiness teaching.

In his *Notes* Wesley affirms, as we have seen, that God has given sentence "that sin should be destroyed, and the believer wholly delivered from it" (on Romans 8:3).<sup>28</sup> "The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil--all sin. And will he not perform this in all who trust in him?"

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<sup>26</sup> He speaks of the devil as "the first sinner of the universe" (*Notes*, 1 John 3:18), who "transfused" his own self-will and pride into our first parents (Sermon CXXIII, I, 2; Sermon LXX, I, 9-10, thus becoming the "origin of evil" in the world (*Notes*, Matthew 13:28; John 8:44; Sermon LXX, I, 8). By sin and death Satan gained possession of the world, so that it was "Satan's house" (*Notes*, Matthew 12:29; John 12:31). Man's guilt gave him over to Satan's power, and man's corruption takes Satan's side in temptation. Satan thus enjoyed a right, a claim, and a power over man (*Notes*, John 13:39; Romans 6:14). Christ's ministry was an assault upon Satan (*Notes*, Matthew 12:29), but his decisive encounter with Satan, sin, and death was in the cross and resurrection (*Notes*, Matthew 27:52-53; Luke 12:50; 1 Corinthians 15:26; Ephesians 4:8; Hebrews 2:14). The resurrection, which is victory over death, is the inauguration of Christ's kingdom (*Notes*, Luke 22:16; Acts 2:31; 1 Corinthians 15:26), and its power will raise men to new life in regeneration and eternal life in the general resurrection (*Notes*, Romans 6:5; Ephesians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 15:20). The ascension signifies Christ's exaltation to the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33; Ephesians 1:21-22) until he returns to judge the world (*Notes*, Revelation 1:7; Hebrews 9:28). After the judgment Christ will return the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, but will continue to reign eternally with him (*Notes*, 1 Corinthians 15:24). Here, indeed, are the essential elements of a full Christus Victor doctrine. See Deschner, *Wesley's Christology*, Chapter 5, "The Kingly Work of Christ," and William M Greathouse, "John Wesley's View of the Last Things," *The Second Coming: a Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of the Last Things* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 142-148.

<sup>27</sup> Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: The Abingdon Press, 1960), 88.

<sup>28</sup> Scripture references hereafter are all to Wesley's *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*.

(1 John 3:8). In his sermon on this latter text, however, he limits the manifestation of Christ to the "inward manifestation of himself."<sup>29</sup> Not once in this entire sermon does he refer to Christ's objective victory on the cross, although he makes passing reference to Christ's final victory in the last day. By ignoring the objective victory of Christ, Wesley opens the door to a subjective, individualistic type of holiness. The message of sanctification would have been more vigorously positive and biblical if he had sounded with clarity the note of Christ's historic conquest of sin.

Moreover, because Wesley does not seem to see clearly that sanctification is the repetition of Christ's victory in us, Deschner thinks, it is "not primarily a participation in Christ who, as Paul says, is also our sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30), but rather such a relation to Christ as allows His Spirit to establish in us a 'temper,' a more abstract stylised kind of holiness." In the light of recent studies of Wesley's psychology, with the attendant emphasis on the importance of the means of grace in the development of holy character, Deschner's criticism of Wesley may be too strong.<sup>30</sup> What it appears he is pointing out is that holiness is only *secondarily* a "habitus"--a psychological habit-pattern; it is *primarily* the indwelling of Christ within, a position Wesley would endorse. "And what is 'righteousness,'" Wesley asks, "but the life of God in the soul; the mind that was in Christ Jesus; the image of God stamped upon the heart, now renewed after the image of him that created it?"<sup>31</sup> The latter pages of his *Plain Account* suggest that Wesley had indeed come to see the sanctifying Spirit as the Spirit of the victorious as well as the suffering Christ, in Christ's role as Prophet, Priest, and King. Listen to the mature Wesley:

The holiest of man still need Christ, as their Prophet, as 'the light of the world.' For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment; the instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their holy

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<sup>29</sup> Sermon LXX, "The End of Christ's Coming" (II. 7; III. 1, 1).

<sup>30</sup> Randy L. Maddox, "Reconnecting the Means to the End: a Wesleyan Prescription for the Holiness Movement," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Volume 33 (Fall, 1988): 29-66; Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> Sermon XXI, Discourse I, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount" (I. 11).

things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ... The best of men may therefore say, "Thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven. Through my union with Thee, I am full of light, of holiness, and happiness. But if I were left to myself I should be nothing but sin, darkness, hell."<sup>32</sup>

This is Wesley at his best. Here he means by perfection, not simply any "temper," "intention," or "affection" inherent in man himself, but a participation in the being of Christ's love. Christ is both the content and source of this perfection. On the ground of Christ's priestly work, the prophetic and kingly offices can also be understood as grace.

We can only regret that Wesley, having suggested such an exalted view of Christ's intercession, did not fully articulate this in his doctrine of sanctification. We are not "holy in Christ" (as Wesley abhorred), but "in Christ" we are actually made holy. Here he could have found his sound defence against antinomianism (Hebrews 7:25). And it can be argued that this was, in the band societies, Wesley's pastoral answer to antinomianism. There his Methodists found their place in the Body of Christ with its worship, exhortation, admonition, encouragement, and service. There they experienced the presence and power of Christ who had won for them the victory. Though Wesley may not have done so, must we not develop this doctrine's implication that we participate in Christ's active righteousness, through the Holy Spirit, in the church which is his Body? Perhaps we are being called upon to restore Wesley's insistence upon the means of grace *as an essential ingredient of the doctrine of sanctification*.

For believers awaiting God's promise of "entire renewal in the image of God," it is necessary that they wait for this fulfilment, says Wesley,

Not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any man dream of attaining it any other way (yea, or of keeping it when it is attained, when he has received it even in the largest measure,) he deceiveth his own soul. It is true, we receive it by simple faith: But God does not, will not,

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<sup>32</sup> *A Plain Account*, 81, 83.

give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained.<sup>33</sup>

Fallen creatures, lifted up by God's grace, can remain in that grace, Wesley was convinced, only when they appropriate it in obedience to his commandments. And we can grow in that grace, he insisted, only by constant attendance upon the means of grace, which if we neglect leads to that falling away which is the occasion of sin. "By 'means of grace,'" he explained, "I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained by God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace."<sup>34</sup> Whatever deficiency we may find in John Wesley's appropriation of the Christus Victor idea in his theological formulation of the doctrine of sanctification, we still have much to learn from his practical theology if we are to keep the message of holiness pertinent and alive in these times. In the final analysis, Christian perfection is the *worship* of God in the beauty of holiness. The challenge we face is the development of a full-orbed formulation of Wesley's theology that does justice to the Christus Victor idea, as at the same time we reconnect the means of grace to the end for which we were created--to be holy, even as God is holy.

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<sup>33</sup>*A Plain Account*, 62.

<sup>34</sup><sup>34</sup> Sermon, "The Means of Grace," *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, 1:238. By the instituted means of grace Wesley understood (1) Prayer, (2) Searching the Scriptures, (3) Fasting, (4) Christian Conference (Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today*, 132-136). The private means of grace he subdivided as (1) works of piety and (2) works of mercy (Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998], 106-107).

### 3

## Jesus' Prayer for the Church

Dr William M Greathouse  
General Superintendent Emeritus

Scripture Lesson—John 17:1-3, 6, 11, 15-23, 26c (the thread of Jesus' prayer)

Introduction--This high priestly prayer of our Lord has been called the New Testament Holy of Holies. And indeed it is. Here on the eve of His crucifixion Jesus draws back the veil and permits us to look into His inmost soul, as He is about to offer up himself as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world.

First, He prays for himself. *"The hour has come. Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee."* The hour of Jesus' crucifixion was at hand, when His glorification would begin.

Earlier He had announced: *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying the death that he should die"* (John 12:32-33).

Jesus' death would be followed by His mighty victory over the grave and His exaltation to the Father's right hand, where He received the promised Holy Spirit, with whom He would baptize His church on the Day of Pentecost. *Thus being glorified himself, Jesus glorified the Father, by inaugurating God's redemptive plan for the world, which has touched each of us gathered here today!*

But the burden of Jesus' prayer was for His disciples and the church which would believe on Him through their word. It was a threefold prayer: *"Sanctify them... Make them one, as we are one... Consecrate them."*

Beyond question, this prayer was *literally* answered for the one hundred twenty gathered in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost. Exalted at the Father's right hand, Jesus baptized that company, sanctifying them, forming them as His Spirit-filled body, and sending them out in the power of the Spirit to turn their world upside down!

But Jesus said, *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those whom thou hast given me.”* This, then, was Jesus' prayer for you and me here today who have believed on Him through the word of the apostles recorded in Scripture and proclaimed to us by His anointed preachers.

**I. FIRST, “SANCTIFY THEM” -- literally, “separate them.”**

**A.** Adam Clarke explains that the Greek verb *hagiadzo* is derived from two roots, *ha* (negative) and *ge* (“earth”), and literally means “de-earth” them. *Separate them from the earthly and sinful TO the heavenly and the holy—that is, purify them as gold or silver.* This is an ancient metaphor for sanctify, as we see it in Malachi 3:1-3: *“BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.”*

John the Baptist saw himself as the fulfilment of this prophecy. On the banks of the Jordan he announced, *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”* (Matt. 3:11).

Dr George Buttrick sees here a picture of the ancient refiner, who keeps the silver in the crucible, until all the dross comes to the surface and is removed; until all agitation ceases in the molten metal, and the refiner can see his own face reflected as in a mirror in the surface of the molten silver!

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,  
All His wonderful passion and purity;  
Oh, Thou Spirit Divine, all my nature refine,  
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me!*

**B.** Observe, this purification is a two-fold process:  
First, the silver is mined from the earth;  
Second, it is placed in the crucible to be refined.  
So, sanctification is a twofold process...

(1) *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world—Sanctify them.”*

(2) But it is one thing to be taken out of the world—another thing to have the world taken out of us!

We must remain in the crucible of the fiery baptism, said John Fletcher, until all the corruption in our souls comes to the surface, and is confessed and removed; until all selfish agitation ceases and we rest in Christ’s promise—till refined and purified, only pure love to God and man remain, and we reflect the image of the Refiner!

*Refining fire, go through my heart,  
Illuminate my soul,  
Scatter Thy life through every part,  
And sanctify the whole.*

—Charles Wesley

## **II. SECOND, JESUS PRAYS FOR THE CHURCH, THAT IT MAY BE ONE, AS GOD IS ONE—**

*“...that they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, ... that they all may be one as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfectly one” (vs. 21, 22b, 23 RSV).*

**A.** Here we are introduced to the central mystery of the Christian faith: the mystery of the Triune God. The Triune God is not a solitary individual—He is *in himself* a fellowship of holy love. As Isaac Watts penned it,

*Glory to God in Trinity,  
Whose names have mysteries unknown;  
In essence one, in Persons three;  
A social nature, yet alone.*

Now, Jesus prays that WE be introduced into this Divine Fellowship: *“As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may in us” (v. 22).*

In this Fourth Gospel, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit re revealed as displaying patterns of personhood within an essential unity, and displaying love as servants of one another, always deferring to one another. The Son loves the Father and glorifies Him; the Father loves the Father and glorifies Him; the Spirit loves the Father and the Son and glorifies them. Now this is the pattern of the Christian fellowship.

**B.** This unity is Christ's *gift* to us in the Spirit. By baptizing the one hundred twenty with the Holy Spirit He truly sanctified them and formed them as His Spirit-filled Body. Pentecost was the birthday of the Church as the Body of Christ. St Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13). *To be quickened by the Spirit of God is to be incorporated into Christ's body, signed and sealed by baptism.*

*In Christ there is no East or West,  
In Him no South or North,  
But one great fellowship of love  
Throughout the whole wide earth.*

*Join hands then, brothers of the faith,  
Whate'er your race may be,  
Who serves the Father as a son  
Is surely kin to me.*

*In Christ now meet both East and West,  
In Him meet South and North,  
All Christly souls are one in Him.  
Throughout the whole wide earth. —Charles Oxenham*

**C.** This unity is indeed Christ's gift—but a gift to be appropriated by obedience to Jesus' New Commandment: "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*" (John 13:34-35).

The early church took this commandment with all seriousness and by their obedience to it penetrated the Roman culture with the spirit of Christ. The early Christians lived out this love not only within the fellowship of the Church but also in the world—forgiving those who were persecuting them and putting them to death. It was a love that world had never before seen. It was by their chastity and charity, their purity and their love, that the early Christians turned their world upside down (Adolph Harnack).

### **III. FINALLY, JESUS PRAYS FOR THE CHURCH, THAT IT MIGHT BE CONSECRATED TO HIS REDEMPTIVE MISSION ON EARTH**

*"Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the*

*world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they may be truly consecrated” (vs. 17-19).*

In case you question this translation, hear Nazarene theologian H Orton Wiley commenting on these last two verses:

“As there is a human consecration that precedes entire sanctification, so there is a Divine consecration that demonstrates it.”

**A.** As the Father consecrated the Son and sent Him into the world (John 10:36), so Christ sanctifies/consecrates the Church and sends it into the world. *To be truly sanctified is to be truly consecrated.* “The church exists by mission,” says Emil Brunner, “as fire exists by burning.” When fire ceases to burn, it ceases to be; and when the Church ceases to burn with a sense of mission, it ceases to be the Church. And what is the mission of the Church? *“That the world may believe that thou hast sent me ... and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (v. 23).*

Archbishop William Temple once said: “The Church of Jesus Christ is the only institution on earth that exists primarily for non-members!”

**B.** Our Lord closes this prayer with this petition: *“that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them” (v. 26b).* In his book *My Lady of the Chimney Corner* Alexander Irving tells of his mother Anna, who was a quiet, unobtrusive Christian, but a woman powerful in prayer: One day one of her neighbours came to see her saying, “Anna, I am so depressed, I don’t believe I can make it through the day unless the Lord touches me. Will you pray for me?” Anna quietly replied, “Of course. Get on your knees, and I will ask the Lord to touch you.” Wiping the flour from her hands on her apron, Anna began to pray; and as she prayed she reached a trembling hand out over her burdened neighbour. When she had finished her prayer, the lady rose to her feet and said, tears streaming down her face, “He touched me, Anna—but it felt like your hand, Anna.” “It was my hand, but it was His hand too; sometimes He takes the hand of a bishop, sometimes He takes the hand of a surgeon, and sometimes He takes the hand of a poor old creature like me—it was my hand, but it was His hand too. He takes a hand wherever He can find it.”

*Take my life, and let it be, consecrated, Lord to Thee....*

*Take my hands and let them move, at the impulse of Thy love....*

*Take myself, and I will be, ever, only, all for Thee!*

## **Part 3: HOLINESS**

### **4**

#### **The Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit Among Nazarenes: The Controversy with the Pentecostal Doctrine**

Rev Katambu Balibanga  
District Superintendent, Democratic Republic of Congo

##### **Introduction**

The choice of our theme: “The Evidence of Baptism of the Holy Spirit Among Nazarenes: The Controversy with the Pentecostal Doctrine” is not a hazardous undertaking. It responds definitively to multiple theological questions that certain people ask themselves regarding specific cardinal doctrines in the Church of the Nazarene, an ecclesial community that has spread throughout Africa since the beginning of the 20th century.

Our objective is not to engage in a debate between Nazarenes and Pentecostals, but to shed light on the subject regarding the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This question about the evidence of the Holy Spirit finds opposition among some groups within Christendom. We propose to elucidate this theological controversy by the example of Nazarenes and the Pentecostals. The Church of the Nazarene, like other evangelical churches, affirms that the biblical evidence regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the sanctification that is revealed by the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, while the Pentecostal doctrine stipulates that this baptism is made evident by a visible sign, such as speaking in tongues. Our cordial task is to find a response to the following question: What is the real evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The essence of our investigation consists of the verification of our working hypothesis that we can formulate briefly in the following manner: “The purification of the heart by Jesus Christ made known by the fruit of the Spirit should be the real evidence or visible sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

##### **Conceptual Approaches to the Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy**

## **Spirit**

This section focuses upon the theological approach to the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, a partial conclusion will include the theological complications that we formulate in this section. Our work consists of tackling the controversial question of the baptism of the Holy Spirit assisted by the Scriptures that constitute the essential foundation of all Christian theology. H Orton Wiley, Dean of Nazarene theologians, said, “The Holy Scripture is recognized by all schools as being the true source of Christian theology.”<sup>35</sup> However, the other sources like tradition (experience of communities), reason (the rule of logic), or experience (personal religious experience) can have limited validity.<sup>36</sup> Those who found their doctrine upon experience, for example, run into many dangers as emphasized by R S Taylor in these words: “The ‘God’ of human experience could well not be God of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”.<sup>37</sup>

## **In the Church of the Nazarene**

The Church of the Nazarene believes that all believers should be entirely sanctified after regeneration. However, it is important to note that this experience of entire sanctification may be indicated by many terms representing its different facets, such as: Christian perfection, perfect love, purity of heart, fullness of the blessing, Christian holiness, and baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup> Thus, we will study the crucial question of its evidence. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is defined by J Paul in the following manner: “‘the cleansing with the Spirit from on high.’ This expression implies purity, power, and consolation.”<sup>39</sup> But from his side, William M Greathouse says that “to be baptised by the Holy Spirit is having a purified heart, to be renewed with power, be fixed in the image of Christ.” In the Articles of Faith in speaking of entire sanctification, the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene says that the acquisition of this divine work is presented in this way: “Entire sanctification is accomplished by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and embraced in the single experience of purification from sin, the constant presence and intimacy of the Holy Spirit,

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<sup>35</sup> Knight, J A. *Ce que la Bible dit a propos du parler en langues*, Kansas City, MPN, 1988, p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

fortifying the believers for life and service.”<sup>40</sup>

In its official declaration of 15 October 1976, the Board of General Superintendents stated: “We affirm that the biblical evidence of entire sanctification or of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, is the purification from original sin, as affirmed in Acts 15:8-9. And this purification is made known by the fruit of the Spirit in a holy life (Galatians 5:22-24). Affirming that one special physical evidence or to claim that a prayer language is an evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit is contrary to the biblical and historic position.”<sup>41</sup>

In his study, John A Knight presents an interesting reflection in speaking of the apostle John’s writings in the First Epistle of John. He summarizes it this way:

- We love because we love the brothers (3:14).
- We know because we keep the ‘commandments’ (2:3).
- We know because we have the “assurance”. We feel at ease and without fear at the day of judgment (4:16-19).
- “We know... by the Spirit that He has given to us” (3:24).
- We know that we are born of God because we “practice justice, our ethic, and our life is like that of Christ” (2:29).<sup>42</sup>

In this analysis John A Knight says that John gave as evidence for proving his right relation with God, the power of love, obedience to the commandments of Christ, virtuous living and the like, and the *Manual* declares that “in the holy obedience of love made perfect.”<sup>43</sup>

But what then is the position of the Church of the Nazarene on the speaking of tongues? As all other gifts, it is for the edification of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:7) and not for making proud the persons to whom God gives the gift. Dr W Marais designates it as the gift for preaching cross-culturally; it was given to certain persons for communication and must be exercised to bring God’s love to others.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. EGLISE DU NAZAREEN, Op. cit, p. 27.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 283.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Knight, J A. Op-cit. p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp.17- 18.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Marais W. Les 14 éléments essentiels pour l’Evangélisation de la famille étendue, Florida, R.L.O., 1997, pp.26 - 27.

In conclusion the Nazarenes believe that the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the purification of the heart that is made known by the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the believer and covers a person with power for service. This position is in every way contrary to the Pentecostal conception that we are going to analyse meticulously in the following section.

### **In the Pentecostal Movement**

The Pentecostals have a viewpoint about evidences for baptism by the Holy Spirit that is completely contrary to that of the Church of the Nazarene. For the Pentecostals the gift of tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This means that without having the experience of “glossolalia” or ecstatic utterances, one cannot pretend to have received the Holy Spirit in His fullness. Even if certain Pentecostals say that the gift of tongues is only one of the evidences, they still put most of the emphasis upon the gift of tongues.<sup>45</sup>

The baptism of the Holy Spirit among Pentecostals is not a sacramental baptism, but an emotional one. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an intense feeling and mystical contact with God. The sentiment manifests itself through “the speaking of tongues”, of which the Pentecostal Church is a witness.<sup>46</sup> A Corten defined speaking in tongues in these terms: “Speaking in tongues is a prayer that does not follow any pre-established form: not in how one makes one’s requests (either aloud or in deep silence), not in reciting prescribed formulas, not in being inspired by these formulas to improvise on the Psalms, and not even as a form of worship.” Speaking in tongues means to pray without using a language or the mental functions associated with language.<sup>47</sup>

This Pentecostal practice was taken to many sections of the world and through the vast range of Christian confessions, such as in the Catholic Church, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Lutheran, Methodist, etc. This followed a reform already happening in denominations that had been worshipping in a manner that was frigid, rationalistic, and highly liturgical.

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Pache, R. *La personne et l’oeuvre du Saint-esprit*, Lausanne, Emmaüs, 1940, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Corten, A. *le Pentecôtisme au Brésil: Emotion pauvre et romantisme théologique*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 46-47.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> These denominations often created an emptiness among many faithful members. To fill up this void that had been created, the Pentecostals promoted spontaneity, a sense of liberty, emotional intensity, and personal participation.<sup>49</sup>

There is a sense of liberty and personal participation in some notions of Pentecostalism that is properly advisable to all Christian churches. For God needs each and every believer to feel free in serving Him. He has above all a need for the participation of each member for the edification of His Church. J A Knight said, "These ultra traditionalist churches, that were becoming rather lethargic, had found a 'cure' in the warmth and vitality of this 'experience' that concentrates upon this particular act of worship."<sup>50</sup>

The Pentecostals in their conception of the experience say that each believer must necessarily speak in tongues, for according to them it is the one sign that accompanies believers according to Mark 16:17, a text that is found in the final words of Mark 16:9-20 having been inserted to correct the abrupt ending that is found in Mark 16:8.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, in this text we have many signs cited: they will cast out demons, they will handle serpents, if they drink a deadly poison they will not become sick and they will heal the sick with the laying on of hands. So the question is, why insist on a single sign when there are so many of them? Most Pentecostals say it is because speaking in tongues is the sign that appeared on the Day of Pentecost. For the Pentecostals speaking in tongues or glossolalia is not only the first sign for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but also a gift of the Spirit granted to certain believers. Speaking in tongues as an initial sign of the Holy Spirit is continual unless it is viewed also as a gift granted by the Spirit.<sup>52</sup>

Like Nazarenes the Pentecostals base their conception about the evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit on certain texts of the New Testament. We will study these passages in the following section. Their doctrinal foundation, however, is the result of a wrong interpretation of the passages. So, now we will deal with the biblical foundation for the evidence of the

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Knight, J A. Op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Bassin, l'Evangile de Marc, Vaux- sur- Seine, Edifac, 1994, p.301.

<sup>52</sup> KUYE Ndongwa Mulemera, Op. cit., p. 385.

baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Biblical Foundation of the Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

We have seen that the Nazarenes and the Pentecostals base their arguments on the Bible. Furthermore, by promising His disciples the baptism in the Spirit, Jesus knew well to prepare visible signs to show how this work occurs in the life of the believer.

What are these signs or what evidence is there for the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The only way to arrive at an answer to this question is to make an exegetical study of the New Testament texts that mention the experience. These references are found in Acts 2:1-4, 10:44-47, 19:1-7, and 1 Corinthians 14:1ff.

### **Speaking in Tongues in Acts**

This book from the New Testament is the key text to a clear comprehension of the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the first time that the experience took place in the history of the Church. The event that happened on the Day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel but also the promise of Jesus to His apostles as we read in Luke 24:49 and in Acts 1:8. In fact, the key verse in the entire book is Acts 1:8.

Acts chapter 2 refers only to living and spoken tongues. The word “dialecto” found in chapter 2 verses 6 and 8 signifies “language”, and does not refer to speaking in an ecstatic language. This is the same meaning that should be given to the word in Acts 2:9, 10 and 1 Corinthians 12-14. Furthermore, in Acts 2, the Bible declares that the disciples were speaking in the languages of all those present for the Pentecost celebration. It was truly a miracle to see nearly fifteen nationalities represented that day who heard the disciples speaking simultaneously in the listeners’ maternal languages.

The word “dialect” signifies conversation, discourse, or language. In Acts, it is not a matter of a mysterious or unknown language. The dialect or tongue is not a celestial language, but only the various languages as they were spoken by the disciples and heard by each nationality present that day

in Jerusalem.<sup>53</sup> The questions posed by the listeners prove this: “Are they not Galileans? Why are they speaking in other languages?” C Carter said that the reason for this experience was to convince the crowd in their proper languages about the truth contained in the message.<sup>54</sup> At the same time the evangelical message was understood by many people of different nationalities and languages. The ones who now claim the gift of speaking in tongues must conform to the context that we have in the book of Acts.

In reading the book of Acts, we find that there are some passages that speak of this experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit without mentioning the act of speaking in tongues. Some examples are: Acts 4:31 “and they were announcing the word of God with assurance,” and Acts 8:17, here there is another manifestation of the reception of the Holy Spirit.

### **Speaking in Tongues in 1 Corinthians**

First of all let us speak about the city of Corinth. This cosmopolitan city was the intellectual centre where all spiritual groups were respected. It was equally a religious centre where oriental cults exercised an indisputable seduction. In this context, we find the church in Corinth lacking spiritual maturity.

The church was agitated and full of internal divisions. Corrupted by spiritual immorality, the church lacked stability.<sup>55</sup> In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul combats pagan practices that had been introduced into the life of the church. For example the practices used in the cult of Dionysus, full of savage and uncontrollable rites, were brought into church worship and resulted in emotional excess.<sup>56</sup> So Paul’s goal was to make a distinction between the inspiration of the Spirit and savage pagan emotionalism.

Paul is trying to fight the deviation that is occurring among the Corinthians in connection with the central theme of spiritual gifts and their usage by the Church. This position Paul had first of all presented in chapter 12 and continued to the conclusion of chapter 14.<sup>57</sup> The Corinthian congregation

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Goodell, G. *Heavenly Tongues Or Earthly Languages? What The Bible Says About Speaking In Tongues*, Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1989, p. 17.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* p. 25.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Walwood, J F. ( Dir.), *Commentaire biblique du chercheur*, Ed. Béthel, 1988, p.457.

is not a church to imitate or to take as an example. J MacArthur in his book entitled *The Charismatic*, cited by G Goodell, says that Paul is worried as he fears that pagan practices slipped into the church, in contrast C Carter from his perspective suggests that there is a possibility that diabolic worship has been found in the church by the instigation of pagans. In each event Paul does not want the power of pagan practice to make eruptions in Christian worship.<sup>58</sup>

In chapter 14, Paul's concern is not so much offering instruction in how to view the gift of tongues, but he wants to show the superiority of the gift of prophecy in relation to the gift of tongues. Prophecy here is not primarily about the prediction of the future, but proclamation of the will of God, meaning a challenge that reaches the conscience of other people.<sup>59</sup> Speaking in tongues is not assigned to all members of the church. As found in 1 Corinthians 12:30: "Does everyone speak in tongues?" So the gift of tongues is not a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for it is not necessary that everyone must speak in tongues.

According to Paul the gifts are for the edification of the church and for the perfection of the saints in view of ministry (Ephesians 4:12). According to the overall background of religions regarding the speaking in tongues, the experience is to be defined as speaking in ecstatic languages as Sibylles, or diviners. Others see it also as an ecstatic speaking like one of the Pythians.<sup>60</sup>

At the conclusion of the objective exegetical analyses of the scriptural passages that speak to the theological question of the evidence of the Holy Spirit in correlation with the speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-47; 19:1-7), we can certify without much dispute that these Scripture passages do not constitute "speaking in tongues" as a concrete expression of the evidence of the Holy Spirit.

### **General Conclusion**

At the conclusion of our work, we have made an attempt to describe briefly the major articulation of this controversial theological question regarding

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Senft, C. la première Epître de saint Paul aux corinthiens, Neuchâtel, Delachaux et NEST

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Walwood, J F. ( Dir.)

the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Actually, this paper focused only upon the Pentecostal doctrine and the Nazarene theological conception of this evidence.

Our original task was to give an outline of the doctrinal presuppositions, and their major articulations on the subject. Also, we gave attention to presenting the conceptual approaches to the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is there actually for consolidating the unity of all believers. The gifts that we have received in spite of their doctrinal divergences make certain that a single community cannot pretend to hold the monopoly on the truth. The gifts are for the edification of the Body of Christ.

The spiritual baptism preached by the Pentecostals must make sure that Christians have purification of the heart which must automatically produce the fruit of the Spirit and not an emotional manifestation that can destroy the Church's brotherly and honourable communion in Christ.

## **Response**

Dr M Odette Pinheiro

Principal, Seminário Nazareno de Cabo Verde, Mindelo, Cape Verde

Here and there speaking in tongues becomes an issue among evangelicals, especially in holiness circles, concerned as we are about the baptism with the Holy Spirit – that which ushers in the fullness of the Spirit, which in the Book of Acts and the Epistles is clearly the standard for every follower of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, the claim of our charismatic brothers in that speaking in tongues is *the* evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit makes us from time to time have to capitalize this issue in order to clearly explain why we are at odds with their doctrine, inasmuch as it tends to cause false feelings of inadequacy to some in our congregations. This causes them to start doubting their previous experience with the Triune God, thinking their spiritual life is suffering for lack of the kind of esoteric experiences claimed to be normative in charismatic circles. Therefore, Rev Katambu Balibanga's paper is timely, as periodically we need to revisit the issue, to teach truth to our people.

In order to make the paper stronger, there are a few issues I would like to point out. One is that the expression "baptism with the Holy Spirit" is preferable to "baptism of the Holy Spirit", used throughout the paper. Not only is it more in line with biblical terminology (Acts 1:5; Matthew 3:11-12, et al.), but it also avoids a wrong representation of the baptism, as originating with the Spirit Himself. Even keeping well in mind the unity of the Godhead, we need to teach that the baptism is not of the Spirit; neither is He the Baptizer, or its originator.

It is important to point out that Christ is the Giver. He is the One who baptizes with the Spirit. In fact, the fullness of the Spirit is the fullness of Christ, as the indwelling Spirit is Christ "in us." This understanding may help us keep a right perspective of the operation and manifestations of the Spirit in the believer and in the life of the Church as the Body of Christ.

The paper rightfully elaborates on the importance of the biblical foundation for the evidence of the baptism with the Spirit, and its points are well taken. However, we would get a much stronger case concerning our

position if we would consider the basis for our discussion to be not only I Corinthians 12 – 14 and the passages narrating the three instances of speaking in tongues in the Book of Acts, but all that pertains to the giving, action and nature of the operation of the Holy Spirit. When we see the global picture of the life and teaching of Jesus, and the life and teachings of the Early Church, we see how much is said about the Holy Spirit and His operation, and how little attention is given to speaking in tongues.

Therefore, I would suggest that in dealing with this issue we follow Jesus from the time of His baptism, even as the Spirit came down on Him, clothing His humanness, that state in which He was voluntarily found emptied out of the prerogatives of Deity, so that His identification with us would be complete, causing Him to need the Spirit as much as we do. Following Him through His endless vigils, watching Him teaching His disciples to pray, sitting at His feet throughout the discourses of the Paraclete, being under His anointing while He prayed His priestly prayer, staying close to Him in Gethsemane, and even listening to the words addressed to the Father in Calvary—through times of joy and grief, worship and thanksgiving, jubilation or deep supplication, teaching or simple conversation, there is not even a hint of what our charismatic brethren teach as the external sign of the infilling of the Holy Spirit! Neither is it mentioned as a prayer language nor as a sign of His fullness!

Further, in teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus gave a beautiful but sober model of pointed thoughts, and further warned them not to use vain repetitions (*battalogēsete*) like the gentiles (Matthew 6:7) – that is, empty words without intended meaning: therefore, even less a canopy of sounds meaning nothing! The instructions of our Lord on prayer are a clear disavowal of praying in an unknown tongue. Nowhere in Scripture are we instructed to pray in anything short of clear words directed by one's mind, heart and will, well connected and integrated, without any disassociation between one's mind and vocal utterances.

I would also suggest that we try to ascertain that which was considered normative in the Early Church. And we will be surprised, by the fact that, except for the three instances of speaking in tongues at Pentecost, Cornelius' house and Ephesus when probably there were circumstances

warranting inaugural supernatural displays,<sup>61</sup> its absence from the Church everyday life is startling – exclusion made of the Corinthian phenomenon, a clearly unhealthy situation, which warrants special consideration.

We find Peter, immediately after Pentecost, explaining what had just happened, quoting the prophet Joel word for word, mentioning the gift of prophecy, visions and dreams, which would result from the outpouring of the Spirit in the “last days.” He states that the gift of the Spirit is for all called of God then and in the future. But there is an absolute silence about the inaugural signs which have just taken place. That is, immediately after those signs happened in history for the first time, there was not even a word explaining their importance, if any, for that generation, even less for others to come.

So, my suggestion is that we examine closely the meetings and prayers of the Early Church. At times, even the contents of those prayers are given. We find the Apostles and their associates preaching and conducting great revivals; we see Stephen being stoned to death and, filled with the Spirit, praying in everyday language; we watch Paul receiving the Holy Spirit as Ananias lays hands on him – and not a hint of the presence or importance of speaking in tongues, either as a sign of the infilling of the Spirit or as an intended help in one’s spiritual life, a prayer language. Not a word!

But this is not all. I also suggest a tour of the Epistles, including those of the Apostles who were at Pentecost (Peter, John and James, the Lord’s brother, Acts 1:14). Although many times they mention the ministry of the Holy Spirit, there is complete silence about the place of tongues in the Christian life. Five times Peter’s epistles mention different ministries of the Spirit (I Peter 1:2: sanctification; 1:11-12: prophetic ministry; 3:18: strength as opposed to the weakness of the body; 4:14: presence of the Spirit upon the believer; II Peter 1:21: inspiration of the Holy Scriptures),

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<sup>61</sup> (1) At Pentecost the era of the Spirit was inaugurated, and there was need for cross-cultural proclamation; (2) at Cornelius’, some ten years after Pentecost, it was the coming of the Spirit the same way as it had “in the beginning” that convinced the Jewish brethren the Gentiles could be baptized in water and join the Church (Acts 10:45-47); (3) in Ephesus, about 20 years after Pentecost, it might have been the need to assert the correctness of Paul’s teaching, when the eloquent Apollos had already taught them and knew nothing about the infilling with the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7). We need to balance these happenings against the whole of the New Testament and see if there is support for a doctrine that makes speaking in tongues the normative experience of the Early Church. Definitely not!

but not speaking in tongues.

And the same is true of John. In his first epistle he explains that the norm for the Christian is a pure heart (1:7, 9; 3:3), a life without sin (2:1; 3:4-6; 5:18), obedience to Christ (2:3-5, 24; 5:3), love perfected in the heart (2:5, 10; 3:11, 14, 18, 23; 4:7-8, 11-12). And he states, “We know that we live in him and he is in us, because he has given us of his Spirit” (4:13). We are taught to prove whether the spirits (teachers) are from God, and to learn to distinguish false teachers from true ones (4:1-3). But there is not a word of instruction on glossolalia either as evidence of the Spirit or a prayer language. Nothing!

Equally important is the silence in all of Paul’s thirteen epistles, except for his corrective teaching in I Corinthians 12-14, as Rev Balibanga well points out. Paul was responding to concerns about the disruptive practices taking place at the Corinthian church, and only faulty exegesis can lead some to think he was condoning speaking in tongues. A closer look, however, using either the Greek or a good translation purged of the many words inserted by the KJV, which muddle the issue, show that the contrary is true. Although Paul seems to have thought it wise not to simply forbid the practice (probably forbidding it would have caused more harm than good to the church), he comes very close to that (14:26-28). He proves its lack of usefulness in church gatherings (14:2, 5-11, 19), and also its little to no usefulness when the user or the listeners do not understand the tongue used as a prayer language (14:14-17). His long address is a mild rebuking from one who does not approve a situation, but for some reason decides to put up with it, although pointing out “the most excellent way”, that of love (12:13, and chapter 13). It is like he expects the issue to die out by itself as the Corinthians mature and become spiritual rather than carnal minded (14:20)!

Unfortunately, even if the issue died out at that time, it has been resurrected from time to time in Church history. May God help us to do what Paul advised: follow the most excellent way, that of I Corinthians 13, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. What is not found in Him, cannot, in any way, be lacking in us!

Therefore, it is incumbent on us to clearly teach what the Bible really says about the way the Holy Spirit operates in our lives, to comprehend what is truly important to the Godhead as evidenced in the Word as a whole, to

experience the Spirit of God moulding us into conformity to our supreme Model—Jesus Christ, and teach all of this to our people. In fact, more than simply teaching them, it is also incumbent on us to lead them into the experience of the fullness of the Spirit, so that they will be fully satisfied in Christ, the donor of the Spirit. And when the heralds of exoteric experiences arrive, they will not find potential customers—rather, a people who fully understand “the things of God,” and who sing, shout, preach, and live life in the Spirit, not craving anything else than perfect love, the likeness of Jesus Christ.

## 5

### **Gifts or Holiness: An Attempt to Explain the Difficulties of Proclaiming the Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in Black Africa, Côte d'Ivoire as a Case Study**

Rev Yao Clement Djedje  
Pastor, Niangon Church of the Nazarene, Côte d'Ivoire

The Christian charismatic movement in Africa raises a doctrinal pitfall, and where it exists it raises both religious and social pitfalls as well. The Church is neither a centre of charlatans nor a hospital. It is the body of the Living Christ made up of sanctified people. To proclaim the doctrine of entire sanctification is to lead Christians so as not to miss the final goal—heaven.

#### **Introduction**

The doctrine of entire sanctification as taught by the holiness churches should lead believers away from spiritual malformation. With the goal of demonstrating the obstacles of proclaiming that doctrine, I will address the following outline: the African religious background, consequences for African social life, and the doctrinal question.

#### **African Religious Background**

The earliest anthropologists misinterpreted African society not knowing that in sub-Saharan Africa, the civil and religious aspects of the society intermingle. That ignorance influenced the early missionaries who, in turn, adopted a programme of evangelism by assimilation.<sup>62</sup>

#### **Ancestor Worship**

In African belief, the dead interact daily with the living. No longer restricted by physical responsibilities, they keep their family on the right path of cultural and religious traditions. This explains the control the ancestors, or the dead, exercise on the living. More than half of modern

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<sup>62</sup> L'évangélisation, à l'époque coloniale, a produit des assimilés au christianisme mais pas des convertis. Lire pour mieux comprendre « Le pauvre Christ de Bomba » de Mongo BETI, publié aux Editions PRESENCE AFRICAINE, Paris, 1956, 1976.

Africans still believe this.<sup>63</sup>

### **Divination**

Divination is part of African daily life. The bété<sup>64</sup> diviner is a “géomancien” who interprets divine messages, dreams, and premonition signs. Among the Baoulé tribe,<sup>65</sup> a people group from central Côte d’Ivoire, the diviner, or “awafoué” must be both physically and morally capable of transmitting the messages of the gods and of the dead.

### **Initiation, a School of Mysticism**

In the tribal system, young men are authorized to enter into the category of adults by means of an initiation. In the religious context, these initiations permit access to secret societies. In terms of magical practices, they consist in leaving behind the normal human condition in favour of acquiring supernatural powers. The hidden reasons for all of these ceremonies are, first of all, the submission of the whole society to the mystical and tutorial forces, and following that, the selection of an occult elite who sees to keeping the practice of worshipping the dead.

### **Consequences for African Social Life**

Africans remain subject to mystical forces. Their internal life remains unchanged, even if they acquire new morals in regards to consumerism.

### **No Such Thing as a Natural Death**

According to Georges Thomann, “that which frightens the Néyau the most, a people group from the west coast of Côte d’Ivoire, is the sorcerer, the man with the power to kill ... I am convinced that there is in fact a kind of secret society of evildoers.”<sup>66</sup> Because of sorcery, the invisible hand of a band of criminals, death is never natural. The worship of the dead carves out the mental state of Africans and creates the way for demon possession.

### **Life Centred Around Fear**

By a calling forth of different spirits, the sorcerers feed the people with

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<sup>63</sup> Reference needed.

<sup>64</sup> Bété, un peuple du Centre-Ouest de la Côte d’Ivoire, dans « L’image du peuple Bété » de B. HOLAS, publié aux Editions PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES DE FRANCE, Paris, 1968. p. 35.

<sup>65</sup> Guerry, Vincent. « La vie quotidienne dans un village baoulé, Editions INADES, Abidjan, 1979 P.106, 107, 108.

<sup>66</sup> Thoman, Georges. a été cité par B. HOLAS à la page 150 de son ouvrage mentionné plus haut.

relationships that create the following consequences: the first is a terrible fear of the ability of any spirit to hurt us; the second appears like mental bonds, the victims believing that the sorcerers, genies, and “revenants” have the right of life or death over them.

### **Success by Means of the “Cauris”**

Many Africans continue to believe that their success in life depends on diviners and their prescriptions. The popular expression which means to consult a medium, “launch a *cauris*,”<sup>67</sup> is so anchored in the thoughts of the people that the various intersections of our neighbourhoods are filled with products for offerings. On the subject of the influence that ancient beliefs exercise on modern times, Jean Pierre Dozon writes, “they offer in the life of Ivoirians the possible remedies for their difficulties, their illnesses, their familial or professional failures.”<sup>68</sup> Therefore, we still see Africans wearing fetishes and amulets.

### **The Doctrinal Question**

In Africa, the danger remains that very few young people invest themselves in theological studies, as long as they cannot produce an income in comparison to what the classic university careers can. Therefore, the field is wide open to charlatans who proclaim themselves servants of God.

### **The Holy Spirit as a Fetish**

In Côte d’Ivoire, churches that were planted by locals make of the Holy Spirit a talisman, like protective rings or belts against sorcerers, accidents, demons, and illnesses.<sup>69</sup> The Christian charismatic movement lends a “magical” understanding to the baptism of the Holy Spirit: someone who is baptized in the Holy Spirit will speak in ecstatic language, prophesy, and work miracles. They will call themselves “prophets” and will become charismatics. Without this experience, according to their sacred language, one would “not be anointed.” On this subject, Wiley and Culbertson make the following observation, “entire sanctification ... is ‘wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the

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<sup>67</sup> Cauris : a shell the belongs to a group of porcelain objects, which served as money and as instruments of divination in Africa. - Source : MediaDICO 1999-2001.

<sup>68</sup> Dozon, Jean-Pierre. « Jésus, Mahomet et tous les esprits », article publié dans le Mensuel GEO un nouveau monde : la terre, n°132 de février 1990. P.100.

<sup>69</sup> Cette remarque est le fait de mon expérience personnelle. Elle reste vérifiable en fréquentant ces églises.

cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.”<sup>70</sup> In the teaching of holiness churches, the believer does not become “super-spiritual,”<sup>71</sup> but rather someone who becomes humble and grateful by action of the Holy Spirit, who eradicates the pivotal root of sin from his heart. It is truly a work of God’s grace.

### **On the Subject of the New Birth**

The biblical passage in John 3:3, “Jesus answered him, Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” proves that the idea of the new birth is found in the Bible. But this same idea exists also in African initiation practices. “A process designed to realize psychologically the passage from a state, understood as inferior, of the person to a superior state,”<sup>72</sup> this is how S Hutin describes the symbolism of the destruction of the old personality in favour of a new birth. In the separation rites of tribal and religious initiation, the same process is at work—destruction of the old personality in order to access a new, superior personality—from death to rebirth. If it isn’t made clear that “entire sanctification begins with regeneration but is completed by an instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit subsequent to regeneration,”<sup>73</sup> it is very easy for the new African Christian to be tricked by what appears to be a new birth via initiation rites, one which is much different in both theological and practical terms from the new birth about which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus.

### **A Christianity of Miracles**

In Côte d’Ivoire, the prevailing opinion among many Christians would make one believe that churches where the pastor does not cast out demons nor perform miracles are dead. This is the current charismatic stream of ideas. It underscores Luke 10:9, “heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘the kingdom of God is near you’” and other such verses. The problem is

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<sup>70</sup> H. Orton Wiley and Paul T. Culbertson citing the “Manual of the Church of the Nazarene” in “Introduction to Christian Theology,” BEACON HILL PRESS, Kansas City, 1963, page 253.

<sup>71</sup> Bourdanne, Daniel. « L’évangile de la prospérité : une menace pour l’église africaine », Editions PRESSES BIBLIQUES AFRICAINES, Abidjan, 1999. P.48

<sup>72</sup> Hutin, S. a été cité par Roger BASTIDE dans son article intitulé « Initiation », publié dans l’ENCYCLOPEDIE UNIVERSALIS, P. 1185

<sup>73</sup> H. Orton WILEY et Paul T. CULBERTSON, ouvrage précité, P. 308.

that exorcism is not an unknown phenomenon in Africa. Among the Baoulés, there are several types of exorcism practiced: personal, familial, and collective. The act of casting out demons is not a surprising event for a new African Christian. During religious initiations, the society of spirits gives esoteric instruction, like how to heal the sick. During initiations into magic, public ceremonies are disguised by the sorcerers as simple tests of magic, like the healing of the sick. Holiness churches do not deny divine healings,<sup>74</sup> but to make them the focal point of the thoughts and the life of the Christian turns believers away from “holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

### **Conclusion**

The charismatic movement has a lot of disciples in black Africa and in Côte d’Ivoire, in particular because it reminds them of the religions of the past. Healing services (séances) awaken the same emotions as the traditional healer. Pastors exercise on their followers their gifts of healing and miracle-working. They are called prophets and apostles, but they play the role of “geomanciens” and “awafoué.”

The central message of the Bible is holiness, “Be ye holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy ... you will be holy unto me, for I the LORD am holy; I have set you apart from the nations, to be my own” (Leviticus 19:2; 20:26). To proclaim this truth in Africa effectively, we need to be informed about the realities of the terrain. This is what I have tried to do here, for better or for worse.

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<sup>74</sup> MANUEL DE L’EGLISE DU NAZAREEN, « Les articles de foi (article 14)

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## Response

Pastor Samuel Nekati

Ph. D. Student at Asbury Theological Seminary; Zimbabwe

Rev Clement Djedje is to be commended for a job well done. It is such a wonderful thing for him to raise relevant issues concerning the doctrine of holiness in Africa. Of particular significance is Djedje's articulation of how the aspects of African cultural and religious practices bear upon the message of entire sanctification.

If I were to summarize his article, I would say Rev Djedje is very much concerned about what scholars of the Theology of Contextualization frequently refer to as "syncretism". The meaning of this word has always attracted heated debates among concerned scholars, but this is not the time to go into that. However, to put it too simplistically, syncretism, in most evangelical circles, has invariably been understood as the blending of aspects of the gospel message with other religious and cultural beliefs, to the extent that the gospel becomes totally coloured or encapsulated by the receiving religion and culture. Even though syncretism can be understood neutrally as a sort of fifty-fifty inter-borrowing between two or more religious and cultural systems, evangelicals prefer the earlier explanation I have given, in which the gospel message is totally overwhelmed by the receiving context. This evangelical understanding, therefore, places syncretism diametrically opposite to contextualization. In other words, contextualization is a positive word while syncretism is negative.

In Djedje's article, I see a staunch evangelical, who wants the gospel message to transform culture and traditional religion. In this important respect, I agree with Djedje. It appears that some Africans never quite get over their former religious beliefs, including those cultural practices that are contrary to the message of the gospel in regard to entire sanctification. In some instances, especially in African independent churches, it is true that much of what they do is nothing more than a replication of their old beliefs. For example in my country Zimbabwe, we have seen situations where someone, who used to be a witchdoctor in the world, became a miracle healer, purportedly after being filled with the Holy Spirit.

This reminds me of an insight that my former college principal and professor, Dr Enoch Litswele, gave about the attitude people seemed to have towards the Holy Spirit in my country, which was evident in our worship services. He observed that whenever we started a worship service, the worship leader would encourage people to sing so vigorously “in order for the Holy Spirit to come.” If people were not cheerful in the service, they were chasing the Holy Spirit away, or rather, He would not show up. This attitude was a direct replication of our traditional religious practices. When our people gather for a ceremony to do rituals that invite the ancestral spirits to come, they begin by chanting in song and dance. If they do not do it properly, the spirits do not show up. It is through the vigorous chants, dances, songs and ululating that the spirit mediums are transported into the world of the spirits, paving the way for those spirits to possess them. The spirits can then deliver the message. Usually, the message is about protection from “evil” and good luck to the needy. Rev Djedje is therefore correct in attempting to warn evangelical Christians in the holiness tradition, to not duplicate these practices.

I beg to disagree with Djedje, however, on some points he raises in his relevant article. My main concern is on some sweeping statements he makes, and some seeming contradictions and some presumptions.

First, it is not clear how Djedje employs the word “church” in his article. Even though his is too short a theological treatise to pay attention to such scruples as defining special terms, etc., I think his use of the word church is too loose. It is especially so when we think of the sweeping statement he makes on the first paragraph, that, “The Church is neither a centre of charlatans nor a hospital.” This statement leads us to ask what church he is talking about? I submit: From an evangelistic and missional perspective, the church is very much like a hospital as much as it is full of charlatans. This simply means that the church is full of people who are at various stages of grace; some are sick, some are halfway recuperating, while others are well enough to be doctors. I think our goal is not to stop the church from being a hospital, but rather, to ensure that this hospital is still giving people the cure they need. In fact, I think the more people find a cure for their spiritual ailments, the more they come to this hospital.

Secondly, even though Djedje’s intention is to not let the Holy Spirit be equated with talismans, fetishes and so on, I think there is a need to

critically examine this African practice more, without undue biases. The African, like any other Christian in the whole world, desires to be protected from evil forces that endanger their lives. It has often been the case that, in trying to discredit the African's replication of their religious practices in Christianity, we go to the other extreme of emphasizing the Holy Spirit as one who cleanses from sin, but does not provide protection. I believe the message of the protecting power of the Holy Spirit is as much a message of holiness as the emphasis on entire sanctification. Is it not ironical though, that de-emphasizing the "protection aspect" does prevent African Christians from receiving the "second blessing" sooner?

Towards the end of his article, in a paragraph with the subtitle, "A Christianity of Miracles," I am not sure what Djedje is trying to do. Is he trying to merely draw analogies between Christian exorcisms and those that are found in African traditional religions, or is he trying to invalidate Christian exorcisms because they have duplications outside Christianity? Judging from the tenor of his whole essay, I think Djedje is deliberately prejudiced against everything found in African traditional practices. I believe that, if there is anything that needs to be emphasized and practiced in our churches as much as holiness and entire sanctification, it is the exorcism of demons.

In conclusion, I need to point out that the Christian concern against syncretism as demonstrated in Djedje's paper will forever be legitimate and relevant. In Romans 12:2, Paul says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...." Djedje's paper raises very important issues in regard to the transformation of our lives by the gospel. My recommendation is that this article should be discussed in light of the meaning of the Incarnation, so that, while we deal with issues of syncretism, we will not forget that the gospel message needs to be truly contextualized. The Incarnation (the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us – John 1:14) helps us to ask, "How would Jesus preach the gospel to Africans?" Entire sanctification, therefore, does not just need to be defined by Orton Wiley<sup>75</sup>, but by Africans who have come to know what it is really like, first hand.

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<sup>75</sup> Djedje, Rev Yao Clement. "Gifts or Holiness: An Attempt to Explain the Difficulties of Proclaiming the Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in Black Africa, Côte d'Ivoire as a Case Study" pg 2

## **Response**

Rev Eugénio Duarte  
Field Director, Africa West and French Equatorial Fields

Rev Djedje offers an excellent contribution to those who desire to understand and minister to the African Church. The challenges to the proclamation of the holiness message that the author brings up seem to be common to the entire continent, not only Côte d'Ivoire. His doctrinal thesis is very pertinent to the current interest in African theology, which is by and large oral and therefore limited in space and time, but it is there in all the practices and beliefs of the church.

The modern African church must depend on and be faithful to the Lord and His Word in order to avoid the threat of the inclusivist theologians who preach the uniqueness of the Christian faith but also teach that the God Who is in Jesus also works through other religions. Djedje urges us to decisively distinguish Christian faith from "the African religious background" and to battle against the deformation of the biblical doctrine and its consequences. His concern challenges the preachers of holiness as he points out the necessity of appropriate equipping of the young generation of preachers as well as the importance of delivering the plain biblical doctrine.

It is obvious that the religious structure of any given people is part of their whole worldview. The way we perceive reality affects our religious behaviour. It is important that Christian preachers and teachers consider that African people perceive God through His work and His attributes. God does not act in secrecy. The intent of His work is to move all men to desire Him. He wants us to see beyond our native horizon. This is what Paul states in Romans 1:20 "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." The problem rests in us, in how the revelation of God is focused and defined. Our mind is under cultural influences that tend to distort the divine revelation, placing our historical experience and aspiration above the divine presence in us. This fact, I think, explains "the spiritual malformation" and "obstacles" that are so well pondered by Rev Djedje.

The author shows his concern with the lack of investment in theological

studies as a way to equip the church with the necessary tools to confront the attraction of the Pentecostal movement. The adoption of Pentecostalism by African independent churches is paying with their rapid growth in membership. We must do more than just condemn their excess and obvious mercenary tendencies. Our theologians must emphasize the biblical doctrine in both their preaching and living. As Imasogie (1983) says, “the role of the Holy Spirit has been neglected in Christian theologising in Africa.”<sup>76</sup> This is due to the fact that many western theologians need to be convinced of the reality and work of the Holy Spirit. Their acts, teaching, and preaching give great credit to psychological power and very little trust in the spiritual direction of the Holy Spirit. It is evident that the African’s worldview counts on spiritual direction and this is a fertile soil for the preaching of the truth about the work of the Holy Spirit in us. He is the agent of holiness and we are His messengers. What a message we have got for Africa!

McKenna (2002) wrote, “we need to come together on the biblical balance that holiness is, by definition, a holistic doctrine... involves belief and being, command and promise, event and experience, dynamic and discipline.”<sup>77</sup> It is by faith in His promise that the crisis takes place and it is the blessing of the character of Jesus in our lives that enables us to grow in experience and obedience.

The teaching of the apostle Paul to the Christians of Corinth is relevant to the African context. It is our responsibility to tutor our African brothers and sisters on the difference between the fruits of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. As Dunning (1991) says, “the gifts of the spirit may be duplicated.”<sup>78</sup> Not the fruits. It is imperative that holiness preachers minister to Africans by implementing Paul’s teaching tactic. He corrected the Corinthians’ understanding of the Holy Spirit without denying that the ones involved in certain manifestations of spiritual experience were believers. We also need to teach the importance of love as the true evidence of the Holy Spirit. The blessing of His love (1 Corinthians 13) reduces to less than nothing all the “rings, belts, languages, etc.”

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<sup>76</sup> Imasogie, O. *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa*. Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1983.

<sup>77</sup> McKenna, D. *Wesleyan Leadership in Troubled Times*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2002.

<sup>78</sup> Dunning, H R. *Sanctification*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1991.

Likewise the teaching and preaching of the new birth in Christ must prove how it differs from the African initiation. The evidence of its effectiveness is not in the mere psychological effects of a ritual, but in the constant, undeniable and transforming might of a personal relationship with God in Jesus.

Rev Djedje also reminds us that the church must address the issue of material reward for those seeking theological profession. The divine call makes it possible for a person to learn “both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Philippians 4:12) but when it is time to be hungry and to suffer need, the preacher and teacher of the gospel should not live below the average income of those whom he or she serves. It is a matter of call and stewardship. Both the theologian and the ones he ministers to are called to accomplish a mission in the Kingdom. They both must be good stewards of their different calling and make the best possible contribution to the Kingdom.

## 6

**Conflicts Between Holiness and Culture**

Rev Margarida B Langa  
Lecturer, Seminario Nazareno em Mozambique

The Church of the Nazarene is a denomination that has as its central message “Holiness unto the Lord”. This message is not only denominational but also a biblical message. In many passages of the Bible such as Leviticus 11:44 and I Peter 1:6, God requires His people to be holy. The Church of the Nazarene teaches sanctification as an experience and as a life-style of every Nazarene.

However, many Nazarene Christians preach about holiness and teach the holy life-style but they find it difficult to make it the standard of their life because the holy life clashes with their traditions, customs, habits, and ethnological concepts. They are not able to reconcile holy living and culture. They want to be completely consecrated to God and wholly dedicated to Him but their culture seems to push them into consecrating only their hearts, pressuring them to preserve the practices of the traditions, heritage and history of their people. For example, the African traditional culture teaches that people should communicate with their ancestors because they are connected by blood, by customs, and by spirits. For this traditional culture the deceased are closer to their gods and to the Almighty God so the ancestors can be used as their advocates in our worship.

*How can Nazarenes be dedicated to God without getting into conflict with their culture? How can they express holiness in their culture?*

God wants Christians to share His nature and character. In the past God commanded Abraham to come out from his nation, from the customs and traditions of his ancestors and their pagan worship. The purpose of Abraham’s call was for service and worship of the only Almighty God. Even today God still wants the people that are called by His name to come out from their traditional customs, habits, and pagan worship to serve Him only.

When people are possessed by demons or malignant spirits, these spirits consider the person as their temple, their wife and their possession. When

they are expelled from the person, they refuse to come out until they are overcome by God's power. God wants to possess us in the same way that demons will possess a person, but He does not want to do this by force. He wants us to willingly consecrate ourselves to Him and become His temple and instruments for His ministry. In the same way that demons refuse to share their possessions with other masters, God also refuses to share His children with other gods or masters in pagan customs and traditions.

In Luke 16:13 Jesus said, "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Mammon." Whenever a Christian serves God and serves also pagan traditions, customs, and ancestors, he or she disturbs God's plans for the character and nature of His people because He wants them to completely forsake all that is pagan. Is it possible for the Nazarene to come out from these pagan customs, habits and traditions? Yes! When a Christian dedicates himself to God, God does the work of transformation. The Christian does not battle alone against these pagan traditions but God fights, too.

**How can Nazarenes make holiness a life-style even in customs like those relating to death?**

Every Nazarene should present himself or herself as holy even in the sadness and pain of the death of a loved one. Many Nazarenes have made the holiness message irrelevant to themselves and to others who do not know Jesus. When death comes to families, many Christians get involved in pagan rites and ceremonies of the purification of the house which include cutting their beards, shaving the hair from the whole body of each family member, climbing to the roof of the house if someone has lost a husband or wife or mother, or the practice of sexual relations between a couple from one family or a member of the family with another person. This practice may lead the person into immorality and adultery. Moreover, the ceremony includes the participation of each member of the family in a special meal which is prepared with impure ingredients.

Other rites which conflict with the holy life-style are the practice of masses that are held in memory of the dead, the transference of the shadow of the deceased from the tomb back to his or her house, the burying of drugs, herbs and charms; self-mutilation for protection and success in life and work. Usually these practices are conducted by witchdoctors and

magicians.

What can the church do when death comes? Does the church have some practices and Christian habits or customs that may be done to replace these pagan practices and ceremonies? What can be found in the Bible which may be applied when death comes? Does culture not contain good practices and habits that can be adapted by Christians to fit to the holy life-style?

In some cultures when a family loses a member, friends and fellow Christians as well as relatives come to the grieving family and bring with them prepared and unprepared food to share together with the family. The visit lasts for days, a week, or even a month. Some visitors go back to their house to rest and come the next day. Some sleep with the family. The purpose of this visit is to comfort and entertain those grieving with conversation, words, songs, prayers, and stories. This fellowship helps the family in grief to not fear death and to give a mental break from thinking about the deceased. It also prevents those grieving from seeking help from witchdoctors and magicians and from practicing pagan ceremonies because they have people around them.

Another positive aspect present in some cultures is providing company for those grieving when they have to leave their house. During the first days right after the death, the bereaved family is not allowed to be alone. They are accompanied by others to the fields, to church or to the market, etc. They are also not allowed to be without counsellors who take care of them and give them support and advice in making decisions. Nazarenes can use these positive aspects of the traditional culture encouraging Christians to be with the grieving ones, teaching them the good models of holy living. Nazarenes can pray, tell stories of others in grief who were able to keep the faith. Nazarenes can show holiness by loving, caring and testifying to grieving people. By doing these acts and keeping internal and external life holy even on the occasion of death, they can make holiness relevant and practical. Nazarenes must follow the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:10-11: "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them for it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."

**Is it possible for a Nazarene Christian to be available for God's use and not be in conflict with his or her culture?**

In some religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, a person can be

an instrument of the god of his religion but this should not create conflict with culture.

How can a person be used by God and Satan at the same time? How can a person practice magic, sorcery, self-mutilation or use herbs, talismans or charms in order to get protection and success, or even to get position or employment? Is it possible for the Nazarene to put God at the centre of heart, family, and life? What protection does God offer to His children in the time of suffering? The Bible says that God promised to Abraham and the people of Israel that if they would be His holy people, that He would protect them, that their enemies would be His and that He would curse who they cursed. God surrounds the Saints with His fire and He seals them with His presence so that they will not be attacked by the enemy. The Nazarene can relax and be sure that there is someone on his or her side in the midst of anguish who will fight for him or her and bring the victory. Those who have the presence of the Holy Spirit, also have a great Protector who is greater than any magician or witchdoctor.

Usually the history, tradition, and customs of a people are passed from one generation to another. The people who have this responsibility of teaching and passing on are the elders and the leaders of communities and families. The church can use these elders of the families and the communities to teach the members of the culture the good ideals of life that are used in holy living. It is a duty of the church to organize discussions and debates concerning habits, customs, and traditions that are not Christian and are not according to the will of God. It is the duty of the church to persuade the heads of families to not practice them.

In I Thessalonians 4:7, Paul says, "For God did not call us to be impure but to live a holy life." Nazarenes, God is calling us to holiness, to share with Him His celestial heritage, to be a part of His character and make holy living a reality and a life-style. There is a conflict between holiness and culture if the person is not totally dedicated to God, but for the saint, God is above every culture.

## Response

Rev Tom Nothstine  
Missionary, Madagascar

We are indebted to the planners of this conference for including this vital aspect of “Social Holiness” in the programme. A theology of culture is often neglected. John Stott observes that, “...only, I suspect, as a result of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974, has the evangelical constituency as a whole come to acknowledge the central importance of culture for effective communication of the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

To Rev Langa we are grateful for being very specific in addressing a pervasive aspect of African culture, that is the traditional religious belief surrounding the ancestors, demons, and spirits. These animistic beliefs are then set against the claims of Christ and holiness. She then *prescribes* some changes that might be used within this context using a holiness lifestyle as correctives to the problem.

I would like to make several observations or disclaimers as I begin to respond. First, I am from a culture which has, in the past, relegated the animistic worldview to the level of superstition. My culture has a separation or dichotomy between the supernatural and the natural. I have had to learn in the classroom and by living in and observing animistic cultures how this impacts the life of the Church in Africa. Secondly, some of my observations may be more related to language expression than theological correctness. I admire a person who is expressing their thoughts in their third language of acquisition. Were the same thoughts given in the “mother tongue” perhaps some of my comments would be different or not applicable.

### Summary and Agreement

Holiness is presented as the result of the experience of grace of entire sanctification. This comes as Christians give themselves fully to God. The subsequent lifestyle should conform more and more to the image of Christ and as a result, show new and observable qualities that reflect a Romans 12:2 non-conformity to the world’s cultural mold. It is, therefore, a religious prescriptive approach to culture.<sup>2</sup> This is a healthy approach with

only agreement coming from this respondent.

### **Culture Defined and Worldviews Noted**

Culture is not defined by Rev Langa but rather some aspects are described. It will help if a definition is supplied here to get a better understanding of the dynamics between culture and the “mind of Christ” which is to be expressed in a holiness lifestyle. Missiologist Louis Luzbetak defines culture as “... a way of life; culture is the total plan for living; it is functionally organized into a system; it is acquired through learning; it is a way of life of a social group, not of an individual as such”.<sup>3</sup>

The worldview is the most important difference (often unseen) between cultures. How the people of a culture see the world determines how they set customs, values and beliefs, and these result in prescribed patterns of coping with nature or the total plan for living. Although there are thousands of cultures, each will take one of four major worldviews around which the characteristics of their culture are ordered. These are listed by Van Rheezen as: Secular worldview, Animistic worldview, Pantheistic worldview, and Theistic worldview.<sup>4</sup>

Rev Langa describes some of the animistic worldview’s belief systems which are based on manipulation of spiritual powers through the use of Shamans or witchdoctors with specific rituals designed to cause the ancestors (demons in reality; see Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalms 106:37-38; I Corinthians 10:19-20), spirits or ghosts to do their bidding.

### **Conflicts are Inevitable and Syncretism Results When Conflict is Resolved by Accommodation**

Thus, we have the answer to the first question. “How can Nazarenes be dedicated to God without getting into conflict with their culture?” They cannot. Conflict is inevitable. However, what is described (“...their culture seems to push them into consecrating only their hearts, pressuring them to preserve the practices or the traditions, heritage and history of their people.”) is not a double minded man or a half dedicated Nazarene. Rather what is described is syncretism, mixing the Bible with dominant beliefs of the culture to accommodate the culture’s prescription rather than God’s. The Lord has provided a way or manner to view the world and it is against the very practices described (Isaiah 8:17-20). Again, a few paragraphs

later, after quoting Luke 16:13 about the impossibility of serving two masters, Rev Langa seems to be saying that a Christian can actually remain a Christian and serve two masters. Perhaps this is one of those areas where the language translation filter is not allowing the actual thought to come through?

Twice more the concept of syncretism is raised: page 2, paragraphs 2 and 3. “Many Nazarenes have made the holiness message irrelevant... [by getting] involved in pagan rites and ceremonies...” (parenthesis mine). Similar to the above are the “...practice of masses that are held in memory of the dead... herbs, charms; self mutilation...” Again, such practices are set as conflicting with the holiness lifestyle. The final (dualistic) syncretistic sounding phrase is on page 3, paragraph 3. It is the first of a series of questions set forth for our consideration. “How can a person be used by God and Satan at the same time?” The answer is they cannot; however, it is left unsaid as are several other questions. Perhaps they are best thought of as rhetorical, although the preceding examples make this option seem unlikely.

The theological difficulty is that these are practices that must be given up by all those who wish to call themselves Christians. These practices of the dominant culture are not negotiable. They are not even to be tolerated on a temporary basis. These cultural practices which Rev Langa sets forth as barriers to a holy life are in fact barriers to being saved. Acts 26:18 gives the basis for our thought here: “to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to God, and receive and share in the inheritance of the sanctified”. Each of these phases is not just a few degrees from where the person was without Christ; each represents a total paradigm shift.<sup>5</sup>

I supply a supposition at this juncture. And it is not with tongue-in-cheek: “Nazarene” as used in Rev Langa’s examples of participation in demoniac activities does not mean “Christian”. There is a high percentage of church members who continue to practice traditional customs and rituals. This causes an embarrassment for Christ and the Church.

### **A Caution: Different Paradigms Cannot be Made the Same**

Rev Langa writes: “God wants to possess us in the same way that demons

will possess a person, but He does not want to do this by force” (page 1 paragraph 4). I am not being over-reactive at this point. While I think I understand the implied connotation, I believe we should stay away from this sort of analogy; it can only lead to confusion and similitude of other Christian activities causing them to look much like the animistic activities.<sup>6</sup>

The cleansing and in-filling with the Holy Spirit and the walking in the Spirit is not just a different “power” causing the difference in the life of the Christian. If God’s thoughts and ways are higher than ours and past our finding out, if only the Spirit of God searches the things of God, then we need to stay with biblical material revealed by the Spirit on how God reigns as Lord of our lives. How can we - why should we compare - the activity and work of God with the activity and work of the devil or demons?

### **The Prescriptive Aspects of the Paper**

I do question that God protects his church from attack, at least as formulated. I quote: “...they will not be attacked by the enemy. The Nazarene can relax and be sure that there is Someone on his or her side ... Who will fight for him/her and bring the victory” (page 3 paragraph 1). Paul in Ephesians 6:10 - 20 tells us that we are in a battle, that we need offensive and defensive weapons to withstand the attack of principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. He tells us that we are with Christ and that we are thus above principalities and powers (Ephesians 1:20; 2:6).<sup>7</sup> Because of this (above principalities and powers and being with Christ) we do not have to resort to animistic practices of manipulation of spirits and principalities. Being with Christ we have direct access to the Father and have the means to fight and win against these evil foes with spiritual warfare equipment God provides. All of this is possible because of the mighty victory of God in Christ on the cross; conquering sin, death, grave, and hell, and making the vanquished foes march in His victory parade (cf. Colossians 2:15). Christus Victor means the mission of Christ so defeated the devil and his evil forces that in Christ we can be free from the power and principle of sin, live a life that is pleasing and acceptable, entirely sanctified and truly Christian.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, I cannot be attacked in the same manner as a non-Christian which may lead to demonization and control or possession. Greater is He

that is in me than any of the foes He defeated. I believe Rev Langa would agree with me.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This is a tough-love call for us to do more than we have done, not just expose the darkness and evils of African culture, but to set forth Bible based prescriptions that can meet and take the place of the traditional practices, to give Christian Nazarenes light that will be an aid in their holiness lifestyle. The Bible based prescriptions would then be dynamic equivalents to provide a way of ministering in areas that have been dominated by the devil. It is both a warning and a prophetic call to the church that our doctrine of holiness indeed be a social holiness.

Thank you Rev Langa for this call to action. I would like to see this expanded to a proper length and thus have room to develop your ideas and answer more of your questions and suggest further equivalents or substitutes for animistic practices.

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## **Response**

Rev Cariot M Shongwe  
District Superintendent, Swaziland Central District

Since the Church of the Nazarene was established or arose for the sole purpose of fulfilling the great commission by emphasizing HOLINESS as taught by Scripture as its Central message and life-style, it is therefore imperative that it demonstrates a life-style that follows its message in all spheres of its existence which include all cultures and practices in the whole world. In short the Church of the Nazarene ought to apply its message of holiness in real life.

Rev Margarida Langa's paper is trying to address the issue of the practicality and applicability of holiness in our African Cultural and Traditional life-styles. It is very much appreciated that as a Nazarene ordained elder and a Lecturer at a Nazarene College, she shows a clear understanding that the Church of the Nazarene was established to preach and live the message of "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" as a Biblical imperative required by God. She also emphasized the fact that as a Scriptural message it must be applicable in real life. Therefore I wholeheartedly agree with Rev Langa in this regard.

Holiness as a central message of the Church of the Nazarene is not only supposed to be a slogan as such but ought to be demonstrated in the lives of all its members. This must be so because holiness is God's character and is required and commanded by God for all people who are called Christians just as Nazarenes are (Leviticus 11:44-45, 1 Peter 1:13-17, Hebrews 12:12-14). This call is for both an experience and an application of holy living in all spheres of life.

So Nazarenes can be totally dedicated to God by experiencing a transformed life through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. That can come about by each and every member's commitment of love to God alone and no other gods (Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Mark 12:28-31). Once this kind of commitment is made continuously in ones life, his character will bear testimony that he is a Christian. This kind of a Christian life-style will surely conflict with ungodly Cultural and Traditional practices that go against God's will. His life will show a message of holiness before his

words. As he follows God's command in love and commitment continually, his life will confront all bad cultural and traditional practices because he/she will not practice them anymore.

However, for the Christian or Nazarene member to succeed in living such a life he has to constantly believe, accept and follow all scriptural teaching about holiness and holy living more than his culture and traditions. That means that he must become a "person of one book", the Bible, in order to find out what God requires of him and to do it. In this way it becomes possible for a Nazarene to live a life-style that is pleasing to God and to shed cultural and traditional practices that are against God's will. Also he can be in a position to take God's word and apply it in the place of wrong cultural and traditional practices. Likewise he will be able to examine and take those good traditions that are compatible to Christian practices and apply them. Scripture will enlighten him about the right traditional practices.

Also, the Nazarene Christian ought to know that God in his holiness confronts cultural and traditional beliefs that are against him. Therefore the Christian or Nazarene must know that there will be first a confrontation of his life and his culture. Then there will follow a life-style that will bring an answer for the confrontation. So it won't be easy at first. Thus there must always be a commitment of love.

In conclusion I totally agree with Rev Margarida Langa when she says, "It is the duty of the Church to organize discussions and debates concerning habits, customs, and traditions that are not Christian and are not according to the will of God. It is the duty of the Church to persuade the heads of families to not practice them!" I would also add that the persuasion of the Church of the Nazarene to its members not to do these bad practices should be through teaching and preaching. The debates should come out with guidelines of what it is in our customs and traditions that are ungodly and what are those that are correct and godly.

## 7

### **Is Polygamy Sin?**

Rev Caleb Mathebula  
Lecturer, Nazarene Theological College;  
Pastor, Dube Church of the Nazarene, South Africa

Thesis: God's attitude towards polygamy as opposed to divorce.

Objective: To show that God's attitude towards polygamy is redemptive.

#### **Introduction**

The practice of the Church of the Nazarene not to accept polygamists into full membership, at least in South Africa, has given the implication that polygamy is sin. This is the understanding of some ministers as indicated by their preaching and/or teaching and the laity in general. This has resulted in polygamists being lost not only to the church but even to God. This loss is sometimes experienced by whole households. While it is true that the church recognizes marriages between one man and one woman (*Manual*), I believe that we need to develop an attitude and policies that will be redemptive even to the polygamist in order to stop this loss. This paper is an attempt to help change this attitude by briefly reminding ourselves of the biblical understanding of sin, the biblical portrayal of polygamy and God's attitude towards polygamists.

#### **Institution of Marriage**

God instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden when He first created man and woman. He stated that man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This implies that God's ideal is for marriage to be between one man and one woman only, thus the general perception that anyone who marries more than one wife is a sinner. However, those who marry only one wife among the Africans, do so due to the influence of Western culture, that which is taught by believers to be God's expectation for them, because they are poor or because they cannot handle more than one wife without discrimination. It is true that in our age marrying one wife has become such a norm that becoming a polygamist will make news headlines.

In the Christian culture marrying more than one wife has been classified as

sin or unacceptable. People who are polygamists are not accepted into the membership of the church especially in the Church of the Nazarene. This practice of regarding polygamists as sinners has led the Church to challenge them to divorce all but the first wife in order for them to be saved or accepted into membership of a Church. This practice raises the following questions: Is a person saved by divorcing the extra wife/wives or by having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Does God consider polygamy as sinful? If sinful, does it mean that those who were polygamists in the Bible times were sinners?

### **What is Marriage?**

Marriage is defined by Herbert Lockyer as the union between a man and a woman as husband and wife, which becomes a foundation for a home and family.<sup>1</sup> Isaac K Funk defines marriage as a mutual and voluntary compact properly based on mutual regard and affection and suitably ratified, to live together as husband and wife until separated by death.<sup>2</sup> The two definitions above do not include polygamy as a marriage. It is concluded that marriage is limited to only one man and one woman. This raises the question as to what must be said about the relationships where more than one spouse is involved. Are they marriages or not?

### **What is Polygamy?**

Polygamy refers to a marriage between one man and more than one wife (polygyny),<sup>3</sup> a marriage between one woman and more than one husband (polyandry),<sup>4</sup> and a marriage between one man and a series of wives and vice versa (serial polygamy)<sup>5</sup> as it happens in divorce and remarriage. In countries like Tibet and some parts of India where there are fewer women than men, a woman would be a wife to more than one husband in a rotational manner. Usually brothers would marry the same woman. In our discussion I will use polygamy in the place of polygyny since it is a term which is in use in most parts of Africa.

### **What is Sin?**

Sin is defined as a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a moral responsible person.<sup>6</sup> James 4:17<sup>7</sup> defines sin as failure to do the good that one knows he should do. It is a sin of omission. The epistle to the Romans 14:23<sup>8</sup> regards sin as anything done outside faith in God. I conclude that this definition emphasises the relationship between God and man in day-to-day dealings. These definitions will guide our discussion in this paper.

### **What Does the Bible Teach Regarding Polygamy?**

Looking at polygamy from this understanding of sin, it is clear that the Bible does not specifically teach against or for it. It is silent or neutral.

In Deuteronomy 17:17<sup>9</sup> God gave the command to those who would be kings in Israel not to multiply wives lest they lead their hearts away from God. This is not a command to all the Israelites nor is it to all the males. It is to the kings of Israel. This command as it is does not forbid polygamy since “to multiply wives” may mean to marry many wives rather than a few. So this command does not forbid or promote polygamy. One may choose to use it either against or for polygamy. Some people well known to us today, practised polygamy in Bible times.

The Bible regards some of the polygamists, like Abraham, Jacob, and David as heroes of faith. Solomon is the only person whose life ended in disgrace. However, before his fall he was regarded as a man who was full of wisdom and one who pleased God. It is only in his old age that his many wives led his heart astray as God said.<sup>10</sup> Otherwise no one ever denounced him for marrying hundreds of wives.

The Church regards some of these people as examples of faith. Today Solomon is regarded as an example of a person who was loved by God and who sought the best gift from God. His state of polygamy is disregarded.

### **What Are Some of the Problems in a Polygamous Marriage?**

Three examples of problems in a polygamous marriage will be cited. Abraham had two wives, namely Sarah and Hagar. The two wives failed to live in peace. Hagar despised Sarah because she was pregnant while Sarah was barren. Abraham had to divorce Hagar later in his life to bring about peace in his family.

The next example is the family of Jacob who had four wives. There was jealousy between the two sisters, Leah and Rachel. Because of their jealousy and competition, their maids were made to become his wives too. This jealousy and the failure of Jacob to distribute his love equally amongst his sons led to the slavery of Joseph, his beloved son.

David on the other hand had many wives, possibly more than twelve plus concubines. He failed to balance discipline amongst his sons although he was a good judge when it involved people in his kingdom. This boils down to failure to distribute his love equally amongst his wives; hence it affected

his sons too.

Yes! Polygamy has its problems and therefore cannot be promoted.

### **Can God Accept a Polygamist?**

Since polygamy is problematic, does God accept a polygamist? The answer to this question is very important, because it is either a polygamist cannot be saved in his state or he can. In looking back to the three families we have just mentioned, one may conclude that God does accept polygamists unto Himself or to a living relationship with Him. Abraham is called a friend of God,<sup>11</sup> while David is called a man after God's heart.<sup>12</sup> God called the descendants of Abraham after Jacob as Israel rather than calling them after Isaac who was not a polygamist. The fact that the Bible writers regarded Abraham and David as the examples of faith shows very well that God accepts polygamists.

### **Is Polygamy Sin?**

Now the question is, is polygamy sin? We have already seen that God accepts polygamists. How can that which God regards with a favourable attitude be sinful?<sup>13</sup> The Word of God does not strictly forbid polygamy except in the following instances:

- a. God commanded the kings of Israel not to multiply wives for themselves lest they lead them astray as it happened with King Solomon.
- b. In the First Epistle to Timothy, Paul forbids church leaders from marrying more than one wife.<sup>14, 15</sup>

Apart from these instances, polygamy is not forbidden nor promoted. It is implied in Deuteronomy and the Pastoral Epistles that polygamy was not forbidden but accepted amongst the laity. The Bible does not go into detail as to why it was accepted for the laity. The fact is, it is not sinful though not the best idea!

Although the matter of polygamy is a repulsive thing to many believers, serial polygamy is generally accepted amongst believers even in the Church of the Nazarene. This is seen by accepting divorced pastors behind our pulpits and also by the provision made in the *Manual*. What is more surprising, in comparison to polygamy, is that the Bible clearly states that God hates divorce.<sup>16</sup> In the New Testament Jesus allowed remarriage of a divorced person if such a divorce was a result of unfaithfulness in marriage

and if such a person was an innocent partner. Otherwise there is no remarriage for any person whose divorce was not the result of unfaithfulness! What is more challenging is that Jesus regards those who marry after divorce where unfaithfulness is not involved, to be living in adultery.<sup>17</sup> In short he says that they are living in SIN!

The main question then is what should be done with those polygamists who come to put their faith in God through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord? Shall they be accepted into the membership of the church, or shall they be required to divorce their wives first, an act hated by God,<sup>18</sup> before they can be accepted? Or shall they be refused membership in the church because they are polygamists? What is it that makes it acceptable to God but repulsive to man? How can something be acceptable to God but sinful to man (Acts 10:9-16; 15:8-9)? **What shall the church do with the polygamists?**

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## Response

Rev Mashangu Harry Maluleka  
Academic Dean, Nazarene Theological College, Muldersdrift;  
Pastor, Mothutlung Church of the Nazarene, South Africa

Thesis: God's original plan about marriage is the answer to all marital problems including polygamy, divorce, and remarriage.

Objective: To expose polygamy, divorce, and remarriage as the result of the hardness of the sinful human hearts.

### Introduction

It is important that the author of the paper, "Is Polygamy Sin?" be commended for having the courage to discuss an issue that is so real to the Christian church in Africa. While the author highlights his thesis at the beginning of the paper, this paper raises many very important questions around the issue of marriage. Here are some of the questions raised by this paper:

- a. Should people who were polygamists before they found Christ be accepted into full membership with their polygamists' status or not?
- b. Should Christian monogamists be allowed to become Christian polygamists?
- c. Is it Biblically correct to encourage a polygamist who becomes a Christian to send some of his wives away and only remain with the first wife before they are accepted into full membership?
- d. Is the position of the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 35:4, not biased by accommodating those who remarry after divorce into its clergy and yet refusing to accept polygamists with full membership rights?

We will be depriving ourselves and failing the African church if we can approach this paper with the suspicion that the author's intention is to introduce polygamy into the church. As a divinely designed institution, the Christian marriage is currently facing challenges from different cultures. Polygamy, divorce, and living together are some of the symptoms reflecting the problems facing the Christian marriage today. The best way to respond to the paper on polygamy, I believe, is to clarify the biblical

principles of the Christian marriage as a true reflection of God's purpose for marriage.

I classify marriage into three categories, namely: Western, Non-Western, and Christian marriage. By Western I mean the kind that believes in a wedding gown, a legal document and a church ceremony. This kind of marriage includes as part of the ceremony the exchanging of vows. In those vows the words "till death do us part." are repeated and yet western culture accommodates serial monogamy, a direct violation of the same vows, but condemns polygamy.

By non-Western I mean any cultural marital arrangement that fails to meet the Western expectations of marriage. It mostly stigmatises divorce yet embraces polygamy.

A Christian marriage is the kind that is based on the agape type of love, and sticks to the biblical principles of marriage. From the outside it has a lot of common things with the Western type. However it sees marriage as a life-long relationship that is sustained through love, forgiveness, and lots of sacrifices for the benefit of all stakeholders and for the glory of God. Many people, even Christians, confuse the Western marriage to be the same as the Christian marriage. The Western marriage is influenced by popular opinion (hard hearts) while the non-Western is driven by what is culturally acceptable; meanwhile the Christian marriage is driven by God's initial purpose for marriage.

### **Setting The Record Straight**

While the author correctly indicates that the Bible does not speak for or against polygamy, the tone of his paper seems to suggest that God was in favour of the practice. Nothing could be further from the truth. First, it is a fact that most of the great men of the Old Testament who were polygamists could be said to have somehow been cornered into such arrangements by situations or people. Abraham was in that situation because he and his wife thought it would be the best way to hasten God's promise. Jacob was tricked into that situation. We also need to emphasise the fact that there are many heroes of faith who were monogamists as compared to those who were polygamists.

Secondly, the Bible states facts as they are. What happened to the relationship of Sarah and Hagar, the relationship of descendants of Ishmael

and of Isaac? What about the relationship of the wives of Jacob, though they were sisters. Would Joseph have received such treatment from his brothers if they had the same mother? What about the household of David? Can we say polygamy resulted in a happy family? Think of the raping, hatred, and killing that went on in his household. Eventually one of his sons slept with his father's wife. So whenever we want to talk about the Old Testament's position on polygamy we need to look at the whole picture.

From Genesis to Revelation whenever the Bible speaks about marriage, a monogamous relationship is assumed. Genesis 2:21-25, Matthew 19:4-6, and Ephesians 5:28-31 are some of the examples to that effect. One common message found in all three portions says: "for this reason **a man** will leave his father and mother and be united to **his wife**, and the **two** will become one flesh." Whenever Paul spoke about marital relationships again monogamy was assumed as the normal marriage. Jesus in Matthew 19:8 says, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. **But it was not this way from the beginning**".

Divorce, remarriage, and polygamy all fall short of God's original plan for marriage, and they are the result of hearts that are hard. Like the ancient Moses, if the church eventually accepts the victims of such practices it should not be partial in its approach. The church should teach, preach, and encourage believers to live marriage according to the teachings of the Bible. However the position that the church has taken towards those who practice serial monogamy in the church should be extended to the polygamists or else the whole issue should be revisited.

Much as it was wrong for the Jews to expect the gentiles to be circumcised first before they could become Christians, it is wrong for the church to expect the polygamists to become divorced monogamists before they can be accepted into the body of Christ. While I believe polygamy to be contrary to God's number one plan for marriage, I feel that the church needs to have a different attitude towards those who were polygamists before they knew the Lord. We also need to deal with the double standard that we are practising on this issue. Both polygamy and serial monogamy fall short of God's original plan for marriage, and both of them should be treated as being the products of hard human hearts. It is not right to think of polygamy as only an African issue because many nations have and are

still practising polygamy.

God designed marriage to be between one husband and one wife. Polygamy contradicts that. God designed marriage to be a lifelong relationship, and serial monogamy contradicts that.

It is dangerous to assume that since the Pastoral Epistles deal with monogamy regarding leaders it means that it was acceptable for the laity to be polygamists. The general tone of the Bible does not give us that impression. Paul also says that an elder must see that his children obey him with proper respect. Will we be right to take that to mean that Paul says all elders must have children? Will it be right to say that Paul is saying that only married men can be elders? We cannot say that because the Bible is silent about a particular issue it therefore supports that issue.

I believe that Paul set a standard for both elders and deacons in the church not because he expected them to have a different level of holiness than their congregations, but for them to be a living example of what God wants from Christians. I believe that Paul expected all Christians to live up to the expectations of the gospel. Paul once said that those who found it hard to follow Christ should follow him because he followed Christ. That verse tells us about Paul's philosophy of leadership. Nowhere in the Bible is there proof that God was happy with the laity being polygamists; much as there is no proof that God was ever happy with the laity being serial monogamists.

We need to be careful as a church not to fall into the trap of thinking that everything that is said to be legally acceptable is therefore morally acceptable. There is a thin line between allowing the mercy of God to reach the polygamists and giving them all the rights and privileges of being members of the body of Christ, and promoting polygamy in the church.

However, the same could be said about the problem of serial monogamy. As a denomination we are becoming softer and more sympathetic on serial monogamists at the expense of the polygamists. We cannot practice double standards on the same issue.

As we attempt to reflect holiness and the sanctity of marriage, what is going to inform us - popular opinion or God's original intention about marriage? What informed our decision to change our position about the marital positions of those we allow as pastors of the flock? If the same

standard is used, will it not lead us to accommodate polygamists as pastors? If not, why accept the former but not the latter? If the same criteria is applied, what is going to stop us from shifting from our position on the issue of gay and lesbians in the ministry and in the pastoral positions?

Jesus said: “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.” I believe He challenged his listeners to choose between listening to their stubborn hearts and doing it the Moses way, or listening to God’s Spirit and doing it God’s original way. Far be it from us to fall to the level of operating from the hardness of the heart!

## 8

### **Holiness as Transformation for Action!**

Rev Hendrik Vorster

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Sasolburg, South Africa

I am an Afrikaans-speaking pastor in the Gauteng District, South Field. I was introduced to Christ during an *Easter Camp* when I was 12 years old. From age 12 until now, I have been part of the Church of the Nazarene, which I love dearly. I was brought up in an environment where holiness and sanctification was preached (although not always clearly understood by me). My years as a student at the Theological College clarified the holiness concepts to me and I “*fell in love*” with our doctrine of entire sanctification as a life filled with the love of Christ.

The teachings of entire sanctification, and my embracing of the truths, created certain expectations in me. I expected and looked for specific fruit in the lives of people individually and the church collectively, as a result of such a wonderful doctrine. As a teenager in the church I had some “role models”, people I respected and looked up to from a distance.

Everything was wonderful, until I became involved as a student and later as a pastor in the life of a local church. To my deep disappointment (and shock sometimes), I observed some fruit that were not part of my “holiness” frame of reference. I observed people who were “saved and sanctified” for more than forty years, serving on church boards and other ministries, whose lives did not reflect the kind of fruit expected from the doctrine of entire sanctification. However, there are individuals (in the minority unfortunately), whose lives do reflect holiness. I thank God for them.

There is one word, according to my perception, which describes John Wesley, the father of the holiness movement, the best: **CHANGE!** Change was caused by **ACTION** on his side and later by the denomination he founded. Action caused **TRANSFORMATION** in the lives of individuals, families, communities, cities, and nations! Wherever he moved, **LIFE CHANGE** occurred by the mighty working of the Holy Spirit! John Wesley, in the true spirit of his Master, Jesus Christ, can

rightly be called one of the greatest *life change agents* in the history of the Christian Church.

I am writing from a certain context in our denomination. The white Afrikaans-speaking segment of our church in South Africa. We can best be described by one word: **PASSIVE**. It has been said that the Church of the Nazarene is the “*best kept secret of South Africa!*”

What are the reasons for a church that originally had so much zeal for God and people, to become so destructively passive? I will use and describe two words briefly as derived from Dr H Ray Dunning’s book *Reflecting the Divine Image*.

The first word is *monasticism* – it happens when Christians have a pre-occupation with *personal holiness* to a degree that it results in withdrawing from a *redemptive involvement* in the world. It happened in the medieval Church and also now in the 21st century church. Today, many Protestant groups refuse to be involved in the affairs of the world mainly out of fear of defilement (Dunning 1998:15).

*Legalism* is a by-product of *monasticism*. It shows its ugly appearance when we become so exclusive in our conditions for being part of our fellowship, that we often drive people away from the Church and Christ. I do not advocate the lowering of the standards of holiness. What I do advocate is to let God be God in people’s lives and let Him do the conviction and cleansing according to His plan and timetable. Let us do our part – disciple-making of the nations in love, with sensitivity for people and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Another reason for the passivity of my people can be found in the word *apocalypticism*. It reflects a particular attitude of pious people toward the world. According to Dr H Ray Dunning:

“Apocalypticism is pessimistic about society in general. It assumes that the present age is so corrupt that it is beyond redemption and must soon be brought to an end through divine judgment. Those who believe this way often withdraw into a kind of isolationism and make no effort to exert any influence on the world’s institutions. Apocalypticism involves what can be called a lifeboat mentality. The ship is sinking and only the few who flee the doomed vessel and seek safety in the lifeboat can be rescued. Nothing can be done to save the

ship” (Dunning 1998:123-124).

We know *apocalypticism* in our context as preachers who have only preached about the last days. Jesus is coming soon. He is going to rapture us out of this evil and corrupt world. Our only responsibility is to keep ourselves pure and holy. Forget about the multitudes on their way to a certain death and the eternal hell awaiting them. They are corrupted beyond repair. Save only yourselves, your friends, and family. Be pre-occupied with the end times. Use all your energy to study the trends in the world pointing to the rapture. Programme your church life only around the last days. Make it your business to warn the *Christians!* Forget about the world!

The result is that our focus became centred on ourselves and our purity and holiness. We became so self-absorbed in our own life and church, that we completely missed out on what Jesus said we are to *be* and *do* through the *Great Commandment* and *Great Commission*.

What is holiness other than an active, dynamic living out of Jesus’ words in Mark 12:30, 31 (Great Commandment):

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (*KJV*).

Is it possible for a self-absorbed Christian to really love this way? Can a church with a “*monasticism-apocalypticism-syndrome*” love the way Christ as the Head of the Church commanded? Is there any action, transformation, or life change present in and through a self-absorbed Christian and church?

Christ said something equally profound in Matthew 28:19-20 (Great Commission):

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (*KJV*).

Christ is *actively present* in a church where his commandments are *obeyed!* God’s miracles take place where his people take action in faith! His vision

is for the nations, the multitudes of people on earth who need His salvation and life transformation! And we as the Church are supposed to do this! Our calling is not to be an exclusive, self-centred people, but an *other-centred* people with a vision for the nations.

The harvest is white. People are “*ripe*” to be saved. They are waiting ... Waiting for a Christian, waiting for a local church... waiting for a denomination... driven by holy love, to take action and reach out to them by presenting the almighty, omnipotent, loving Christ in creative ways to them.

Passivity equals lovelessness. Passivity is nothing other than *non-holiness*! Passivity is a cruel sin! Christ called it lukewarmness! It is impossible to have Christ’s love in our hearts and keep it for ourselves by being passive and self-centred!

The nations of Africa need us! We are God’s people for this hour! We need to repent; we need to rediscover true holiness! Holiness is always a *transformation for action*. We cannot come into contact with true holiness and not be transformed in the essence of our being! It is impossible for us to be truly transformed and changed, without being a witness of that to other people and affect their lives for the better.

We, as the Church, have unique challenges today. God wants to use us in a dynamic way to address the multiple needs of the terrible AIDS crises we are facing today. Millions of orphans need care and a godly upbringing in the context of a loving family. Orphanages are not really the answer, for children need to experience love in a safe and secure surrounding. We need to think and act more creatively in order to address this huge problem.

We need to plant thousands of holiness churches and disciple the new converts. People need to see and experience the holiness message practically. God wants to make an impact on the continent of Africa and He wants to do it through His Church, networking with each other. Our influence in Africa can become so much greater when we take hands with the greater Body of Christ. We as a denomination have so much to offer. God has blessed us with extraordinary resources. We have to utilize it to His glory!

Our church is a sleeping giant! We desperately need to awake! God wants to use us to create dramatic transformations on our continent! Let’s take

**ACTION** today! Let's humble ourselves before almighty God, ask His forgiveness and start doing what we know we should – living the *Great Commandment* and *Great Commission* and transform Africa! We already know the **WHAT**. Our challenge however as a church, is to collectively seek God's face concerning the **HOW**. We need to become a Holy Spirit-driven *change agent* as the Church in Africa, as it was in the days of John Wesley.

## Response

Rev Resemate Klaas Tau  
District Superintendent Free State, South Africa

### **“Some Effective Models for Translating Holiness into Life Experience”**

#### **Statement**

This article attempts to respond to Rev H Vorster’s “Holiness As Transformation For Action”<sup>79</sup> and hence the choice of this theme, viz.: “Some Effective Models For Translating Holiness Into Life Experience”. I propose to move through this discussion in the following order: Firstly, I will reflect a summary on issues raised by Rev H Vorster without regurgitating them over and/or attempting to paraphrase them out of their context. My views on the same issue(s) will be strongly represented, albeit in a minimal form. Secondly, I will evaluate some delivery systems and/or the means used to communicate the holiness message. Finally, I will conclude this article by attempting to make some brief recommendations concerning the way forward. I may sound out of context of the scope imposed on this paper, but I would like to state that the views represented in this article, as a response to Rev Vorster’s article, are my own and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

#### **Central Issue – Disguised Fear, Mutual Rejection and Indifference**

In this section, I would like to reflect a summary on the issues raised by Rev Vorster in “Holiness As Transformation For Action”. My initial survey of issues in the article under discussion has led me to believe that a degree of disguised fear, mutual rejection and indifference has come to characterize the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa. To say the least, Rev Vorster’s article is really provocative. Indeed it suggests a programme of action beginning from repentance. I must state from the outset that it is well known that the Church of the Nazarene is serving in an abnormal and unique situation in Africa. Decades of separate race development and centuries of tribalism continue to challenge the credibility if not undermine the doctrine and the life of scriptural holiness. The issue is not that the doctrine of holiness is not known, but that it has hardly been witnessed by

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<sup>79</sup> Vorster, H. “Holiness As Transformation For Action” ANTC Paper, 2003.

life and deeds. As we shall see, scriptural holiness remains a major problem, not so much on the level of doctrine, but on the level of practice. For this reason the denomination is still finding it hard to address questions of democracy on one hand, and latent fear, indifference and mutual rejection between ethnic races and tribes of Africa on the other. Our level of growth and understanding of the subject of holiness, therefore, is still confined to cultural, tribal, and racial norms or values. Our own cultures, norms and values, notwithstanding their validity and historical richness in one way or the other, have all creatively been reduced into effective systems of mutual exclusion. In these contexts repentance, therefore, will only begin when or if we do not conceal but confess and correct reasons for our fears and mutual rejection through dialogue, for we have to be students of peace and holiness. "Peace with all men" (Hebrews 12:14) and "Holiness Unto The Lord" (Zechariah 14:20). Not just holiness - no, but that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

Once we have gone through the cycle of repentance in full then God will know we are ready for the next one. But for that to happen, it is not simply going to be an easy exercise. The traditional place of the altar in our churches must change. The new place of the altar is before the face of the other. There we must confess our sin, mutual rejection, and indifference. There is the correct spot where our hearts will be circumcised to enable us to love, forgive one another and bring about healing and reconciliation. Reformation, yes, but it is cheap; it is realized by determination and by a political will. Transformation is always costly; it comes not without a price. It is realized by no means except the cross! We are to be judged by history for we are its creators. History is beckoning us toward a turning point in the Church of the Nazarene. The turning point has always begun with full circle of REPENTANCE. Revival began when people did not simply pray on altars built of stones and wood but on altars built of flesh and blood. Love is not simply tears or some sense of rationalized responsibility and guilt. Love is realized by no other way, but self-denial. That is holiness!

### **Disguised Monasticism, Legalism and Apocalypticism**

In this area, Rev Vorster unsympathetically took a hard and critical look on the state of affairs as it stands in the Church of the Nazarene at this point and time in Africa. He describes the passivity of the Church as simply monasticism, legalism and apocalypticism. The church is "PASSIVE"

(Vorster's emphasis not mine), and quite withdrawn refusing to be the salt and the light of the earth (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt loses identity when it comes into contact with the substance it savours, and the light does not shine for itself. The Church must be "awake," says Vorster. Otherwise, why tearfully sing, "I Surrender All" if we know we are preoccupied by fears of losing some elements constituting our identities. "Nations of Africa need us," cries Vorster. But we have refused all biblical challenges to become the salt of the other. From our racial and tribally separate "churches" we cry out to one another, "I do not want to be your salt; and I do not want you to be mine, lest I lose my identity". To be holy is to be the salt and savour the other, and therefore lose your identity. Holiness is never the end in itself, but the means to see the Lord. It is not by chance, or by lack of understanding that some people and some denominations reject holiness — it is costly, very costly and yet very simple. But they are indeed honest with themselves. They are afraid that they would say one thing and do the opposite one. Do we want to be holy?

Again, Rev Vorster charges that we have turned local churches into monasteries. We are good when it comes to shunning all forms of contamination, but not so with sin, no! We are not indifferent to sin; no, sin we do commit anytime, but indifferent to the other. Monasticism has always demoted holiness from active life to the ranks of religion. No religion is better than the other. If Christianity is religion it needs join the others on the table for it is as good or as bad as they are. Biblical Christianity has never been considered a religion, and in fact is not as it is in the Bible.<sup>80</sup> Holiness is essentially first and foremost unselfish and self-sacrificial.

### **Conclusion**

I now conclude my observations on Rev Vorster's article by recapitulating some elements of the plea he made to the Church. If we are to be holiness disciples and for that matter, identify ourselves as Wesleyans, we should move from a passive to an active life. The Church of the Nazarene must rediscover its mission and, therefore, its saltiness. This should be manifested by responding, with love, to the needs of the other for "the nations of Africa need us!" (Vorster) - not only what we have (sympathy),

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<sup>80</sup> Seamands, J. *Tell It Well: Communicating the Gospel Across Cultures*. Kansas City. Mo., Beacon Hill Press, 1981. P 64ff.

but also what we are (love). As the salt of the earth, we must be savoured into the lives of the other and the King of Kings will know where to find us. "Passivity is nothing other than *non-holiness*" (Vorster italics, not mine). "We desperately need to awake" and "We need to become a Holy Spirit-driven change agent as the Church in Africa, as it was in the days of John Wesley" (Vorster).

Monasticism, apocalypticism, and legalism all have the rightful place in the history of the world. I am not sure if I completely agree with Dr Dunning whom Rev Vorster has quoted; nevertheless, apocalypticism is a danger to the religious community if considered an end in itself (for instance, the Thessalonians). If this be the case, then we would domesticate it into being our own pet. But apocalypticism is designed to help us cope better with present reality. It is not just a mocking mirage in an awful desert.

### **The Doctrine of Holiness**

This section refocuses our attention on the subject matter in question – "Holiness As Transformation For Action". The fact that holiness is the greatest doctrine of Holy Scripture cannot be reasonably denied.<sup>81</sup> Holiness is both the essence and the goal of the gospel - to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). Indeed, in alluding to the fact just mentioned, the fundamental basis of holiness doctrine is the Bible itself.<sup>82</sup> While the Bible itself is not the doctrine of holiness, it does richly provide the material out of which the doctrine is constructed.<sup>83</sup> Therefore to remain true to the message of the Bible, holiness should be at the centre of our lives, teaching and preaching.

The doctrine of holiness received more interest during the 19th century, and theological formulations of holiness also received attention during the same period. The interest in holiness culminated in the Holiness Movement of the 19th century (Pillay 1991), and consequently, the organization of many independent holiness churches,<sup>84</sup> of which the largest number combined in 1908 and officially organized the Church of the

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<sup>81</sup> Bedwell, H K. s.a. *The Greatest Doctrine Of Holy Scripture: Meditation About What the Bible Teaches About Holiness*. Hillary, Natal: The Forward Movement.

<sup>82</sup> Grider, J K. *Entire Sanctification: The Distinctiveness of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City Mo., Beacon Hill Press, 1980. P 17

<sup>83</sup> Ibid

<sup>84</sup> Smith, T L. *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarene, The Formative Years*. Kansas City. Mo., Nazarene Publishing House, 1963. P 21.

Nazarene.<sup>85</sup> Today the Church of the Nazarene is one of the largest holiness denominations committed "*to spread scriptural holiness throughout the globe*" (italics mine).<sup>86</sup>

In addition to that, the mission statement of the Church of the Nazarene on the Africa Region identifies the denomination as a "Christian Holiness family" committed to "worshipping the Saviour; fellowshipping and serving with the Saints; winning the lost; discipling the won, and deploying the disciplined!"<sup>87</sup>

However, one of the greatest challenges facing the denomination in Africa today is that, in preaching and teaching holiness, more often the doctrine fails to translate into experience and life. This issue was first observed by Dr William Esselstyn in the early 1960's when he said, "There is today little witness to the doctrine and experience of second blessing holiness in South Africa, and even comparatively little effort to bring converts from heathenism into a definite born-again relationship with God".<sup>88</sup> Sad to say, but that has not changed! Part of the problem is the delivery systems employed to communicate the message of holiness - the matter now to be evaluated in the next section.

### **Ineffective Delivery Systems**

Africa can be saved, and Africa will be saved and sanctified! But the means employed to communicate the message, the current delivery systems, have little capacity to do so. By delivery systems I simply mean existing local churches, pastors, directors, educators, districts and etc. There is an urgent need to revisit our delivery systems at least on the level of their structures. For some time now, Africans have been calling for the indigenisation of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa. That was granted. But in an attempt to indigenise the Church of the Nazarene in Africa, we have heavily borrowed from the apartheid models rather than being content with the New Testament ones. Parker sadly observes that "the government

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<sup>85</sup> Pieraard, R V. "American Holiness Movement", from the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Elwell, Walter A (ed). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House. 1984. Pp 516-518.

<sup>86</sup> *Manual 2001-2005 Church of the Nazarene*. Nazarene Publishing House, Kansas City, MO, 2001. p. 39.

<sup>87</sup> 2003 Calendar of the Church of the Nazarene - Africa Region.

<sup>88</sup> Esselstyn, W C. *Mission In South Africa*. Discovery, Transvaal, 1951

of the Republic of South Africa has been creating a number of self-governing Black states within the republic...*the Church of the Nazarene has structured the administration of its work largely along the lines of these tribal groupings*" (italics mine).<sup>89</sup> In so doing, the Church has effectively facilitated estrangement between races and tribes. Today, we inherit separate local churches, separate district activities all on the basis of race or tribe. Consequently, members of local churches in the same denomination are not unconditionally welcomed in another local church. We still refuse to affirm God's image in each other. Now the government of South Africa has changed that policy. Some architects of the policy have approached the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to say they were sorry about that and have acknowledge that it was a gross violation of human rights. But the Church of the Nazarene is still preserving them as a better model of indigenisation.

Despite the fact that calls were made during the tenure of Dr Richard Zanner for interracial districts, this is still not being welcomed with enthusiasm in some circles. Despite the call to "go and make disciples of all nations," pastors of one race or tribe serve only the needs of their own race or tribe. District and Local Church activities are still held separately. Like the Corinthians we always edify our own and not another people. We do this under the label of "being realistic: you must know the culture of your people in order to serve them effectively". Some have come to believe that "it will take time, if at all, for generations to be able to serve people who are not your own, and thus reaffirm God's image to them". Are we conservative sociologists? Why are politicians not worried about these things? Are we servants of Culture or Christ? By no means am I implying that holiness is just to serve cross-culturally, no, but serving people, no matter who they may be.

- **Is Entire Sanctification Still A Distinctiveness of the Nazarenes in Africa?**

The form of the question as it is above demands an honest answer. Indeed, it is worrying that for some time the voice of these testifying or publicly professing to the experience of heart cleansing holiness **is quiet** in many of our churches in South Africa today. This does not mean people are no

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<sup>89</sup> Parker, J F. *Mission To The World: A History of Missions in the Church of the Nazarene*. Kansas City, MO., Nazarene Publishing House. 1988. P 170.

longer testifying in our churches. On the contrary! They do - and more so. But in their testimonies people would **very seldom** profess the experience of heart cleansing through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We might also add that those that dare to testify about it, more often sound unsure of what they are talking about. This is in spite of the fact that holiness doctrine is one of the chief cornerstones and the distinctiveness of the Church of the Nazarene (Grider 1980), and that "only persons who profess the experience of entire sanctification" may be elected as church officers (*Manual* 2001-2005). It is even a matter of concern that seekers after the experience are not seen coming forward to our altars to declare their need and pray. Our congregations are, for lack of a better word, hungry for holiness, but scores of people coming forward to pray at our altars today are those whose concerns range from poverty and unemployment, diseases, discouragement, family concerns, etc. They are hurting inside but have not come to realise the malady of sin.

- **Do Nazarenes Still Need Do More On Social Gospel?**

Social gospel, yes, and emphatically so – but it is not the answer to Africa's problem! For instance, what more could reasonably be said or done in Africa? Thousands of Non Governmental Organizations including some religious organizations, have poured and are pouring billions of dollars/Rands and some material aid into Africa in an attempt to alleviate the "plight of the poor", "but have done not nearly enough" (Mandela's speech at World Conference on AIDS). Social gospel - yes, but Africa needs the salt of the earth. It needs to be savoured to be saved. The question demanding an urgent answer is, who is ready to be the salt of Africa, willing to savour it with their own lives, losing identity? Does the Church of the Nazarene with its current delivery systems have the capacity to be the salt, not of the earth, but of Africa? The answer is, yes, but only if we rid ourselves from "every kind of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22).

### **A Commission on Holiness Proposed**

In conclusion I would like to suggest a way forward, and this is urgent. But just before doing that, remember that in the year 2010 there will probably be a million Nazarenes in Africa, 12000 churches, and 12000 pastors. We all welcome this, and we all are committed to see that happen. This does not simply mean we in Africa are too optimistic about that. On the contrary. But are we here to say that we want to reach out for a million

Nazarenes in order to reclassify them into existing delivery systems which have not been transformed for them? By no means! But time is running out for continuing to preserve these delivery systems within the Church of the Nazarene untransformed.

Having said this; it is hereby proposed for the establishment of a Commission on Holiness whose investigative terms, tenure and personnel should be determined by this Conference. Part of the Commission's task would be to help facilitate democracy throughout the region. To help Districts and Fields organize holiness symposiums; publish a holiness newsletter which may be translated into ethnic languages; and convene an annual meeting part of which is to equip pastors, district superintendents, lay ministers, college teachers on the subject of holiness. It must be remembered that the Church of the Nazarene is modelled on the lines of apartheid and tribal authority. In conclusion, I would invite you to view Rev Vorster's contribution in this light. Our thanks go to both the organizers of the Africa Nazarene Theological Conference as well as to the Office of the Regional Education Coordinator.

## 9

**Holiness: A Call To Be Christ-like**

Pastor Million Woldu Bekresion

Literature Department, Africa Regional Office, Florida, South Africa

The ultimate purpose of redemption through Christ Jesus is restoring man to the image of God. This, however, is not the end but the beginning of the new life. God is holy and His holiness distinguishes Him and sets Him apart from all finite reality. God's holiness calls us to be separated from sin and to live a holy life. Once regenerated, the person needs to have a change in his lifestyle, character, and behaviour. The old nature of the converted person must be replaced by the sanctified nature. One, therefore, in order to maintain the image of God in his or her life, must have a renewal in the inner person.

In this paper I will look at the nature and fall of man and see holiness as a restoration to Christ. I also look at holiness not as a difficulty but a real possibility because of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. Scripture references are taken from the New International Version (NIV).

The superiority of mankind and their origin is derived by a direct act of God initiated in the divine counsel, "*Let us make man in our image, in our likeness and let them rule over all creation*" (Genesis 1:26).

The first man was created from the dust of the ground and became alive by the breath of God. His soul, therefore, is never independent of the will and Spirit of God (Genesis 6:3, Matthew 10:28). Man can never be understood or known in his nature unless he is understood as a creature of God. Thus man is highly personal in nature. He was created in the image and likeness of God in order to live, God-like, as a free moral being. Man, however, violated his freedom by disobeying the known law of God. This resulted in a broken relationship and a falling away from his original right relation with God

Man was created essentially good; a person made for God. However, due to man's rebellion against God he cannot return to God on his own initiative. God, therefore, initiates the restoration of man to Himself.

Man's sin alienated him from God, but he is a receiver of God's redeeming grace through Christ Jesus. According to Tillich (1951:62), man's relationship with God is broken yet continued. This can be seen as man "existentially" being sinful, a rebel alienated from the life of God, and "essentially" man's relationship with God is unbroken.

Berkouwer (1988:193) remarked that "sin is a very vicious and mortal enemy." The Word of God explains sin as something radical and regards it as alienation from the life of God, lawlessness, and lovelessness. Sin, as a result, leads man to rebellion. Wesley's definition of sin, namely, "a wilful transgression of the known law of God," indicates that man is a lawbreaker. In addition to that man became enslaved to sin, unable to do good things. Augustine underscores this idea of sinfulness by saying, "man as a fallen being is free only to sin." This implies that the sinful man not only needs to be delivered from his sinful acts but also from inbred sin. A person, therefore, needs to be sanctified initially and entirely. The intended purpose of the reconciliation of man to God is both moral and spiritual transformation. We, then, have to experience the second work of grace working in our lives.

Holiness has its foundation in the Bible. This is stressed in both Old and New Testament scripture references. Two of these include Leviticus 11: 44, "I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy", and 1 Peter 1:15, 16: "But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy.""

A closer study of Leviticus provides the reader with remarkable insights into the character and will of God particularly in the matter of Holiness. Among the pagan Near Eastern nations, holiness was a state of consecration to the service of a deity and often involved the practice of immoral rites. For the Hebrews to be holy, as God is holy, required a close relationship of obedience and faith. This should be a daily experience with a high moral and spiritual quality characteristic of God's nature as revealed in the law. Christ has the same expectation of us today as we walk with Him in grace. This can only be done by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The word holiness contains both the negative sense of separation and the positive sense of consecration. The mark of holiness is the highest expression of the covenant relationship between a holy God and His people. Our relationship with God can and will only be maintained if we

remain holy. No holy living; no fellowship with God!

By divine ordained rituals the priests were consecrated, set apart and made holy so that they might be worthy mediators between God and the people. God's call for holiness, however, is not only for the priest (minister). It includes every believer to present him or herself blameless in worship and conduct before God. This biblical message of holiness is for all humankind. What God asked of the Israelites is also expected of today's Church of Christ. This truth remains relevant throughout time.

Sanctification can simply be defined as the act or process by which finite objects become holy. To sanctify, we might say means "to make holy." In the Old Testament certain rituals were specified by which this would occur. One, then, must qualify the term "Sanctification" within ceremonial holiness. This conveys the quality of "belonging to God." It means that individuals are perfected as holy not merely because they are separated; but they are separated because they are related to God and therefore this makes them to be holy (Weatherford 1971: 11-16).

Sanctification can also be defined as the process by which a person becomes a Christian and remains a Christian. Holiness refers to God-likeness. Sanctification, therefore, describes the process by which one is made to partake of this quality. The work of sanctification includes both the human act of consecration, accompanied with repentance, and the divine act of cleansing. The purification from all defilement and the renewing of the heart through the Spirit of God is the essence of the sanctifying activity of God. From this concept of sanctification, we summarily see sanctification as the total work of God in making a person Christ-like.

Careful thought is given to sanctification as a process. It should not be concluded that everyone would take the same length of time during this process to gain the experience of entire sanctification. What we call Initial Sanctification is the first step to becoming holy. When a person is regenerated into the new life with God his sins (actual) are forgiven right away. Yet he still has the inbred sin. John Wesley stated that sanctification begins "the moment we are justified. The seed of every virtue is then sown in the soul. From that time the believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace. Yet sin remains in him - the seed of all sin till he is sanctified through and through in spirit, soul, and body" (Lo

1994:52). There are people, however, who make a complete consecration at the time of their justification. A balance, therefore, has to be sought between differing viewpoints of the timeframe required for people to experience entire sanctification.

God as the source of holiness wants His people to be holy like Him. Holiness is possible in this world only as we live close to Him. This allows us to think, act, and serve as He would. This life of holiness means to be set apart for God's glory. We are urged to live with His intended purpose. The lifestyle of Christ-likeness or God-likeness permeates all that we do socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually (Romans 12:1, 2). On this basis we are transformed into His likeness. Our lifestyle is a worship of God throughout the day. Holiness embodies our worship of God.

Holy living is possible. Holiness needs to be seen dually as 1) set apart in spirit for the worship of the only true God, and 2) set apart in living our lives in worship of God. The Holy Spirit, the gift and helper that Christ asked the Father to send us, empowers, enables, and cleanses so that we may lead a life that is pleasing to God. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is in itself an instantaneous work, followed by growth.

The problem we have in Africa is misinterpretation of the concept of holiness among our people. This may be caused by the lack of thorough explanations of the terminology used by clergy and educators when conveying the message of holiness. The systematic explanation of holiness is important. Linked with this, however, we need to use biblical terms to simplify and clarify the message of holiness. The diagram (see Appendix) frequently used to communicate this message also needs to be reviewed. This is because it falsely indicates, or gives the impression, that holiness is difficult to attain.

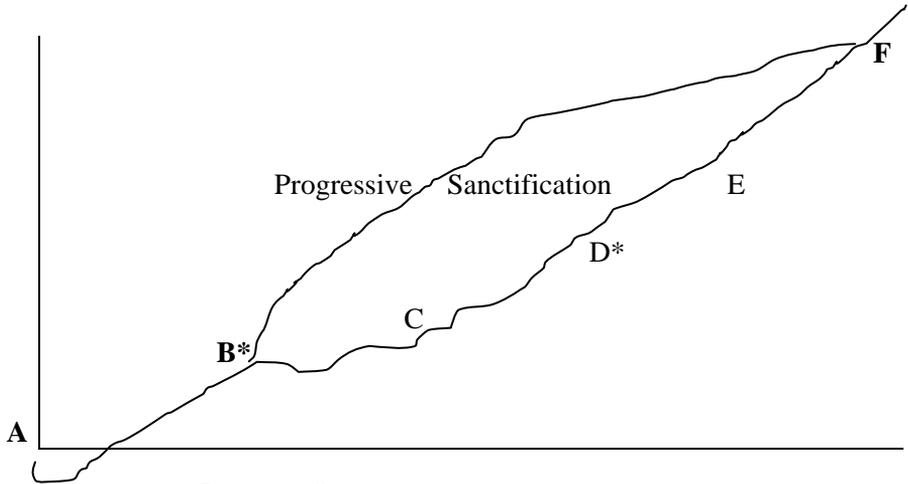
It is important, therefore, that we seriously consider ways to effectively communicate holiness both biblically and contextually in simple terms so that all of us can fully know, understand, and experience the abundant life Christ promised.

In conclusion, the exclusive, intimate, and ultimate relationship that comes with holy living not only links Christians to God; it cuts us from the world. Separation from the world and penetration of the world are the twin around which this relationship swings. Detachment – yet involvement, withdrawal

– yet engagement. This rhythm is expressed in Jesus’ prayer (John 17:17-19). His separating us from the world is not a separation of fear and anxiety but of a blessing and hope.

The message of holiness is unique. It is unique in origin and unique in purpose: unique in origin because truth is linked to God’s Word, unique in purpose because truth is given to produce holiness.

APPENDIX



- A: Preventive Grace
- B: Initial Sanctification (Justification or regeneration)
- C: Carnal / immature Christian
- D: Entire Sanctification
- E: Mature Christian
- F: Glorification
- B-F: Progressive Sanctification**

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## 10

### **Corporate Holiness in the Trinity and Creation**

Rev Rob A Fringer

Visiting Lecturer, Nazarene College of Theology (NCT), Siteki, Swaziland

*“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”* (Leviticus 19:2).

These words are of paramount importance for the Church of the Nazarene and moreover for the universal Christian church abroad. Though these words have often been viewed as a divine imperative calling Yahweh’s people to a godly indicative, it may be beneficial to understand them as a verbal expression of created and restored human reality. That is to say, Yahweh is recapitulating created reality post-fall. Once we were created in the *imago dei* (image of God - Genesis 1:26) and the reality of this ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ was that we shared in the characteristics and attributes of our Creator. Having come from the Holy One, we ourselves were holy. God does not create anything that is not pure and perfect for how can perfection spring up imperfection or how can pure goodness produce anything but the like? As it was in the beginning, the irrefutable reality is that apart from God nothing can be holy and whatever or whoever stands in the presence of God is made holy (cf. Isaiah 6:1ff). Therefore when Yahweh tells Moses to utter the words of Leviticus 19:2 to the ‘Sons of Israel,’ Yahweh’s purpose is to restore His people to their created reality. He desired for Israel to be holy and that was integrally dependant upon an intimate relationship with the Creator which was expressed through very ethical, moral, and practical means.

In the same way, when we read these words of Yahweh, we must come to understand that this is not a command but rather an invitation to be reunited with our Creator; it is a call to become what we were created to be, i.e., holy. But what are the ethical, moral, and practical means by which we might evidence this holy relationship with our Creator? The answer to this question will, in essence, answer the very pressing question, “How are we to live holy lives?”

While the influence of Western civilization has led to an individualistic understanding of holiness, nevertheless, this view is not congruent with the

Hebrew worldview from whence our own traditions are wrought. In a groundbreaking work, H Wheeler Robison brought to light and crystallized the reality of *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel*.<sup>90</sup> This concept is not a new one; rather, it has been in existence since the creation and is widespread throughout the scriptures. It is very likely that Israel's perception grew out of her understanding of human creation. In both of the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2, it becomes clear that humanity was created either in community (Genesis 1:27) or in need of community (Genesis 2:20b). Of the former, Dietrich Bonhoeffer brings to light the 'corporate personality' of humanity when he writes: "Man is free for man, *Male and Female he created them*. Man is not alone, he is in duality and it is in this dependence on the other that his creatureliness consists."<sup>91</sup>

This communal reality is reflective of the Godhead. Since the church's beginning, she has always held the tri-communal reality of God: *una substantia – tres personae* (one substance – three persons). As a community, the Godhead does not act independently. That is to say, the Father does not act in contradiction to the Son or the Son in contradiction to the Holy Spirit. This truth is lucidly visible in Jesus' words at Gethsemane, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). Jesus would not subvert the way of the cross for it was the Father's will, and the Father would not carry out His will if not for the Son's willing submission. This expression of the divine interdependency of the three persons of the Godhead exemplifies the aspects of solidarity that are essential to their unified activity.

If this tri-communal reality is fundamental to the very nature of God then it is not a far stretch to understand how human existence came to be inherently communal. It becomes lucid that wrapped up in the *imago dei* (Genesis 1:26) is the creation of a creature that is like its Creator; as God exists in community so God creates His creation with this same

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<sup>90</sup> Robison, H Wheeler. *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981 Second Edition). In this short exposition, Robison shows through the scriptures how the Hebrew mind always understood the individual in terms of the group. While individuality became prevalent in the time of the prophets, the individual could never be separated from the whole and, in fact, always acted for the good of the whole.

<sup>91</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Creation and Fall, Temptation: Two Biblical Studies* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1959), 38.

propensity.<sup>92</sup> We have been created in God's image and therefore we long to be in 'community' with God. Yet, the paradox is that this divine communion takes place through earthly fellowship with God's own people. Thus, in our daily living in relationship with and for the other, we enter into a divine relationship with the triune God, and in so doing; we are made holy by being in God's presence, i.e. relationship with God. The ethical, moral, and practical means by which we live holy lives comes via our relationship to others and especially Christ's Body (cf. Matthew 5-7, 25:34-40, 1 John 4:20-21).

It can then be said that the call to holiness is a call to live out our lives in Christian community. In living for the other we are free to die to self and in dying to self we are able to love God wholeheartedly. Through God's grace and wisdom, God has provided a tangible and concrete means by which we might understand what it means to be holy and how to live this holiness out; Jesus Christ is that example. Through faith in Christ we simultaneously enter into both a divine relationship with the triune God and at the very same time a divine relationship with the *communio sanctorum* (communion of saints), both past and present. "Just as faith is confessed through speaking, so also is it confessed through life *in* the fellowship of believers. In this sense, faith *means* entering into *communio*, *communio* with the triune God and with other Christians."<sup>93</sup> And learning to live in solidarity with these new communities is the pursuit of holiness. The individual is made holy as he or she works toward corporate holiness because in so doing the individual truly begins to be human taking on the *imago dei* in which he or she has been created. Having been created in the triune God's image we are not fully human until we begin to resemble God's image and this divine image is one of communal holiness.

A cultural example of such a divine phenomenon can be viewed in the African understanding of *ubuntu*.<sup>94</sup> The concept, in essence, embodies everything good and is in antithesis to any and all forms of evil. To do

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<sup>92</sup> Much of this thought is owed to Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), see especially Part II.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 173f.

<sup>94</sup> I am indebted to my African brother in the Lord Dr Enoch Litswele, Assistant to the Regional Director for the Africa Region Church of the Nazarene. Most of my understanding of *ubuntu*, comes from dialogue with Dr Litswele.

good ultimately means to live for the good of the community. In so doing, the individual secures harmony among his or her ancestors and can therefore be understood to be fully human, i.e. living in community with a long line of ancestors coming both before and after.<sup>95</sup> The general ideals of *ubuntu* are embodied in Christianity and the West would do good to seek understanding from her African siblings. “Malusi Mpumlwana regards *ubuntu* as the African equivalent of the biblical notion of ‘the image of God.’”<sup>96</sup> In this we see the connection between the ‘corporate personality’ and the tri-communal reality in whose image we have been made.

With this concrete example from the African culture I now offer a charge to live out a Christian understanding of *ubuntu*, and in so doing, to become fully human, i.e. to become what we were created to be, those in God’s own image. When we as Christians commit ourselves to living in solidarity with God’s people then we will ultimately solidify our relationship with the triune God and in so doing we will be made holy. Holiness is therefore intrinsically tied to our created nature and this nature finds holiness in simultaneous relationship with the triune God and the people created by this God. The charge of Leviticus 19:2 is therefore a charge for godly community. It may be that those of African heritage are better equipped to live out this image. If this be the case, then the Christian Church of Africa has the great responsibility of being a living example of holiness to her Western siblings.

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<sup>95</sup> Pato, Luke Lungile. “Being Fully Human: From the Perspective of African Culture and Spirituality,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 97 (March 1997): 53-61.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in, Russel Botman, “Who is ‘Jesus Christ as Community’ for us Today?: The Quest for Community: A Challenge to Theology in SA,” *Journal of Theology for South Africa* 97 (March 1997): 30-38.

## 11

### Holiness

Rev Gene Pretorius

Pastor, Belhar Community Church of the Nazarene, Cape Town, South  
Africa

One of the exciting developments of our time and age within religion in our world is the great interest people show in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. No matter what they call the present time in this century, the “New Age”, or the “Atomic Age”, the Presence of God and the infilling of the Holy Spirit is so relevant for God’s creation today.

We are still reminded of this fact by the hymn writer Lelia N Morris (1862-1929) who wrote: “*Called unto Holiness*”. These wonderful words as a holiness message still ring out to a world that is so troubled with sin and bombarded with the twisted teachings of many today. Young people are searching for something definite and certain. Many are perplexed by the uncertainty and confusion of the present day and age with the low morals and thwarted modesty that is being laughed at. The songwriter stated: “Holiness unto the Lord is our watchword and song, Holiness unto the Lord as we as are marching along. We will sing it, shout it, preach it and live it. Holiness unto the Lord now and forever.”

The subject of holiness is old, but yet ever new. Many writers have written about the doctrine and the wonderful experience it brings to our situation. Our societies can and must be changed and can be as holy as previous generations. God’s provision of salvation and sanctification is still available and sufficient for a change of heart and life for the world today. Holiness is God’s ideal; His moral character is Holy and His requirement for all His creation is “Be holy; because I am holy”(1Peter 1:16). “You are to be holy to me, because I, the Lord, am holy” (Leviticus 20:26). This is how God wants to transform and impart Himself into the lives of men who once were sinful, but have made the commitment of turning back to serve the one who died and gave Himself as a ransom for many. Jesus prayed for mankind and the impartation of God’s Holy character and moral nature to be infused into man’s inner life, “Sanctify them by the truth” (John 17:17).

Holiness is the only message that is relevant for our time. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, it will turn man back to God from their wicked way of life. Holiness is the fountain of truth, the origin of righteousness, the source of moral standards, and the criteria and standard for the thoughts and actions of man. Holiness is the ideal for God's nature and thus becomes His ideal for the quality of man's moral nature.

### **The Holiness Denomination in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

We live in an age of activism and of challenge where the doors of the future are wide open, beckoning men of vision. Any church is safe in the hands of people who possess a prophetic vision and a historian's wisdom. We must not only look into the future but also be reminded and have a strong appreciation of the foundations laid by our founders. In words of Dr P F Bresee: "The chief aim of the church was to preach holiness to the poor." This fact is evident from every page of the literature published. The very first literature published bore the scripture on the top of the page: "Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." The founders were convinced that their mission was to go into the poorest areas and neglected places and by the power of the Holy Spirit create centres of fire.

The Holiness Movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century inherited from John Wesley, a great man of God, the idea that transforming a society and nurturing a convert is a timeless concept. In the fields of spiritual awakening for a society or spiritual discipline for the believer, Wesleyan history has few peers. Its vitality along the frontiers of a developing nation and its role in the Great Awakening of the 1850's cannot be discounted. Nor can we forget the role it played in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the rise of the Pentecostal and Evangelical movements to great prominence. Now that we face the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the Holiness movements and denominations can embrace the importance that we as God's army are marching forward with the strong message of holiness that will change the direction of the Christian faith to its proper course. The time has come for the holiness movement to embrace the tenets of personal and social holiness to make a definite change in our world today. I believe we need to recommit ourselves to the doctrine of holiness, which gives spiritual, aesthetic, and ethical meaning to our movement. What are the practices of commitment in our holiness movement that should be preserved and passed on to the

next generations? The church with the Wesleyan-Holiness Theology has a treasured memory of the past with the opportunity to be a major player in the spiritual history of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Africa for Christ**

Africa for Christ, regardless of all its diverse cultural settings, should be our main focus. I can say I am proud to be South African. God gave the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Take note: “all nations”, of all races, colour, or creed. We may learn a great lesson in our lives and ministry about God’s will for our Church and the message of holiness. Christ said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). When God calls us to Him He wants all of us. One of the things God needs surrendered to the will and blood of Christ is our culture. Only when the heritage has been redeemed can God give it back to us. Our culture provides a unique way through which God’s Spirit can speak to and through us. We must communicate this fully to our people to make faith meaningful in their lives. We must have greater concentration upon religion itself, namely the resources for spiritual in depth holiness in heart and life. We must get involved in community concerns as this is where our people have to test their faith. We must get our young people into the churches or we will suffer the loss of another generation. We must take a giant leap forward as examples of holy living and sacrificial love in true and honest commitment. Africa can be won with the vision of our leaders impressed upon our minds and lives inspiring us to march forward reaching our generation for Christ in this 21st century.

### **Holiness Our Timeless Legacy for Africa**

The concept of holiness has remained intact through the years. Within the Wesleyan circles the definition of holiness is clear, the doctrine is declared and the demands for holy living are made plain. The world may not understand our terminology and they may deny our theology, but there is no disclaiming holy atmosphere in the church and holy conduct on the streets. It not only has to be preached but it has to be proven. Holiness proclaimed must be holiness in action. Africa needs to see it modelled in our lives and in our actions and we will then win Africa for Christ. We need to be cautioned that the children of this present generation are wise

enough to detect emptiness and hypocrisy, but if we really have what we profess, it will show. People today are not merely interested in words; they are interested in our walk. They want to see holiness in action, holiness translated in our daily living. They want to see the fruit on our trees, not only the leaves. The truly sanctified person shows it, for there is no substitute for holiness in the Church to reach Africa. Jesus told His disciples that they would receive power after that the Holy Spirit had come upon them and they would be His witnesses throughout the world. People wondered at the miraculous outpouring on Pentecost and heard the gospel in their own language, and it still continues today. I believe that no one that is filled with God's Spirit can ever be silent. This is what motivates Nazarenes across the Globe to "*Celebrate Christian Holiness*" and proclaim "*Holiness, our mission to this world*".

The theory is vital, the theology is necessary, and the holiness message in action is still relevant. This message is therefore of utmost necessity in our daily living to win Africa and our present generation.

1. Way, John M. *The High Way: God's Call To Holy Living*
2. Anderson M. *Our Holy Faith*
3. Purkiser, W T. *God's Spirit in Today's World*
5. McKenna, David L. *What A Time To Be Wesleyan*

## 12

### **The Relevance of Holiness Today**

Rev Ronald L Roux

Pastor, Grace Church of the Nazarene; Port Elizabeth, South Africa

On our way to church on Sunday mornings we drive past a large building. The hundreds of parked cars indicate that at least a thousand people flock to that church every Sunday. When I arrive at my church with less than 30 people in a building capable of accommodating at least 200, I wonder why we are not attracting the religious crowds. We are not in competition with others, yet the question arises, why is the one church more attractive than the other? Our church has lost several discouraged and disappointed pastors in the past decade. Is it our doctrine? Is holiness still relevant? Is it me? These and more questions demand careful consideration.

There is no doubt that in the Bible, the doctrine of holiness is presented as a perpetual reminder of God's immutable requirement for salvation. It confirms that holiness is relevant to every generation. However, many Christians of various doctrinal persuasions have difficulty in comprehending this particular doctrine. It could be that spiritual truth is restricted to spiritually awakened believers<sup>97</sup>.

The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus has Jesus saying, "... unless a man is born again, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God."<sup>98</sup> The Baptist's ministry was an introduction to salvation. Repentance, the necessary precedent to being born again, is symbolised by water baptism. Forgiveness and reconciliation requires repentance but new converts are short-circuited past repentance to salvation. They are emotionally aroused and invited to "accept Christ". The subsequent, emotionally created, addictive adrenalin flow has to be perpetuated throughout their spiritual journey. The intellect is suppressed with ever-increasing emotional emphasis. The psychological and spiritual consequences are sad to behold and we stand by helplessly watching and praying that God will help us break this terrible barrier to ethical holiness.

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<sup>97</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14;

<sup>98</sup> John 3:3 (the word "see" is often misquoted as "enter". But see John 3:5).

It has become a challenge in the light of modern science and intellectualism of our time to prove the doctrinal relevance of our convictions. For the modern man the Bible is outdated; it is a primitive document belonging to the past. There is a vague religious concept that good deeds, a sort of humanistic Mother Theresa kind of holiness, will count for ultimate salvation. The disciples of these un-spiritual notions usually seek out churches that are soft on sin and strong on good deeds. For them, moral purity is not possible and holiness is therefore irrelevant. Is the message of entire sanctification still relevant? The same question could be asked of the Bible. Every story, every historical event recorded in the Bible seems to point clearly to this doctrine. Holiness is not an option, nor is it a doctrine reserved for selected people. It is God's plan of salvation for the entire human race!

The Bible clearly states that entrance into the kingdom of God is reserved for the pure in heart<sup>99</sup>. Several New Testament passages confirm the reality of a resident sinful disposition despite the initial spiritual awakening. The testimonies of Christians throughout church history support this phenomenon. Eventually, the spiritually awakened convert will become aware that he still has a spiritual problem for which there is a solution<sup>100</sup>. There is a separate and additional work that must be done in the heart of the regenerated Christian. Part of the problem in teaching the second blessing message is that we have been taught that born-again means salvation. If it is true that we are saved at that point in our spiritual progress, then holiness is indeed optional, especially if I am taught that once I am saved, I am always saved (born again). Why then would I want to have any other costly blessing? Would that not constitute a "works religion"?

Holiness, the eradication of the sinful self, is what we Nazarenes have been entrusted with. Even as John the Baptist's ministry was to prepare the way for Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, so salvation begins with repentance and perpetuates in the experience of entire sanctification. As long as the human race exists, and as long as the Word of God remains, the process of salvation will not change. Entire sanctification as the subsequent (second) work of grace is as relevant today

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<sup>99</sup> e.g. Matthew 1:21; 5:8; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; etc

<sup>100</sup> Romans 7:21-25

as it always has been in one form or another throughout the ages.

Another reason the relevance of holiness in our modern age has been questioned is due to the unfortunate confusion that reigns within the ranks of holiness denominations. *When the theology of individual sanctification becomes fuzzy and vague, then the experience of those who listen also becomes unclear*<sup>101</sup>. The emphasis on holy living is stretched between on the one side legalism and, on the other side licentious living. The legalists demand exclusiveness and the licentious, influenced by the “unconditional eternal security” doctrine, allow for compromise.

At the root of the problem is a misconception of sin. Sin can only really be understood as a “wilful transgression of a known law of God”. No other definition of sin clearly fits the contextual passages of New Testament reading.<sup>102</sup> Could it not also be that we lack a clear understanding of the difference between carnality and infirmity? Human weaknesses are erroneously identified as sin, thus invalidating the possibility of being holy. We should be reminded that God does not call for perfection of performance or faultlessness but for blamelessness<sup>103</sup>. The sanctified life is a life of victorious conflict. Skirmishes with old habits sometimes result in momentary defeat but victory belongs to the one who perseveres. Understanding human nature will help us to make allowances for the whole range of infirmities that remain in various forms even after entire sanctification. Holiness does not exclude amoral human imperfections. However, holy living does require self-discipline and self-control to correct these un-Christ-like elements in our behaviour<sup>104</sup>. In preaching and teaching holiness, emphasis should concentrate on the fact that entire sanctification purifies the centre of human personality, the heart, by perfectly obliterating every vestige of sin. God perfects that work in response to the regenerated, consecrated soul, earnestly seeking this wonderful blessing<sup>105</sup>. My late father, a well-known layman known as “Uncle Clarrie”, after many years of holiness evangelistic preaching often complained about the lack of hunger for holiness among Christians.

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<sup>101</sup> Metz, Donald S. *Studies in Biblical Holiness* –p 170

<sup>102</sup> Taylor, Richard. *A Right Conception Of Sin*

<sup>103</sup> Greathouse, William M. *Love Made Perfect* –p 38; Steele, Daniel - an excellent discussion on this subject in *Milestone Papers* Ch 4 pp 33-36.

<sup>104</sup> 2 Corinthians 7:1

<sup>105</sup> Matthew 5:6

The essential faith element in obtaining the blessedness of a purified heart<sup>106</sup> is often clouded by unrealisable expectations. Some honest seekers have been disappointed and discouraged because they sought angelic – or Adam-like perfection. Some have been criticised and even ostracised because of wrong perceptions by their peers or colleagues.

Someone has appropriately coined the phrase, “holiness is better caught than taught”. The doctrine of entire sanctification is often taught as a process. It is held by some that the process continues through good works. A few holiness preachers believe that no person can live without some sin in their hearts. When confronted with the question as to when the final sin will be dealt with, assuming that no sin can enter heaven, they are at a loss for words. Another group of holiness teachers claim a fairly tolerable concept that the born-again believer grows towards the crisis experience by walking in all the available light until he is convicted of his need for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, it is more likely that the entirely sanctified will “walk in the light...” rather than the carnal-natured Christian. There is strong evidence for an urgent appeal to every one who calls on the name of Jesus, to seek the experience of heart holiness at the very earliest in his Christian life as possible, lest his procrastination results in a hardening of the heart<sup>107</sup>.

Testimonies to the experience of holiness are very rare. After recently inviting Christians to write their testimonies for me to publish in the monthly church bulletin, my wife’s testimony was the only one I received. She told how, after first hearing the message of holiness, she made several visits to the altar. She finally emerged triumphant after a few weeks through accepting the blessing by pure and simple faith. Her subsequent 28 years of life in the Spirit exemplify the truth of her claims to heart purity. I published her testimony in the church bulletin in the hope of attracting more testimonies but without success. Some people who claim the experience clearly stand apart from those who do not testify to being sanctified but it is probably symptomatic of the vagueness in the teaching from pulpit and local Bible studies that many are hesitant about open testimonies to entire sanctification.

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<sup>106</sup> Hebrews 4:2

<sup>107</sup> Hebrews 4:7

Our loving holy God, our Creator, longs to be reconciled with His children. God is still relevant in our modern world and so is His wonderful, unchanging Word. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we get tuned in to God's Word and seek His special anointing to preach salvation through "*the sanctifying work of the Spirit and belief in the truth*"<sup>108</sup> that ensures a salvation that sets men free from sin.

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<sup>108108</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:13

## 13

**Towards An African Theology of Christian Holiness:  
“A Journey From Israel To Africa”**

Rev Philip H Troutman  
Coordinator of Area 2, Mozambique

There are many exciting developments taking place in the Church of the Nazarene in Africa today. None of these is more encouraging, nor holds greater promise for the future of our Church, than the movement to articulate a theology of Christian holiness that is truly African. Borrowing the metaphor from Asian theologian C S Song who speaks of developing an Asian theology as “a journey from Israel to Asia”,<sup>109</sup> the title of this paper reflects my belief that the Church of the Nazarene in Africa is presently undertaking its own “journey from Israel to Africa”, a journey towards the goal of articulating a truly African theology of Christian holiness.

There are many complex issues involved in undertaking such a journey. In this short essay, we can consider only one of them, the question: What exactly do we mean by an “African theology of Christian holiness?” I would like to attempt an answer in two parts. To begin, I offer my thoughts about some things which an African theology of Christian holiness IS NOT. Then I suggest several things which an African theology of Christian holiness MUST NECESSARILY BE. I believe it is very important that we intensively study and openly debate these questions. For it is my impression that church leaders, both inside and outside Africa, have only a vague understanding of what exactly an “African” theology of Christian holiness might be.

**Some Things an African Theology of Christian Holiness is Not**

Firstly, an “African” theology of Christian holiness is NOT an articulation of beliefs about holiness derived from African traditional religions. While African traditional religions do indeed have their own concepts of “the numinous” or “the holy”, we in the Church of the Nazarene in Africa are

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<sup>109</sup> Quoted by Fukue, Hitoshi, in his paper “Beyond Christ and Culture”, presented to the Guatemala Nazarene Theology Conference in 2002

seeking to articulate a theology of holiness that is distinctly CHRISTIAN. The need to articulate a theology that is truly African must never be seen as granting permission to borrow doctrines or beliefs from other religious traditions. That is the pathway to *syncretism*, a deadly sidetrack from our journey which we must ever avoid.

Secondly, an “African” theology of Christian holiness is NOT a redefinition of the essential nature of Christian holiness. Christian holiness is at its heart being “holy as God is holy”.<sup>110</sup> In other words, it is “Christ-likeness” since Jesus affirmed repeatedly, “I and the Father are one”.<sup>111</sup> No definition of holiness which denies or neglects this essential insight may be said to be either “Christian” or “holiness”.

Thirdly, an “African” theology of Christian holiness is NOT a theology which is valid only for Africans. We must maintain that human beings are, at their spiritual core, essentially alike. We are all created in the image of God.<sup>112</sup> We are all fallen.<sup>113</sup> We all need to be “justified freely”<sup>114</sup> and “transformed by the renewing of our minds”.<sup>115</sup> To be valid at all, any theology of Christian holiness must be essentially valid for all Christians everywhere, regardless of their cultural background. The modes of expression may be African, but the essence must be trans-cultural.

This is not to say that the African *experience* of sanctification will be identical with the *experience* of people from other cultures. In fact, an articulation of unique aspects of the African *experience* of the two works of God's grace will form an essential component of a truly African theology of holiness. However, God is the only source of all holiness - God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.<sup>116</sup> So at its core, in its most distilled essence, that holiness which God gracefully confers on Africans will be the same holiness that He confers on all true saints regardless of their culture or origin.

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<sup>110</sup> 1 Peter 1:15-16; Leviticus 11:44-45

<sup>111</sup> John 10:30

<sup>112</sup> Genesis 1:26

<sup>113</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>114</sup> Romans 3:24

<sup>115</sup> Romans 12:1

<sup>116</sup> Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17d

Fourthly, an African theology of Christian holiness is NOT one which allows for different ethical or moral standards, which would only apply to Africans. Christian holiness sets one, and only one, ethical standard: Absolute, Christ-like integrity. And it sets one, and only one, standard for moral conduct: Absolute Christ-like purity. Whenever ANY human culture (whether Western, African or other) would have us accept a life-pattern other than that of Jesus Christ himself, that culture is at that point necessarily sinful, and must be transformed if possible, or else rejected outright if it cannot be transformed.

### **Some Things an African Theology of Holiness Must Be**

Firstly, an African theology of Christian holiness must be one which is firmly grounded in the Christian Scriptures. Christian holiness is necessarily *Biblical holiness*. As the Nazarene *Manual* states, the Holy Scriptures inerrantly reveal "...the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not found in them may not be enjoined as an article of faith."<sup>117</sup> God's Word - and only God's Word - is the basis for a valid theology of Christian holiness, from whatever cultural perspective.

Secondly, in light of what we have just said, an African theology of Christian holiness must begin by identifying what the essential core of Biblical holiness is, minus any cultural accretions from Western or any other culture. In certain cases, even 1st Century Hebrew, Greek, and Roman cultural elements must be identified and set aside, so that African theologians may build their theology on the rock-solid foundation of the universal elements of Christ-like holiness.

Thirdly, an African theology of Christian holiness will acknowledge that the concept of Christ-likeness is trans-cultural. That is, it transcends all human cultural frames of reference, because being Christ-like is being *like the very person of God himself*. Jesus, the man from Nazareth, was born into a particular culture in which he fully participated. This gives us permission to fully participate in our own cultures as long as they do not directly contradict God's will. But Jesus the Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead stands above and outside any and all human cultures. Christ-

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<sup>117</sup> *Manual Church of the Nazarene 1997-2001*, "Articles of Faith, IV. The Holy Scriptures"

likeness is therefore the only adequate standard of holiness by which all theologies of Christian holiness must be evaluated.

Fourthly, an African theology of Christian holiness will take the universal, biblical core elements of holiness and articulate and describe them using African philosophical concepts and vocabulary. God is neither Hebrew nor Greek nor American nor European. He is the Holy (or Wholly) Other. No one set of human philosophical concepts is adequate to describe every aspect of God's nature or His activity in the human heart. African theologians must evaluate their own culture's philosophical framework, and then express biblical holiness in terms of that framework.

Fifthly, an African theology of Christian holiness must articulate and describe the African experience of the two works of God's grace - initial conversion and entire sanctification - in ways unique to Africans. I firmly believe that there exist external realities - God, other persons, and material objects - which are involved in our experiences. The activity of God, His divine interaction with the human heart, is real apart from our perceptions of it, and does not depend primarily on our ability to describe it adequately.

Still, the personal experiences of each individual are in great measure *subjective*. It is one's own *perceptions and evaluations* of those external realities which constitute the major portion of any individual's experiences. As such, our experiences are shaped by our culture, including the basic worldview underlying our culture, its values, and also especially our mother language. African worldviews, cultural values, and languages all shape the African believer's own perceptions of the daily experiences of African life. So they will necessarily also shape the African believer's perceptions and understanding of the experiences of conversion and heart cleansing. An African theology of Christian holiness will need to articulate and describe the African experience of God's works of grace.

And finally, an African theology of Christian holiness should include some practical guidelines for living a Holy life in African cultural and societal contexts. It will use African life-situations as the *milieu* in which the emerging theology of holiness is tested, critiqued, and perfected. Many thorny questions which are of particular importance to African daily life will have to be addressed, such as: polygamy (both polygyny and polyandry); traditional betrothal practices (*lobolo*); female circumcision and other forms of physical mutilation (whether voluntary or involuntary);

traditional weddings vs. Christian weddings and government weddings; grounds for divorce and remarriage; child-bearing and abortion; traditional “medicine” vs. Western scientific medicine vs. divine healing; corruption and Christian participation in bribery and extortion; and many others.

### **Conclusion**

The “journey from Israel to Africa”, that is, the process of developing a truly African theology of Christian holiness, will be a long and arduous one. But it is a journey which African Christians themselves must make. Missionaries and Western theologians can to a certain extent walk alongside them and help speed them on their journey, by sharing an account of our own “journey from Israel to America or Europe”. We can point out some potential pitfalls and suggest some necessary stops along the way. But ultimately, it is African Christians who, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, will have to develop an African theology of Christian holiness.

## 14

### **Why is the Doctrine and Experience of Holiness Important?**

Rev Jabulani Sibanda

Co-Pastor, Mpopoma Church of the Nazarene, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe;  
MAR Student, Africa Nazarene University (ANU), Nairobi, Kenya

#### **Introduction**

Christianity has many doctrines. People from different denominations view these doctrines differently. These doctrines lead to one reality. In this paper, I am going to look at why the doctrine and experience of holiness is important. I will first define the term “Christian holiness” and then list one or two words that express the same reality.

#### **Definition of the Term**

According to John Wesley in his book *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* holiness is defined as “The loving of God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul and that all the thoughts, words and actions are governed by pure love.”<sup>118</sup> Holiness can also be understood as separation, setting apart from a common use to a sacred use. Other terms used to express the idea of Christian holiness are entire sanctification, circumcision of the heart, baptism with the Holy Spirit, perfected in love, etc. Let us then look at the importance of the doctrine of holiness.

#### **Importance of the Doctrine of Holiness**

This doctrine is important because it tells us about the primal attribute of God in which other attributes rest. Through the centuries we see how scholars have come to understand it and how they have differed. In this doctrine we find God’s redemptive relationship to humanity, which brings us to an understanding of why humanity must be holy, or to an understanding of what form this holiness is to take in man. We also see “God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature” (Romans 1: 20).<sup>119</sup> This helps us to understand and fill the gaps of our conception of

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<sup>118</sup> Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1966. p. 51

<sup>119</sup> Taylor, Richard. *Exploring Christian Holiness* v. 3. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press,

God's personal character and His thoughts towards humankind.

The doctrine of holiness is important as it makes us aware that "God's holiness is the fundamental principle not only for our worship, but of his whole saving revelation and economy of love. It is the moral principle of both love and grace. It is love's content."<sup>120</sup> The above statement shows us that God's holiness not only calls us to worship and revere Him but is also a dispensation of His love. Forsyth said,

"Any conception of God which exalts his Fatherhood at the cost of His Holiness, or to its neglect, unsettles the moral throne to the universe. Any reaction of ours from a too exacting God which leaves us with but a kindly God, a patient and a pitiful, is a reason which sends us over the edge of the moral world.... It is a conception which tends to do less than justice even to God's love. It tends to take the authority of the Gospel, the sinew out of preaching, the insight of our faith, the stamina out of character, and discipline out of home."<sup>121</sup>

This doctrine teaches us that holiness is the underlying attribute of God. No attribute should be magnified at the expense of this attribute of holiness.

This doctrine indicates that holiness is native to humanity because humanity was created holy, not neutral. We see that holiness is a righteous relationship, primarily with God, then with fellow human beings, and then to the environment. We note that this original holiness is a native affinity for God and right - the living personal relationship.

We have seen how important this doctrine is, and now we need to talk about the importance of the experience.

### **Importance of the Holiness Experience**

God calls everyone to be holy. In I Peter 1:16 it is stated, "Be holy, for I am holy." This is a call from God. Because God is holy, when humanity was first created before the fall, we were holy. God is now calling us to the restoration of this holiness. God wants those who are related to Him to be like Him. As God is holy so His people are also to be holy. Shelby said

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1985. p. 13

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. p. 14

<sup>121</sup> Forsyth. *Positive Preaching and Modern Mind*. New York: George H. Doran Co. No date. p. 354

that holiness is a “characteristic of the nature of God...”<sup>122</sup>

Holiness is also a recognition of authority, demanding recognition as humanity is constituted so that unless we recognize a higher power and authority than ourselves, we become lawless and live on the animal plane of our nature. “Holiness makes a great contribution ... to man in the fact that it sets before him a God who is absolute Authority of the universe... God is superior to every relationship of humanity; the more man is conscious of His true character, the more he senses an authority to which he is responsible.”<sup>123</sup> This experience of Holiness makes a man know who he is before God and to submit to God as His child.

Holiness gives a concept of righteousness. It presents a set of definite standards of wrong and right. It leads to sharp distinctions between sin and righteousness and to living according to God’s intention when He created humanity. As holiness comes from God and His character is pure, so He gives the power to abhor the wrong.

This experience is important because it is the second work of grace. It leads to purity of heart, and it is the baptism by fire (Matthew 3:11) in which impurities are dealt with. This experience symbolizes the death to self as Paul said that he is crucified with Christ, “...I do not live but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). It is the singleness of the eye. “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness” (Matthew 6:22–23 KJV). Singleness of the eye is the opposite of what James addresses as double mindedness. He calls people to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts. The person focuses on God alone; he or she is no longer unstable. It is also an experience of devotedness and separateness to God. This is an experience of one giving oneself totally to God. It is being led by the Spirit, which is very important in the Christian walk.

It is important because it is the perfection of oneself. Matthew 5:48 states, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is

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<sup>122</sup> Corlett, Shelby D. *The Meaning of Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1944. p. 10

<sup>123</sup> Corlett, Lewis T. *Holiness in Practical Living*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1949. P.

perfect.” This is the fulfilment of the scripture as well as attaining what was lost in the Garden of Eden.

### **Conclusion**

As we look at this matter critically, being holy is being set apart, and at the same time reflecting a holy God as individuals and as the Church. The scripture calls for holy living – it is a scriptural obligation. Holiness sets the Church apart from being a mere human institution.

In the Church of the Nazarene, holiness is a doctrinal distinctive which sets us apart from other denominations. The Church of the Nazarene serves as the yeast of holiness within the larger body of the Church, although all churches have some element of holiness. Holiness is present in all churches to some degree due to its function as one of the four marks of the church (sanctity, catholicity, unity and apostolicity).

The doctrine and experience of holiness is important as it shows that holiness is not just a mere attribute of God, but it is the basis of all attributes. It is an experience that a believer can achieve in his or her lifetime. As children of God we are called to holiness. As we experience holiness we may worship God in fullness. It helps us to know that holiness is not something new to mankind but was an original characteristic. When people experience this, in actual fact, they are going back to the first state before the fall even though we no longer attain that absolute perfection. Holiness is important for a child of God. Experiencing holiness is an affirmation of doing what is right. It becomes easier to fight temptations as one goes into a deeper experience with God. It helps to have an undivided heart towards God. It becomes easier to trust in God.

In the Church of the Nazarene, we have understood and taught the doctrine of holiness in terms of personal piety. We also go on to teach that our Christian holiness is rooted in the holiness of God. This is a good teaching, but most of us have failed to put this experience into practice; instead, it has produced individualism. Is that what holiness is all about? We have also forgotten to preach on the holiness of the Church. This has affected the church as a whole.

I am of the mind that if the doctrine of holiness was taught and preached to the masses with emphasis, our congregations would cease to become social clubs where people congregate every Sunday. People are to experience the

self-sacrificing love of Jesus, as it is the essence of holiness.

Remember, without holiness no one shall see God.

## **Part 4: MEMORY**

### **15**

#### **A Memory of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa**

Dr Enoch Litswele  
Assistant to the Regional Director, Africa Region

When Rev Enos Mgwenya passed away in November of 1999, Rev Wassenaar Ngobeni, a second generation Nazarene, expressed his deep regret in these short words, “History is gone.”<sup>1</sup> Enos was a man who became a Christian and joined the Church of the Nazarene in 1922 at Sabie in Mpumalanga Province. He was a great leader of the church and a student of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. He and Rev Samson Mkabela, who went to glory in 1985, were some of the early Nazarenes who were converted a few years after the Church of the Nazarene was established in South Africa in 1919.

Some of the African pioneer Nazarenes who joined the church before the 1930s and who sadly passed away with a rich history of our African Church are:

- a) Rev John Diaz passed away in 1964. In 1901 he began and pastored the first and oldest congregation that became the Church of the Nazarene in 1907 on our region in Cape Verde.
- b) Rev Solomon Malangabi Ndzimandze who passed away in 1951, joined forces with Harmon Schmelzenbach in 1912 at Endzingeni in Swaziland, two years after the arrival of the American missionaries. Rev Ndzimandze was a great pastor and preacher of the Word. He and his wife, Martha, were great prayer warriors. Their daughter, Rev Juliet Ndzimande, was greatly influenced by their prayerful lives.
- c) Rev Joseph Mncina Mkhwanazi, who joined the church in 1915 at Endzingeni, passed away in 1965. He was a great preacher and a singer with a beautiful tenor voice. Dayhoff tells us that “Harmon

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<sup>1</sup> W Ngobeni, son of a Nazarene pastor, is a second generation Nazarene. He has served the church for many years and his retirement is coming soon.

Schmelzenbach travelled with him all over Northern Swaziland evangelising and planting churches.” Dayhoff continues to tell us that “Mkhwanazi was instrumental in helping Elmer “Vusigama” the son of Harmon Sibhaha” and Lula “Vulindlela” Schmelzenbach settle his call from God to be a missionary in Africa.”<sup>2</sup>

- d) Rev Samuel Nkhofane Dlamini, a grandson of King Sobuza I, who passed away in 1986, “was present at Endzingeni when the Schmelzenbachs first arrived...”<sup>3</sup> He was a great pastor and preacher. “In 1941,” Dayhoff writes, “He volunteered for service as a Chaplain in the Swazi Pioneer Corps.”<sup>4</sup> As a Nazarene Chaplain “he served throughout the campaigns of World War II in North Africa, the Middle East and Italy.”<sup>5</sup>
- e) Rev Enoch Dlamini, grandson of King Mswati II, passed away in 1940. He and his wife Leah were great soul winners through prayer and home visitation. Their children, one of them Dr E V Dlamini, grew up to be strong members of the church.
- f) Rev John Mazibila/Mazibuko passed away in 1972. He was the son of a traditional doctor and, demon possessed in his boyhood; was being groomed to be a traditional doctor like his father. He, however, became a Christian in 1913 and was delivered from demon possession. He became a mighty holiness preacher for many years.
- g) Samuel Mulate, “one of the first converts of the International Holiness Mission and the first church leader to found churches in Mozambique,”<sup>6</sup> died in 1922. His son, Rev Lot Mulate who died in 1996, was one of the District Superintendents in Mozambique. His grandson, Rev Jonas Mulate, a great church planter, is currently serving as missionary in the country of Angola.
- h) Rev Jona Macharema Mahlayeye who passed away in 1972, graduated from Bible College in 1927, was ordained in 1929, and was the

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Dayhoff, son of pioneer missionaries who worked in South Africa for many years. He was born and raised in South Africa and he followed his parents foot steps in serving as missionary in South Africa and Swaziland. He is now in retirement. His book, *Living Stones in Africa*, is about the African pioneers of the Church of the Nazarene. In this book, inspirational insights from the lives of faithful Christians are recorded.

<sup>3</sup> Dayhoff; *Livingstones in Africa*

<sup>4</sup> Dayhoff, *Livingstones in Africa*

<sup>5</sup> Dayhoff; *Livingstones in Africa*

<sup>6</sup> Dayhoff, *Livingstones in Africa*

- superintendent of the International Holiness Mission in Gazaland.
- i) Rev Daniel Langa, who passed away in 1943, was entirely sanctified during the great holiness revivals in 1927 – 28. “He was one of the first four Nazarene ministers to be ordained in Mozambique in 1939 by General Superintendent J G Morrison.”<sup>7</sup>
  - j) Rev Simao Machava passed away in 1960. He enrolled at Bible College at Pigg’s Peak, Swaziland, in 1923 and while there, in 1924, he was baptized with the Holy Spirit.
  - k) Rev Isaka Mandlate passed away in 1960. When he became a Christian, he refused to participate in the traditional annual cleansing that a traditional doctor was conducting at his home. His upset father demanded that he return to traditional worship or leave home. He chose the latter and in 1922 he left, built his own home and started a Nazarene preaching point there. His son, Simeao Mandlate, is one of the great leaders currently serving our Mozambican church.

Several outstanding Nazarene women were saved and sanctified during the great revivals that took place in Mozambique in the 1920s.

- a) Misses Estele, Ann, and Amelia Mboweni were converted in 1925 and entirely sanctified in the revivals of 1927-28.
- b) Rabeka Chirindzane who passed away 1989, became a widow in 1928 when her husband of three years died. In 1929 she refused to be a wife of a non-Christian brother of her late husband and she ran away and hid in the forest for several days. Missionary Mary Cooper gave her 25 pounds to pay the family so she could be released from the customary marriage practice. Rabeka Chirindzane “became the first African Nazarene trained nurse in Gaza and served the Lord and her people faithfully at the Tavane Nazarene Hospital until her retirement in 1972.”<sup>8</sup> In 1950 Rabeka refunded the 25 pounds to Mary Cooper.
- c) Pastor Esther Daniane Guiva, who passed away in 1994, was one of the great pioneer women who was delivered from demon possession in the Mozambican revivals of the 1920s. She trained as a nurse and a Christian worker.

As we remember these African Nazarene pioneers, and many who I did not mention, we are glad that they are part of the great cloud of witnesses that

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<sup>7</sup> Dayhoff, Livingstones in Africa

<sup>8</sup> Dayhoff, Livingstones in Africa

is surrounding us. Our greatest regret is that the rich history of our African church which they made was not gleaned from them and recorded by our own writers before they passed away. Other than the short summaries of their biographies by Dr Paul Dayhoff in the *Living Stones in Africa*, for which we thank him so much, the very limited oral memory of their lives and activities is waning away as the second generation of Nazarenes is also passing away.

The main purpose of my paper is to encourage us, African Nazarene authors, to research, write, and preserve the rich memory of our church from the African perspective.

Since 1908 when the Schmelzenbachs arrived in Africa, the story of Africa Nazarene Region has mainly been recorded in missionary study books and the *Other Sheep/World Mission* Magazines. The recipients of these books and magazines, which highlighted the activities of the missionaries, were primarily the sending church in North America. The missionary stories and their memories helped and motivated the church overseas to fulfil the great commission in going to all the world through sending and supporting their missionaries.

Some of the good things we should remember about our past is that early African Nazarenes had a good understanding of the core values of the Church of the Nazarene. They knew what it was to be a **Christian people**. They were “united with all believers in proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup> These were people who were born and brought up in pagan environments and when they were converted into Christianity and accepted Jesus as their Lord, they knew what they were doing and their change was genuine and radical.

As Paul says about the Thessalonians, it was easy “to tell how *they* turned to God from idols to serve the living God” (I Thessalonians 1:9). This is how our pioneers were when they became Christian, they clearly moved out of pagan darkness to Christian light. Paul Dayhoff tells us that the demon possessed Mazivila boy, in 1913, “threw himself onto the altar” and “not knowing how to pray...fell on his face and cried to Jesus, confessed his sins and was forgiven.”<sup>10</sup> When Alice Khumalo became a Christian in

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<sup>9</sup> Core Values – Church of the Nazarene

<sup>10</sup> Dayhoff, *Livingstones in Africa*

1921, she faced severe opposition from her pagan family and one day, “she slipped away into the dark and ran away ... men and dogs chased her but she hid in the rocks and evaded them.”<sup>11</sup> She kept hidden in the veldt and slept there until she came to Endzingeni mission station where she gave her life to Jesus. Yes, our early Nazarenes knew what it meant to be a Christian people and were willing to pay the price.

Secondly, our pioneers were a **holiness people**. Following their genuine repentance they were led to the experience of entire sanctification. Their faith through which they accepted the Lord as their saviour and sanctifier was a childlike faith. It was like a child-mother relationship in which a child knows, loves, and has full confidence in his mother even though he does not know the full details and implications of motherhood. Likewise, they too did not know the deep theological and technical implications of the doctrine of salvation as we do, or think we do today. What they knew so well was the Person who saved them from their sin and entirely sanctified them.

When they heard the call of salvation, they came to Jesus and not only to a correct teaching or doctrine about Jesus. Their childlike faith was like that of a blind man who did not know all the theology about Jesus when he was questioned by the Pharisees about how he opened his eyes. The only convincing answer and testimony he gave them was, “I do know one thing, I was blind but now I see” (John 9:25).

One of the beautiful pieces of holiness memories I heard Rev and Mrs Enos Mgwenya relate about the Bible School they attended at Pigg’s Peak, Swaziland, in the 1920s, was that the holy presence of God was strongly felt in that place. A returning student, who while on holiday fell into sin, was convicted and fell down and, crying, confessed his sin. The presence of a holy people at that Bible School made that ground holy and the sinner uncomfortable with his sin.

Thirdly, our pioneers were a **missional people**. Their mission of worship was meaningful and blessed with the presence of God. They began their worship, which was more God centred and not self-centred, with silence, prayer, and reverence on their knees. Their church music, hymns and choruses, was appealing to the heart and not only to the emotions. It was

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<sup>11</sup> Dayhoff, Livingstones in Africa

more spiritually uplifting and touching and not just entertaining and amusing. The present Zulu *Izihlabelelo Zokudumisa Nezokusindiswa* hymns which were compiled and arranged by Minerva Belle Marshall in 1927, were inspiringly sung in their worship services. The preaching of the Word was accompanied by spontaneous ‘Amen’s’ that freely came from the depths of the hearts of the worshippers. Their altar services were blessed with times of prayer where tears of repentance, surrender, commitment, and of joy were shed by both seekers and altar workers. At these altar services enough quality time was spent in prayer, which was followed by testimonies of victory.

The mission of compassion and evangelism was expressed on the local and district levels through the ministry of Nazarene Mission International (the Nazarene World Missionary Society). I remember a lamp stand with seven lamps representing the seven-fold areas of our mission. These were: 1) NMI membership, 2) mid-weekly prayer and fasting services which were faithfully attended, 3) quarterly lessons about world areas that were taught to the members, 4) giving, 5) home visitation, 6) Alabaster offering, and 7) handwork which was collected and sent to the needy. Through these seven ministries, the light of the gospel was sent to those in darkness.

From the early days of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa our pioneers were involved in regional missionary work.

- a) When I became a Christian in the mid 1940s at my local church in Mpumalanga province, the man who prayed for me was Pastor Titus Dlamini who came from Swaziland to minister here in South Africa. “In 1922,” Dayhoff writes, “Titus Dlamini went to help in the new work at Sabie in Mpumalanga.... They were truly Swazi missionaries to the Shangaan/Sotho people of the Northern Province.”<sup>12</sup> (Now Limpopo)
- b) Alice Khumalo was also one of the early regional missionaries. “When the mission was started in the Northern Province of South Africa at Ga-Malebogo, Blouberg in 1948, Alice Khumalo accompanied the missionaries Rev George and Mrs Jeanette Hayse. She worked as a cook and Bible woman. She became a Swazi missionary in going to work among the Gananwa people with different traditions from her own and she had to learn their northern Sotho language. Every

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<sup>12</sup> Dayhoff, Livingstones in Africa

- Saturday morning she would lead a group of women from the mission and go out “marching for the Lord” to visit in surrounding homes. People of the area called the mission Swazini (the people of Swazi) because of Alice and other Swazi-speaking workers who pioneered the work of the church there.”<sup>13</sup>
- c) Miss Salome Khumalo also went out as a missionary from Swaziland. In 1950 she began the church at White City (Jabavu), the first urban Church of the Nazarene in what later came to be called Soweto in Johannesburg. In 1963 when the Bible College started at Arthurseat in the Northern Province she was matron of the ladies residence.
  - d) Rev and Mrs Pato also served as regional missionaries among the Pedi people of South Africa in the Province of Limpopo. Writing about Pato, Dayhoff tells us “when he sought to be sanctified, the Pedi people stood before him and in 1954 he was wholly sanctified when his consecration to God became complete. This included ministering to the Pedi people.”<sup>14</sup> In 1961 Rev Pato and his wife, Gladys Lomafu, arrived at Ga-Malebogo, Blouberg. They learned the language and customs of the Pedi people and served among them as Swazi missionaries. As Swazi missionaries, the Patos also served at Arthurseat Bible College in South Africa and at our Nazarene Theological College in Malawi.
  - e) Another Swazi regional missionary I should mention is Rev Salome Dlamini, qualified schoolteacher. God’s call to missions came to her in 1938 when she heard a visiting missionary who was working in Tete, Northern Mozambique, telling about his work in that area. After many years of delay, her call took her to Nyasaland, later to be known as Malawi. She worked at the Bible School during the beginning days of the Church of the Nazarene in that country. Rev Maurice Hall, one of the Nazarene missionaries who officially started the work of our church in Central Africa, wrote about Salome in his missionary book, *I Sought for a Man*, “There are none finer than Salome Dlamini. She is a real saint of God and has added immeasurably to the success of our Bible College here in Central Africa. Needless to say she is a favorite among the students.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Dayhoff, Livingstones in Africa

<sup>14</sup> Dayhoff, Livingstones in Africa

<sup>15</sup> Missionary B. Maurice Hall was one of the missionaries who started the work of the

The above-mentioned African Nazarene missionaries were not regarded as missionaries by the church. My wife, Ruth, and I spent a total of 11 years serving in the countries of Malawi and Rhodesia now known as Zimbabwe. Like these other African missionaries I have mentioned, we were not regarded as missionaries until we were given the title in 1990. Writing about us when we were serving in Zimbabwe, J Fred Parker in his book *Into all the World* says, “The national pastor installed there came from the Transvaal so was very much a ‘missionary’.”<sup>16</sup>

The mission of discipleship over the years was done through the probationers’ classes, which we have now dropped, and through Sunday School classes for all ages where the Bible was studied and key scripture verses were put into memory. “By studying and meditation on the Scriptures, Christians discover fountains of refreshment in every thirsty valley on the disciple journey.”<sup>17</sup> This is how our people were helped by Sunday School over the years of our Nazarene African history. It is so regrettable that the Sunday School is not as strong and popular as it used to be. The following chorus we used to sing will not go well with most of our African Nazarenes today:

Every body ought to go to Sunday School, Sunday School, Sunday School.  
Father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle too.  
Every body ought to go to Sunday School.

Our mission of Christian Higher Education and medical work, through which our men and women were equipped for lives of Christian service, was carried out in our Bible Schools and nurses colleges. In addition to Christian higher education, our church was also deeply involved in primary and secondary school education in Swaziland, South Africa, and Mozambique.

There are some challenges that our African church has not yet resolved in almost 100 years of its history. The following issues, ancestral belief/worship, demons, polygamy and other cultural practices related to

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Church of the Nazarene in Central Africa (Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe) In his book, *I Sought for a Man*, he writes about the people who were used by God during those beginning days of the church in those countries.

<sup>16</sup> J Fred Parker, in his book, *Into All the World*, tells the story of Nazarene Missions through 1980.

<sup>17</sup> Core Values – Church of the Nazarene

marriage and death, are not dealt with in the Nazarene *Manual*. The little Zulu booklet *Incwadi Yenkolo Nempatho* (A book on Faith and Conduct) was written to deal with these issues but it does not go far and deep enough and it has long been out of print.

Writing about these issues, Dr Ted Esselstyn made it clear in his paper to the Guatemala 2002 Global Nazarene Theology Conference when he said:

“National leaders addressed major conflicts with traditional African culture during the first and second periods, developing practices still followed in southern Africa: Charms, witchcraft and ancestral worship were rejected; men who practiced polygamy could not be full members (despite Old Testament precedents). Because these issues are not directly addressed in the *Manual*, there are no uniform procedures, and procedural challenges regularly arise. Should the issues of all areas of the International Church be addressed in its official documents?”<sup>18</sup>

The answer to Dr Esselstyn’s question is yes, the International Church should address these issues in conjunction with African Nazarene theologians. In his paper to the Guatemala 2002 Global Theology Conference, Dr Neville Bartle complains that:

“For long theology has been seen as something produced by experts in Western seminaries and exported via missionaries and national church leaders who have been seen as distributors of carbon-copy theologies to the churches around the world. But ‘carbon-copy theologies’ do not meet the heart needs of the people of the two-thirds world...Too often Western missionaries have answered questions that no one was asking, and left unanswered questions that people desperately wanted to have answered.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Dr. Ted Esselstyn was born in Swaziland. His parents served the Church of the Nazarene in Africa as missionaries from the late 1920s. Ted, now in retirement, followed his parents’ footsteps in serving as a missionary on the Africa Region for 33 years. In his paper presented to the Guatemala 2002 Global Nazarene Theology Conference, *Remembering Issues in Africa*, he shows how our African church has been developing for the past 100 years.

<sup>19</sup> Neville Bartle is a Nazarene missionary serving on the South Pacific Field. In his paper to the Guatemala 2002 Global Theology Conference presented as a response to Dean

As part of the International Church of the Nazarene, we want to find guidance from the *Manual*. In order for this to happen, our African theologians are duty bound to come up with a biblically sound affirmation that addresses our regional issues, this affirmation should be presented as a resolution to the General Assembly.

These issues need to be carefully studied and handled by our African theologians. As our church continues to grow and enter new African countries on our Region with the message of holiness, we find the same practices that are deeply rooted in the cultures, customs, and traditions of the people. A unified constructive theological policy will be helpful to our Region.

Church ownership is another challenge we have been and are still faced with. It has taken us almost a century to be both sufficient and efficient in the areas of leadership, self-funding, church administration, and management. The dependence on the mother church is taking a long time to die. To date, we have produced 21 regular districts out of the 103 we have on our Region. But several of our regular districts and their local churches are lagging behind in the critical areas mentioned above.

Church ownership is a very important key that opens the door to positive developments. Malawi is regarded as one of the very poor countries on our continent but I was surprised, happy, and challenged as I read this beautiful ownership story from the religious section of the *Weekend Nation*, one of that country's newspapers:

“St Michael’s moderator Luckson Chigadza said the church’s faithful are now open-handed in their giving following the resumption of the hall. During the first quarter fund-raising held on March 30, 2003, the church’s faithful broke the record when they raised K1,184,00 at one sitting. Last September and December, the church raised K240,000 and K460,000 respectfully. This is the first time the church has raised over K1million at one sitting. We have a dedicated congregation who are willing to give to the Lord. They are encouraged when they

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Flemming’s *Theology of Mission and Missional Theologizing: A paradigm from Paul*, Neville says carbon-copy theologies do not give answers to the questions that the indigenous people are asking.

see the progress of the construction work at the hall and they have confidence in the project committee. They see where the money is going because we have a transparent system. Money collected at the function is well accounted for and they get reports from the treasurer from time to time.”<sup>20</sup>

If the “poor” Malawians are able to do this, we can also do the same. If the St Michael’s congregation in Malawi is able to do this, our African Nazarene congregations can also do this. This is ownership responsibility.

It is not only in giving that church ownership responsibility is expressed, but also in leadership. To some extent this has been delayed because our leaders were not empowered through mentoring or delegated with higher responsibilities. Writing about Rev Joseph Mkhwanazi who became the first Swazi assistant in supervising the work of the African church, David Whitelaw tells us that, “From the beginning the vision of Schmelzenbach was for a strong, indigenous church. He laid the groundwork by putting responsibility in the hands of the national pastors.”<sup>21</sup> Had that good work of putting responsibility into the hands of indigenous leaders Schmelzenbach began many years ago been continued and accelerated, the image of our church would be different today.

Other than national district leadership that has been with us for a number of years, the responsibility of running theological colleges and Bible schools was first delegated to national leadership in the mid 1970s. It is gratifying to see doors and opportunities now opening up on our Region. We now have a few of our own as missionaries, and out of the six Field directors on our Region, four are indigenous.

The preserving of “our God-given heritage, the faith once delivered to the saints, especially the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification as a second work of grace,”<sup>22</sup> is a very important challenge that our predecessors were faced with. The same challenge is facing us today and

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<sup>20</sup> The *Weekend Nation* – Republic of Malawi news paper

<sup>21</sup> Dr. David Whitelaw, in his book, *A History of the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa*, shows us the roots and identity, planting and growth, order and polity, theology and beliefs, life and practice and decisions and destiny of the church in South Africa

<sup>22</sup> In a preamble to their church constitution written in the *Manual*, the ministers and lay members of the Church of the Nazarene state that the experience of entire sanctification as a second work of grace is their God-given heritage.

will also face our successors in the future. We must not only teach, preach, and sing the doctrine correctly, but we must live it. If we do not do this, we will fall into the danger of becoming the “unholy *holiness movement*,” in other words, we will remain with only a good name but without a holy life.

The hopelessness of our beloved continent, manifested by sin, disease, ignorance, and poverty that is on the increase, is a big challenge the church should deal with. The breaking down of moral life, wars and hate, rumours of wars, the AIDS pandemic, and many other difficulties continue to cause havoc and suffering to many.

The only answer to Africa’s hopelessness is Jesus Christ the hope of Glory. He is the Good News of great joy that should be to all the people of Africa in this present age (Luke 2:10). Jurgen Moltmann in his book, *Theology of Hope* reminds us that, “As long as hope does not embrace and transform the thought and action of men, it remains topsy-turvy and ineffective.” This glorious hope, the gospel of Jesus Christ, should enable us to successfully face our challenges.

We, the Church, are the channels through which this hope should reach the people of our continent. Jesus is the light of the world, but his light reaches the dark world when it shines in and through us. His light of salvation has power to transform the wicked sinners and make them his children, who are able to live self-controlled holy lives that are protected, not by condoms and guns, but by his redeeming precious blood. His light of love and peace is capable of ending the hatred and the wars and bringing the day when our nations “will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks” and the “nation will not train for war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).

As we think of the glorious past that we dearly cherish and of the glorious eternal future that motivates us to keep on keeping on, we should find spiritual fulfilment in the present. “Is it not in the present alone,” Moltmann asks, “that man is truly existent, real, contemporary with himself, acquiescent and certain?”<sup>23</sup> The answer is yes because Jesus, our Good Shepherd came to this world so that we “may have life and have it to

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<sup>23</sup> Jurgen Moltmann discusses the ground and the implications of a Christian Eschatology in his book, *Theology of Hope*

the full” (John 10:10). When Paul says, “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21), he is telling us that the glorious future he was hopefully looking forward to was not robbing him of a blessed hopeful present life he had in Christ the Hope. Even though many times we may go through severe trials and the dark valleys of death, we are more than conquerors because our Hope is with us.

In their book, *A Dangerous Hope*, Al Truesdale and Bonnie Perry, write about this hope which they say is the centre of the gospel of the crucified and resurrected Christ. They declare that, “Hope is not something God tacked on at the end of the gospel. The gospel doesn’t just talk *about* hope. It *is* hope. In the gospel of grace, the goodness of our humanity is clarified and made secure.”<sup>24</sup>

In a song Lelia N Morris tells us about the Saviour who has come in His mighty power and given us hope. We are led from hope to hope every day and this hope keeps shining brighter and brighter as we press forward to our eternal hope.

From glory to glory He leads me on,  
From grace to grace to grace ev’ry day  
And brighter and brighter the glory dawns,  
While pressing my home-ward way  
While pressing my home-ward way.<sup>25</sup>

When the world that is severely tormented by the evil one sees us happy, fulfilled, full of hope in the Lord, and our holiness light shining before them, they will be attracted to this happy present and better future that is awaiting us.

What I am trying to do in this paper is to show that the Africa Church of the Nazarene has a rich history that has been made during the past 100 years and, unfortunately, most of it has been lost because it has not been written down. This history is currently being made and will continue to be made in the future. In order for us not to continue losing our heritage, I

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<sup>24</sup> Al Truesdale and Bonnie Perry write about encountering the God of grace in their book titled *A Dangerous Hope*

<sup>25</sup> Nazarene Hymnal *Worship in Song*, published by Lillenas Publishing Company, KC, MO.

<sup>26</sup>The *Manual* gives a list of the duties of the Local church secretary.

would like to challenge our emerging writers to collect this memory through research and preserve it in written form. It would really be good if each local church secretary would do his or her work as required by the *Manual*:

“To see that official papers, records, and legal documents pertaining to the local church, including deeds, abstracts, insurance policies, loan documents, church membership rolls, historical records, church board minutes and incorporation papers are held in trust in either fireproof or secure safes on the local premises, or when feasible, they may be placed in safe deposits facilities in local banks or similar institutions.”<sup>26</sup>

It is also a *Manual* requirement that the district secretaries permanently keep the records of their districts and turn them over to their successors. This will make it easy for our writers to get the information they need. If we do this, we will be much better off because as we pass away, we will leave our future generations with a rich documented memory.

## **Part 5: HOPE**

### **16**

#### **How Can We Order Our Economic Practices in the Church in Such a Way That We Give Testimony with Power to the Holiness Message?**

Rev Filimao Chambo

Principal, Seminário Nazareno em Mozambique;  
Pastor, Matola City Church of the Nazarene, Maputo, Mozambique

Eradication of absolute poverty has become a top priority for the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. The world seeks to find ways to reduce vulnerability to being poor, ways for generating sustainable development and the total eradication of poverty in the world as a whole, with special focus on the African continent. The majority of people on the African continent live on less than one US dollar per day. Poverty of course, is a much broader concept that transcends material necessity and embraces the broader social well-being and quality of life of the whole person. Possessions do however play a major role in determining a standard or class in which individuals or society live.

The challenge to respond to the ethical issues facing our world is not only for the “secular” organizations, but the world is also looking to the church for answers. We cannot ignore the fact that economics influence the ministry of the church. As the church grows and expands throughout the continent we are made aware of poverty, which cripples the districts and local churches that we organize.

For several years now I have been concerned about the church in particular in Mozambique where civil war, natural calamities, and HIV/AIDS have contributed to poverty in the society. Poverty is also a big problem in the church. Like John Wesley and Phineas Bresee I desire a Holiness Theology that expresses the gospel mandate to respond to the plight of the poor. I believe the church structure is better maintained only by a good economic system. A great number of our constituency is poor, thus the church is equally poor. I am not only concerned with poverty within the

church. I am very concerned about the present state of the people we reach out to. Therefore, I want to suggest that the eradication of poverty ought to be one of our top priorities as we continue to expand our ministry.

### **Wesley and the Poor**

“Gain all you can; save all you can; give all you can” was Wesley’s most famous statement on the problem of handling worldly goods. Wesley was committed to eradication of poverty. He advocated for the poor, in fact he emptied himself for the sake of the poor. He gave much from his own belongings. He organised relief projects, introduced a loan fund (interest free could be secured up to 3 months), and involved himself in searching for jobs for the poor. It is interesting that Wesley would advocate for wealth creation for the sake of the poor and well being of individuals and the society as a whole. Wesley’s writings did not challenge his followers to voluntarily surrender all earthly goods, rather to earn as much money as possible; this was limited however, by emphasizing essential honesty in profit making. He also exhorted the people to save or put away earned money and refrain from unnecessary expenditures. Wesley believed that money as such is neither good nor evil. In the hands of God’s children it becomes ‘nourishment for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked’. All that money could achieve, good or evil, depended on how people used it.<sup>124</sup>

### **The Church of the Nazarene and the Poor**

“We want places so plain that every board will say welcome to the poorest.” These were words of Bresee. The early Nazarenes listened with their hearts to “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor” (Luke 4:18). Identification with the Lord’s own mission had led Wesley to England’s prisons, slums, and mining communities. Now it was the Nazarene founder’s concern. Holiness builds a church with a heart for the poor and broken!”<sup>125</sup> The *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*<sup>126</sup> lists the following as the responsibility of the church to the poor: “The Church of the Nazarene believes that Jesus commanded His disciples to have a special relationship

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<sup>124</sup> Marquadt, M. 1992. *John Wesley’s Social Ethics Praxis and Principles*. Pages 29 - 36

<sup>125</sup> Wes Tracy & Stan Ingersol. 1998. *What is a Nazarene?* Pgs. 12 and 13

<sup>126</sup> *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene 2001 – 2005* Paragraph 904.5

to the poor of this world; that Christ's Church ought, first, to keep itself simple and free from an emphasis on wealth and extravagance and, second, to give itself to the care, feeding, clothing, and shelter of the poor. Throughout the Bible and in the life and example of Jesus, *God identifies with and assists the poor, the oppressed, and those in society who cannot speak for themselves.* In the same way, we, too, are called to identify with and to enter into solidarity with the poor and not simply to offer charity from positions of comfort (I think that at this moment compassionate ministry is a venue to offer charity from a position of comfort). *We hold that compassionate ministry to the poor includes acts of charity as well as a struggle to provide opportunity, equality, and justice for the poor.*" (I do not believe that the church enters into solidarity with the poor to advocate for economical justice although we are quite good in giving alms).

I do acknowledge that since its beginning the Church of the Nazarene and its leadership have made it a priority to respond to the oppressed, marginalized, and the hurting people of our world. But it seems that the church is only good in relief projects. The relief projects are welcome but they aim mostly to address survival of the victims of war, disaster, and prolonged injustice. They are short-term solutions and most of the times treat the symptoms and not the disease. We need to purposefully intensify community development projects which are sustainable. We are called to advocate for equality and justice.

### **The Economic Imperatives of the Disciples of Jesus According to the New Testament**

And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" ...Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."<sup>127</sup> "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."<sup>128</sup> "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself

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<sup>127</sup> Matthew 19:16-21 (NASB)

<sup>128</sup> Luke 12:33-34 (NASB)

said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" <sup>129</sup>

The Bible offers a basis for discussion: sharing of possessions according to the New Testament is the economic imperative of the disciples. But there could be sharing of possessions with the aim of empowering the recipients or the sharing of possessions with the aim to gain control over the recipients. Jesus warned his followers that wealth could become an obstacle for people to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 16:13; 18:24). Wealth or possessions can become an obstacle when they pose a temptation to prestige and security apart from God (e.g. Luke 12:13-21, 33-34). Therefore Jesus challenges his disciples to sell everything to help eradicate poverty. Luke carefully observes that discipleship "entails" 'leaving everything'. In the early community of Jerusalem, people were able from time to time to sell property to provide for the needs of the church (Acts 4:34). Perhaps the best commentary Luke provides on "leaving everything" comes in Acts: 'No one claimed private ownership of any possessions. Instead, they had everything in common' (Acts 4: 32).

In the ancient's Mediterranean life, the economic sharing was embedded in social relations. To share with someone without expectation of return was to treat them as though they were family. However there were also Patron-client relations. In this context a potential patron possessed some commodity required by a client. In exchange, the client would provide appropriate expressions of honour and loyalty to the patron. Having received patronage the client now existed in a state of obligation, of debt. The possibility for exploitation and the exercise of controlling power is high. I am afraid in some cases this is true in the Church of the Nazarene.

I am equally aware that the rule that disciples of Jesus must give up all their possessions is set alongside other teachings and narratives that pose different models of faithful response to the gospel. Zacchaeus, for example, is commended for his repentant response (Luke 19:9a), even though he gives up considerably less than everything. The church in Jerusalem on the other hand is commended for generous sharing of possessions rather than radical renunciation. Therefore we cannot derive simple or univocal rule for economic practice from the New Testament.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Acts 20:35 (NASB)

<sup>130</sup> Richard Hays. 1996: 467 *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*

But it is no doubt that the New Testament calls the church to acts of sacrificial service far beyond what simple justice would require. The Word of God clearly communicates that God requires of us a sharing of possessions far more radical than the church has ordinarily supposed. The concept of “social entrepreneurship” is an emerging paradigm for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Social entrepreneurship could be the answer to help the church honour her vision to create “self supporting” churches all over the world. Social entrepreneurs are committed to systematic changes and sustainable improvements.

“We understand Christian holiness to be inseparable from ministry to the poor in that it drives the Christian beyond his or her own individual perfection and toward the creation of a more just and equitable society and world. Holiness, far from distancing believers from the desperate economic needs of people in our world, motivates us to place our means in the service of alleviating such need and to adjust our wants in accordance with the needs of others.”<sup>131</sup> We are called to share whatever we possess in a manner that glorifies God. Sharing in a way that empowers means treating others as members of one’s own extended family. It means trusting them to make decisions on how to use or invest resources that are made available to them for sustainable development. Therefore a careful eradication of poverty within the church will set an agenda that seeks to educate members. Educate with the hope that those trained will be able to assess how the church can make effective use of available resources to solve the problem of rural and urban poverty, improve the understanding of the nature and process of sustainable development and contribute to the reducing of poverty.

The challenge to the church today is to apply Biblical imperatives in the process of uplifting the poor. The challenge to the poor is to accept that God has given them the power to rise above their circumstances and become productive members of the Kingdom of Christ. The challenge to the rich is to work towards empowering the poor to reach their full God given potential without trying to impose their views on them, and to treat them with the dignity that they deserve as true children of the Kingdom. “Wesley’s most important contribution in improving the poor’s quality of life lay, neither in these individual projects (however exemplary), nor in his

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<sup>131</sup> *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene 2001 – 2005* Paragraph 904.5

extremely beneficial comprehensive education efforts. Instead, it lay in the challenged consciousness that this now notorious preacher began to engender both among the affected poor and the high strata of English society.”<sup>132</sup>

To be faithful to the mission of the church we have a sacred duty to preach the Gospel and spread its values. The values of the Gospel (truth, justice, and love) must compel us to speak out against injustice of whatever kind in whichever sphere of life it is found. We must strive to promote not only the spiritual, but also the social, political, and economic development of all people. Matthew 26:11 “You have the poor with you always...” is often quoted when the issue of poverty is discussed. It is easy to take a passage out of its context to reject the truth. But in the modern world, it is said that sufficient wealth and resources exist to wipe out poverty, if only they were properly distributed. The fact that so many people, even in rich countries, still struggle to survive from one day to the next and that untold thousands die from lack of food, basic health care, and shelter is an indication of economic injustice. The economies are organised in such a way that they are unable to meet the basic needs. We dare not be silent on the issue of socio-economic injustice.

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<sup>132</sup> *John Wesley's Social Ethics Praxis and Principles.*

## Response

Rev Fred D Otto

Area Coordinator, Field Education Coordinator; Africa West Field, Accra,  
Ghana

Before any comments on the subject are presented, it is in order to express appreciation for the question raised and stimulating discussion presented by Rev Chambo. He has posed some key issues that the Church of the Nazarene must deal with in every generation. To me there is no better time or forum than now.

Within the opening paragraphs Chambo expresses a premise that does not fit my experience: “poverty cripples the districts and local churches that we organize.” My experience has been that when God’s people focus on Christ and not their building, then the church will grow and succeed. This success will not be measured with material things, but with the salvation of souls. Such a fellowship will, even though of necessity, have a building that is “so plain that every board will say welcome to the poorest”. I have rejoiced with the congregations who have just completed their mud and stick and thatched building. I have watched these congregations use great effort to maintain such facilities as the ants and wind and rain attack it. They are successful! I have also seen congregations prepare requests for Alabaster funds year after year. With their eyes on a “Patron”, they seem to drift further and further from the Kingdom with each Alabaster proposal.

Yet, I know from the love Christ has placed in my heart, as well as His Word, that I cannot just stand by and watch. If we are brothers and sisters in Christ, if we are an extended family, if the Love of Christ is in us, then we cannot, we must not just watch! So what is the answer?

Chambo suggests that those of us in the Wesleyan tradition can be guided by the expression, “Gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can.” Whether he is the first to use it or not, Wesley has given us this quotable phrase that helps us understand a Christian’s attitude towards money and possession. I am not sure if he is expressing a formula for wealth creation or the alleviation of poverty. For me, the true essence of the Wesleyan method that made such a difference was not his view of money, but as Chambo quotes, “Wesley’s most important contribution in improving the

poor's quality of life lay, neither in these individual projects, nor in his extremely beneficial comprehensive education efforts. Instead, it lay in the challenged consciousness that this now notorious preacher began to engender both among the affected poor and the high strata of English society."

This is the heart of Compassionate Ministry--not that "compassionate ministry is a venue to offer charity from a position of comfort". Compassionate Ministry properly executed is a "challenged consciousness ... engendered both among the affected poor and the high strata."

Much of Wesley's genius in applying his theology was the system of bringing people together. The poor, disadvantaged could enter into leadership and gain not only the life experiences, but more importantly a sense of worth. This is the move from disadvantageousness to equality.

Let us explore an alternative view to the question. But to do so, I would like to pose an alternative question, "How can we order the practices in the Church in such a way that we give testimony with power to the Holiness Message?" In this I propose dropping back from the "economic" issue and moving to what may be the basic issue.

This question will pick up on the issues Chambo raises in his discussion of the Patron-client relationship. (I will avoid the discussion of the extended family sharing without expectation, as I would be as one merely peering through the window.)

Lasting relationships are established through mutual consent and a sense of needs being fulfilled. The Patron-client systems did lead to abuse. Most often this relationship does lead to a permanent underclass and a perversion of a meaningful relationship based on equal partners. However, the poor would still seek a patron to protect them. What then breaks the cycle? In my mind, Wesley was lead (or stumbled) upon it—a "method" that treated persons as equals, even though they are vastly different in the world's eyes. Let me share more.

Pazmiño (1997, p. 44f.) offers an interesting view of sharing "Hope". The church experiences and expresses Love in *Koinonia* (living in community). The community shares and shows Love in *Diakonia* (servicing others). The Faith of community is formed and informed in *Kerygma* (proclaiming the Word). And the Community expresses its Love and Faith to the world,

to itself, and to God in *Leitourgia* (worshipping the Divine). These we do well.

The local churches that do these four things well we label as “successful”. They will pass through our charts, under our lenses as “good” local churches. I would contend that such churches would fit right in line with most of the “mission” or “vision” statements I have seen.

But, according to Pazmiño there is another dimension — Hope. It is this dimension into which I believe Wesley led his people (as well as the four above). Hope is expressed and expanded, becoming the next generation’s inheritance, through *Propheteia* (advocating the Kingdom of God).

There are many and various reasons why the church serves well in “relief”. Helping people survive is not all that hard. I have seen both poor and rich do it (even some good ol’ middle class!). Being an advocate for the Kingship of God, now that is work!

Keeping people physically alive through sharing food and clothing is an action. At its centre advocacy is the change of attitude--change of worldview, if you will. (This is the inheritance that makes the difference; the inheritance that removes the disadvantage condition). Changing attitudes is difficult, long, hard work. I must confess; we do not do it well. Why not?

First, we are not good advocates for the Kingship of God because we do not believe in it. What is the “Kingdom of Heaven” or the “Kingdom of God”? I suspect most consider this to be the returning of Christ. So our “hope” in Christ is His second coming. Yet, we read, “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” We pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

Hence, our view of the world is often through the eyes of the “fundamentalist”. Many a Nazarene acts as if the world is going to get worse and worse until Christ comes again. Many even believe it **MUST** get worse so that Christ is permitted to come again! Therefore, I sense that we have forgotten the hope for today when we read 1 Corinthians 15:19: “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men”.

Some Nazarenes would not express their view in this way, but they are still squarely in the camp of the fundamentalist for they believe pre-eminently in the sovereignty of God. This doctrine gets applied in lives as: “He is in control of everything.” “What happens is not my responsibility.” We as Nazarenes, and as Wesleyans, must be able to comprehend our being created in God’s image along side the issue of His sovereignty. That is, what are the implications of the “free will” in expressing “Hope”?

Second, we are not advocates because we accept our cultural view of the world. We do not see the world through the eyes of Christ. In this, Chambo is correct in identifying the Patron-client relationship as a problem. I contend that this relationship is formed around the view that “a poor man cannot”. (This is a colloquialism. Read ‘woman’ also.) When the “haves” hold to the view that “the poor cannot”, they act as patrons. When the “have-nots” hold to the view that “the poor cannot”, they act as clients.

Hence, I contend the question, “How can we order the practices in the Church in such a way that we give testimony with power to the Holiness Message?” is partially examined by how do we avoid the attitude “a poor man cannot.” Hence, we do need to become “social entrepreneurs”. As Chambo states, “Social entrepreneurs are committed to systemic changes and sustainable improvements.”

However, I agree with Dees (1998) rather than Chambo. “Social Entrepreneurs” is NOT an emerging paradigm for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dees notes, “We have always had social entrepreneurs, even if we did not call them that. They built many of the institutions we now take for granted.” The coining of a new phrase is not a new paradigm. Yet, this term does offer some good insights into a very old concept. Let us examine it.

The term “Entrepreneur” originates in French from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Dees points out, “It means someone who ‘undertakes,’ ... a significant project or activity.” Dees quotes Drucker, “the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity.”

When the word “social” modifies “entrepreneurs”, the concept that emerges is entrepreneurs with an explicit social mission at the heart of all they do. Profit and wealth are tools not purposes. Social entrepreneurs

may function in the market place, but “free” markets can conflict with their social mission.

As I come to the end of my pages, I am now reflecting on this phrase I had not seen until I read Chambos’ work. I wonder. I wonder, “Do we Nazarenes in Africa believe that “a poor man” can be a “Social Entrepreneur”?”

As one African theologian commented, “We sell our coffee, our tea, our gold, and God’s blessings”. For God has said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

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Dees, J. Gregory, “*The Meaning of Social Entrepreneurship*”, Stanford University ([www.gsb.stanford.edu/csi/SE\\_resources.html](http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/csi/SE_resources.html)), 1998.

Pazmiño, Robert W. *Foundational Issues in Christian Education*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.

## **Response**

Mr Lodrick Dickson Gama

Lecturer, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Nazarene Theological College  
(NTC), Muldersdrift, South Africa

It does appear without doubt that the writer's intended purpose is to challenge the Church of the Nazarene in Africa to empower its members for a long lasting sustainable economic development. The following will be my observations in response to the paper.

It is true that the continent of Africa is known worldwide for its economic struggles. It is not uncommon overseas to hear people refer to Africa as a place of poverty and suffering. The plight of poverty is recognised from every corner of the continent from one cardinal point to the other. There are several contributing factors some of which are of natural causes and others man-made. Natural disasters have taken their toll in Africa and the number of people affected is outrageous. This has been through diseases, floods, and droughts. Lately HIV/AIDS is a scourge that is reducing Africa to shambles. Man-made causes of poverty in Africa include: civil wars which have mined arable farming areas and depleted natural resources. Job opportunities have dwindled thus leading into a high rate of unemployment. The illiteracy rate is very high in Africa and has contributed to a low standard of living. Although Africa has gained independence from years of colonialism its impact is still felt for it takes a few years to stabilise. Emerging from such a background, Africa is struggling to find its identity in the global economy. Presently, there are concrete inroads towards correcting the past and paving a positive way forward. This is what the idea of African Renaissance is all about. The observation of the writer is right. Africa is poor yet the potential for improvement is there.

The churches in most of the countries of Africa, on the average, are full of poor members. They are poor because they are formed by the situation from which they come. Most of these people have put their hopes upon the

church as a God-given avenue to help them. It is true that most seek spiritual help but others have found refuge in the church for their political, economic, and physical needs. Facing a situation of this magnitude, the church has had no other alternative but to engage in relief programmes so that these people may get food to eat, a shelter, a blanket to sleep under and medical help for healing. Unfortunately, a compassionate gesture such as this has created a generation of receivers and dependants. Worse even, according to the writer, a Patron-client relationship has developed which has led to “exploitation and the exercise of controlling power” on the part of our leaders.

I fully concur with the writer in affirming that the ministry to the poor is a biblical teaching as addressed with great precision in the Old and New Testaments. We also observe that throughout the history of the church there have been efforts to tackle the problem of poverty. Roman Catholicism has been in the forefront in this matter and has been a cause of much criticism from the Protestants especially the evangelicals of being a ‘social gospel’ church. In Anglicanism and Methodism, John Wesley was deeply involved in the ministry to the poor, as has been William Booth in the Salvation Army movement. The Nazarenes inherited this social emphasis in the person of Phineas Bresee who could rightly be referred to as the father of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. Since this is a biblical mandate, the Church of the Nazarene must continue to be involved in the ministry to the poor even today.

I personally have no qualms about being involved but my question is how and how much? It is true that we will always have the poor with us (Matthew 26: 11) but that should not deter us from being involved. However, our involvement must be fervent yet cautious so as not to neglect the number one mandate to the church and that of the Great Commission, (Matthew 28: 16-18). The reason I ask this question of how and how much comes from a natural fear which the church has always had and that is that of turning the church into a social empowerment enterprise! Although the question of involvement which is before us is legitimate and deserves

unreserved attention due to the situation in which the church finds itself, I have a few observations to make concerning things to be careful about as we attempt to address this dilemma. To these I now turn below.

The writer is not at all keen about handouts in the form of relief projects. He is of the opinion that these are “short term solutions and most of the time treat the symptoms and not the disease”. My contention is that relief programmes must continue as they are. Who on earth would be so foolish as not to attend to an emergency of some disease, a flood, or a drought and instead inform the victims that the church is working on a long-term solution for it? Long-term solutions are absolutely okay but they need to be considered alongside urgent relief endeavours. There are issues that need attention on the spot. Some people would be dead by the time we come back to them with our long-term solutions! I have always wondered in my mind whether it is at all proper to make a distinction between a relief project and a sustainable development project. I see both as relief work. Whether it be short-term or long-term, the same applies; both are meant to relieve the victim from trouble. That is why I contend for the two to be applied simultaneously. I agree, of course, that it would be detrimental to engage in one at the expense of the other.

One other question that haunts my mind is whether there will ever be a time when poverty will be eradicated in society. It is the writer’s view that with education, training, and equipping, poverty can be a thing of the past. Would I be right that poverty knows no bounds? It is a disease that infiltrates throughout the whole spectrum of society, namely: the good and the bad; churchgoers and the unchurched; the educated and the uneducated etc. The people the church will train are a very small fraction compared with the number of people in a given urban or rural area. Due to the dynamic nature of the church, with new people coming in all the time, there will be no way that the church can cope with the training of all these people. Even non-believers and unchurched people will want to benefit from the schemes. The limited resources would finally be depleted and the situation would go back to square one. The other thing to consider for sustainable development with a lasting impact is that of a need of an environment conducive to put this into place. The way I see it poverty will

not be alleviated in Africa, at least in the next hundred years, unless Africa is committed to addressing the following issues: to put an end to civil wars; to cut down on the birth rate; to foster education for all; to curb corruption and irresponsible administration in high places (even in the church for that matter); to stop coup de tats that often lead to totalitarianism and dictatorships; to eradicate unemployment by creating job opportunities for citizens; to improve on national health care services; and more than anything else, the African people must seriously turn from ungodliness to a genuine reverence for the Almighty God. A godly society will not cause harm to its brothers and sisters. Without a concerted will and effort to eradicate these problems, Africa might as well forget about the eradication of poverty. To develop effectively, the church needs a conducive environment.

Another important factor that needs to be considered for sustainable development in Africa is to recognise that the church cannot go it alone. As indicated earlier, African society is mostly a close knit group of people, hence the extended family concept. That is why sometimes it is not easy to distinguish the secular from the sacred. The same people who sing and pray at the top of their voices in church are the very same people who together with the unbelieving relatives out there at home and in society, engage in social drinking and dancing in a manner unacceptable in the church. The resources provided by the church to empower its members will sooner or later be shared and utilised among friends and relatives who have nothing to do with the church. This being true, why doesn't the church have a reorientation of approach at this point? Instead of talking about empowering its "own members" why not empower the church together with the immediate society where it finds itself, that is the community?

In not going it alone, the church ought to consider the financial implications involved in this as well. As soon as one talks the language of empowerment, he must be clear that he has touched the issue regarding a sacred cow. Resources for empowerment need big bucks. This is because there will be a need for skills training. For that matter, professional personnel are needed. In addition to this expensive training, facilities and

equipment needs to be purchased. In other words, this is an expensive endeavour for the church. This is where other important stakeholders need to come in. Today we hear a lot about the church networking with other organizations such as government, NGO's, and companies in the private sector. Since this will be a joint effort, there is no way that the church can claim ownership. The church might handle relief programmes of its own on a small scale but when it comes to this drastic empowerment, we need to engage in a new way of thinking, and that is of allowing the church to be used as an agent for secular structures that are engaged in social transformation projects. This is a new concept in the church and poses deep heart searching questions. Must the church ever team up with the secular world? Should the church go to the secular world for help? Who must set an example in the world, is it the world or secular structures?

What have I said so far? What point do I want to draw closer home here? The church must be encouraged to utilise its own resources and wealth properly. The so-called values of the gospel (truth, justice, and love) will appeal much more to members of our constituency, the church. We are not going to accuse the world for not distributing its wealth properly because it is its wealth! The God given mandate to care for the suffering, the poor, and the destitute in our midst is for the church to put into practice. We dare not pass the buck on to government structures nor on to politicians. The church must be full of compassion as Christ was. We do need to be sensitive to the plight of the suffering and the dying; to the hungry and naked; and to the homeless and the destitute. Immediate response in the form of relief projects must continue whilst attempts for long-term sustainable development programmes are put in place as well. Whilst in the process of attending to the social needs of our people, let us be cautious not to tilt the scale too far to the other side forgetting our primary mandate for existence, that of fulfilling the Great Commission.

**Is There Hope in the Midst of Death?  
A Paper Towards an African Theology of Hope**

Rev Samuel Daka

Principal, Nazarene Theological College of Central Africa (NTCCA),  
Lilongwe, Malawi

When I expressed interest that I wanted to write a paper for the Theology Conference, one thing which needed to be done was for me to sign a Writer Acceptance Form. One of the questions on the form was to write two or three sentences about what the writer thought was the most pressing theological issue or concern in the Church of the Nazarene in Africa. The question gave me a hint as to what topic I needed to write on for the conference. Many people would agree with me that one of the pressing issues within the Church in Africa is the need to understand Christian hope. But no adequate knowledge, experience, and appreciation of hope is possible to attain without a clearly articulated biblical theology of death done within the African context.

There is need for the Church in Africa to develop a sound biblical theology of death that will provide the educated clergy, the thinking laity, and the majority of our people with adequate biblical understanding of death. The ultimate purpose of such a task would be threefold. First, it will help our people develop a worldview that is biblical and Christian so that in the experience of death, they should stand strong and firm in their faith and never lose hope. Secondly, our people will continue to grow in the knowledge and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Gospel so that they will be able to stand against any teaching on death that is contrary to the truth of God's revealed and written word. Lastly, they will be able to identify and resist within their own cultural systems those cultural or religious practices, rites, and ceremonies during death which tend to undermine the reality and certainty of their Christian faith and hope.

It should be pointed out here that developing such a biblical theology of death is an enormous and voluminous task, one that cannot be accomplished in a paper of this magnitude. A good theology of death well researched, articulated, and written would need to address the following

questions: What is death? What is the origin and causes of death? What happens when people die? Where do people go when they die? In what condition are the dead? Who are the ancestors? Where do they live? Is there assurance that the dead will go to heaven or hell? Why do many people in Africa, including Christians, fear death? How should the living relate with those who have died? Is there hope in the midst of death? Where do we find hope in the midst of death? My attempt is not to answer all these issues but to take a piece of the pie and start the ball rolling from there. The question I want to address is: "Is there hope in the midst of death?"

Death is real, natural, and common. It is the experience of everyone. It is a human situation which no person can avoid nor has the ability to resist. When death strikes, it brings with it great emotional effect and impact on those affected. They experience sorrow, pain, loss, grief, disruption of family relationships and fellowships. The impact of it is great and to experience such effects is natural and understood. But the question we need to seriously consider and ponder is; how do we as Christians respond when death occurs? Do we show faith and hope when death strikes or do we show fear of death and lack of faith and hope?

It is a fact that cannot be doubted nor denied that among the many problems facing African Christians today is the fear of death and consequently, lack of hope when death occurs. Death is one of those things people do not want to talk about. Even faithful Christians do not want to speak about death. Few pastors preach or teach about death in their churches. Many pastors preach about death when it has occurred. During funerals it is easy to see people avoid touching the dead body, sitting on the grave or tomb. In Africa generally and Malawi specifically, death is a community affair, a public event which raises sympathy of many people around. The amount of money, time, energy, and attention which is spent on funerals or death related matters is overwhelming and tremendous. A picture that is created is that of hopelessness. It is a known fact that every culture has its own accepted patterns or ways for its people to express grief and sorrow when death occurs. As Africans, one form is by mourning and involving ourselves in some cultural practices, rites, and ceremonies related to death.

To express grief and sorrow is legitimate and natural and nothing is wrong

with this. But when one looks at the amount and extent of mourning that is involved and the priority that is given to our participation and involvement in funeral rites and ceremonies, one wonders whether the primary idea is only that of expressing sorrow or something else. By critically looking at what happens one gets the impression that the people involved in those activities have fear of death and lack of hope. Care must be taken so that our involvement does not raise the feeling that we are trying to appease, please, or worship the dead and society so that we are seen to be good people. The majority of our people would not ascribe to this view. This has been part of their tradition and identity. These cultural practices and rituals have been done and followed strictly as a cultural norm and standard for every good member of society without questioning why they are being done. The majority of our people strongly believe that mourning is done to express sorrow because of death, and the funeral rites and ceremonies are done not to worship the dead but to give them honour and respect which they deserve. But how do we or can we biblically respond to these issues of mourning during death and honouring the dead as Christians?

The Bible approves of mourning in various culturally defined ways (see John 11:30-38, Genesis 50:1-14). It is known that there are certain customs and practices applied to that culture and time alone which may not be valid for all cultures and times. As Christians, however, we have no need to mourn and cry, weep, wail as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Jesus Christ has power over sin and over death and the grave. *“Death has been swallowed up in victory”* (1 Corinthians 15:54). The believer does not need to fear death.

It is a fact that our involvement in funeral rites is not to worship but to respect the dead. There seems to be evidence in the scriptures that honour was given to the dead in their burial (see Genesis 23:19; 49:29, and 50:25). Proper burial was a sign of respect to the dead and this burial involved ceremonies and mourning according to the customs of that time. However, it should be mentioned that even though there are customs of burial found in the Old Testament or even in the New Testament it does not mean that they are required of us today. But the question of honouring and respecting the dead must be seen in light of what the scriptures teach. It needs to be emphasized here that the African culture has one element that is admirable and desirable which other cultures must learn. This has to do with giving respect and honour to parents and elders in society. It is one of the best

elements in culture that needs to be preserved, maintained, and promoted despite the pressure to let it loose. The church in Africa must support and defend this traditional value and encourage and teach young people to value, respect, and honour the elderly.

Who are the recipients of this honour and respect according to the Bible? Leviticus 19:32 sheds light on this question. The verse says, “*Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.*” This statement from the Mosaic legislation hints that it is proper and pleasing to God for people of all times to show respect to the elderly at all times. It is also seen from the same statement that to show this kind of respect is in some way showing respect for God Himself. Exodus 20:12 talks about the fifth commandment which says, “*Honour your father and mother*”. The command spells out that it is God’s desire that all people should bring honour to their parents. Based on these two passages of scripture, let us answer the question: Who are the recipients of respect and honour? The primary and complete emphasis of the Bible is not on the dead as we emphasize, but the living aged, the living elders, and the living parents.

Those that are living now are the recipients of honour and respect. To these then, we as Christians are commanded to show respect and honour and not to the dead. How is this honour shown? The book of Proverbs 1:8 provides an answer to this question. The living parents must be shown respect by careful consideration of their advice and instruction and by obeying and submitting to them in every way that does not cause them to disobey God (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20). The best honour one can give to their parents is by living a holy life of godly character and behaviour. If it is honouring the dead the same principle can apply. Let us live lives that are godly and Christ like which will honour and respect memories of our departed ones.

Is there hope in the midst of death? Yes, there is. Why do we fear death then as though there is no hope? Christian hope is grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ who lived, died, and rose from the dead and is now living and reigning in our hearts. As Christians our hope centres on Christ and what He has done in our lives and on His return in glory (1 Peter 1:13). Nowhere does the scripture speak of life without problems. Until Jesus Christ comes again, this world as is will be marked by sin, suffering, pain,

persecution, famine, drought, sickness, poverty, hunger and death. The Christian hope does not depend on what is happening around us in our specific situations and places. Christian hope does not focus either on this life or on the things this life can give such as marriage, education, children, positions, wealth, and achievements, but it solely depends on what Christ has done in our lives, what He has promised in His Word and what He will do when He returns in glory. Listen to the hope giving words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:28-39. Nothing will separate us from the love of God; not even demons, spirits of our ancestors, sickness, hunger, poverty, hardship, and death will separate us from the love of God. What remains for the Christian is to believe in Christ and what He has promised in His word. Through Christ alone and by His death and resurrection Christians will have victory and hope in the midst of death.

## **Response**

Rev Chanshi Chanda  
Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Kitwe, Zambia

After careful reading of Rev Daka's article, I have created pictures of the issues raised. I have done this by looking at the behaviour people exhibit when death occurs in my culture and others where I have lived. I thank God that Rev Daka could take such a topic into focus for the Church to consider on the African continent. After thoughtful examination of Rev Daka's concern, I have come to agree with him that many teachers of the Bible teach little about this great Christian doctrine for reasons that might be discovered as the ball keeps rolling.

After a somewhat deeper reflection on "hope in the midst of death", I look at it as a strong evangelistic message in a religiously pluralistic society as we have it today. Hope in the midst of death is anchored in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and Bible promises, and teaching it faithfully is as effective as teaching "*receive Jesus Christ as your personal saviour*". It may sound rather strange to embark on a teaching like this and hope to win people for Christ, but the fact of the matter is that death is one of the common denominators on which the various human traditions rest. This means a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a scientist, an atheist, and everyone else is puzzled with this human phenomenon we call death. Well-articulated "hope in the midst of death" as one distinctive in Christianity will set a clear platform for evangelizing the perishing world. There are many strong Christians today who testify to how they got saved as a result of funeral messages because they found the way out of this sinister reality we call death with which many people wrestle.

"Hope in the midst of death" will not only serve as evangelistic, it will also strengthen Christians who do not understand their faith, and it will also challenge us to stay focused on holy living. In short, "*hope*" will evangelize, strengthen, and stimulate for sanctification.

Talking about "hope in the midst of death", we assume that we are talking from the side of the bereaved since he/she is the one expressing some behavioural patterns. True, the level of hope will be exhibited in the mourner. We also need to note that observable behaviour will not

necessarily match the level of hope the mourner has. For example, calmness during loss does not necessarily express hope because this is a personality trait that even a hopeless sinner can express. At the same time, calmness can be a sign of hope. Joy on the other hand cannot be a sign of hope during loss. Loss is real and painful so that expressing joy during loss might be a psychological insensitivity to human feelings. Again, joy can be a sign of hope. Hope in my opinion should be first a mental assurance based on the promises of God rather than an emotional exposition only. The assurance is that when Christ returns the corpse we bury will return to the best life and we shall live together again if we have all walked in the ways of the Lord. It does not matter how sinister the corpse looks, how destroyed they can be, how bad they can look when we bury them, and how badly worms can eat them, the promise from the Bible is that they shall live again by the power of God. *Lack of hope in the midst of death is unbelief and carnality even when it hurts.*

Talking about hope based on the promises of God, below are some passages that challenge the Christians:

1. Those who have experienced God's touch and power know that there is a future for the man of peace when he dies (Psalms 37:37; 49:15; 116:15).
2. Wisdom demands that we understand life from God's design that during death the righteous has a refuge, (Proverbs 14:32), and that death *is a positive* circumstance (Ecclesiastes 7:1-2).
3. The prophets of God have told this and it will come to pass that those who die in peace actually go to rest (Isaiah 57:2) and at the end of the days they will receive inheritance (Daniel 12:13).
4. The good news from the Master over death is that beyond this world righteous people shall receive comfort (Luke 16:25).
5. Our minds should be instructed and reminded of the following:
  - a. That we belong to Christ even in the midst of death. We are not left to the dust no matter the desperate condition of the corpse in the coffin and the graveyard (Romans 14:8).

- b. That death is powerless; it has no sting. We shall not be held perishing in the grave even if our present experience is of the mortal and perishable (1Corinthians 15:51-57).
- c. That it is not in our powers to resurrect; it is the power of God (2 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14) who demonstrated it by raising Christ.
- d. That through a righteous death we are at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:23).

What else can we say about “hope in the midst of death”? As I grow in Christ, I know that each day of my life is a life of calling. The Lord called me to a holy life, now I can hear the Spirit calling me to a beautiful death, a death full of hope for me and for all those who believe: “*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ... they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them*” (Revelation 14:13).

What a mighty topic Rev Daka has brought! Yes, there is hope in the midst of death. Let us not mourn like people who do not understand.

Turning to little technical matters in the paper, I have the following suggestions:

1. I feel the title could have been affirmative rather than interrogative. Something like “*There is Hope in the Midst of Death*” instead of “*Is There Hope in the Midst of Death?*”
2. Three issues in the phrase: “A Paper Towards an African Theology of Hope”. First, I feel the paper is about the theology of death rather than the theology of hope. Hope comes as an element in the theology of death. This can be seen in the reoccurring “theology of death” phrase in the treatment of the article. Second, I feel it should also read “...Toward a Biblical Theology of ...”. I have a bias that there is no African, Indian, or American theology that would fully agree with the Bible. Speaking as an African, pure African theology at times stands in contradiction with the word of God as demonstrated in the last sentence of the second paragraph in Rev Daka’s article. I would not want to elevate the African position as authoritative on the subject of death, but rather the Bible and what it says on death in the African milieu. Thus, I would write “*A Paper Towards a Biblical Theology of Death in the African Context*” instead of African, Indian, or American Theologies. Third, the word

“hope” seems to be open to many interpretations. We may assume we understand that it is hope for the life after death, but that also can be abused. Many people believe in life after death contrary to what the Bible teaches. A little further explanation on the nature of the hope we are looking for would help.

3. The third paragraph has fundamental questions in the search for the theology of death which indeed need to be tackled as the ball keeps rolling: *What is death? What is the origin and cause of death? What happens when people die?* These are real and fundamental questions at least in the African context that need to be treated individually. I am personally facing them as I plant the Church in Southern Democratic Republic of Congo. For greater impact on the understanding of death in Africa, we might need to talk about the nature of the death of Christ to make Christian hope relevant.
4. The article is very good, but it seems to have some sweeping statements that might need attention or clarification when it is in its final written form. For example: the last sentence of the first paragraph on the first page: “...no adequate knowledge...” could read, “a clearly articulated theology of death fosters an adequate knowledge, experience...”
5. The paragraph beginning with: “*Who are the recipients of this honour...*” and the one saying “*Those that are living now are the recipients of honour and respect...*” seem to tackle a different topic outside “hope in the midst of death”. If this could be looked into, we could have more details related to the question of who receives the honour. These two paragraphs might fit well under the question “*Who are the ancestors?*” rather than “*Is there Hope in the Midst of Death?*”

I would wish to thank Rev Daka for “starting the ball rolling” on this crucial issue affecting the Christian faith in the African milieu.

## 18

### **Philosophy of Poverty**

Rev Simeao I Mandlate

Professor, Seminário Nazareno em Mozambique (SNM), Maputo,  
Mozambique

The philosophy of poverty is a philosophy of desperation and an enemy of hope. It makes people do nothing to resolve or to get out of their situation. In my understanding, after observing how we proceed in Africa, not only in the church but also in society, I conclude that the philosophy of poverty reigns in our minds. From philosophy proceeds theology. From our philosophy of poverty, therefore, we follow after a theology of desperation, blaming God and other people for our condition. This paper is written with the aim of calling African Nazarene theologians to reflect on some problems of pastoral theology in Africa and point out some possible solutions. I gave the title, "Philosophy of Poverty," because I consider it to be the main source of the majority of problems the Church is facing here in Africa.

With philosophy of poverty I mean the passive accommodation to the *status quo* of our present situation whether in the Church or in the society where we live, the willingness to remain always the same, the lack of desire to make any effort to change or to remove the obstacles which hinder progress, the lack of vision and lack of the sense of challenge to accomplish something. Our philosophy of life will influence all decisions we make as well as our behaviour. I do not propound to demonstrate whether Africa is poor or not, neither to show whether the Church of the Nazarene in Africa has or does not have the ability to solve all its own problems; but rather I want to try to show that behind whatever we decide to do in this continent, there is the philosophy of poverty which guides our decision-making process. I am addressing our predisposition and trend to believe that we are unable to do anything to solve the problems that afflict the Church in Africa, problems related to training of youth for the ministry in our excellent institutions, the too low annual enrolment in ministerial programmes to match the needs of the Church in the new century, too low numbers of youth willing to engage in the ministry after graduation

because they will be required to work without adequate salary to face living expenses of today's socio-economic reality, the problems and difficulties of getting pastor's children to engage in the ministry, despite the call to ministry, as a result of fear of suffering what they saw their parents pass through preaching without salary, and so on. These problems are real, and can negatively affect the future of the church. They demand our theological reflection to see what the Bible is saying and what contributions other theologians have made.

On the one hand, Moltmann says, "From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatological, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present." Moreover, Moltmann rightly adds, "Where there is hope, faith is strengthened, and kept always moving forward. Hopelessness and despair cannot uphold faith." (Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*). Moltmann's is the theology of progress. On the other hand, the philosophy of poverty is compatible with hopelessness and despair. The philosophy of poverty gives birth to theology of poverty. John Parratt in his analysis and evaluation of African theology says, "The weakness of African theology is that it does not have eschatological outlook. It is concerned about 'today'" (John Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, 217). This kind of theology will point to the problems without pointing to the proposed solutions.

### **How Did God Help the People of Israel Solve Their Problems?**

Since the beginning God has demanded man's active participation for the solution of his own problems. In other words, God does not support the philosophy of poverty. The people of Israel had just departed from the land of slavery of Egypt. They had arrived at the shore of the Red Sea, ready to cross the sea to the other side. They had no boats to help so great a multitude of the people cross the sea. To make the situation worse, the Egyptian army was coming behind them to bring them back to the land of slavery. Moses' option was to pray to God so that God might deliver them from the dilemma. God rejects Moses' attitude and calls him to action. God had already done His part, and was expecting Moses to do his part as well: "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground" (Exodus 14:15,16).

Moses' attitude in this story was of powerlessness and inability for the task, which is the philosophy of weakness or dependency. Moses' weakness was only in his mind. He believed that his weakness was real; therefore he advocated his full dependence on God. But, to my amazement, God rejects that philosophy and tells Moses that he could solve the problem with the simple staff he had in his hand. And as Moses used what he had in his hand, he confirmed the existence of such ability he was not ready to acknowledge.

Another classical example is found in the New Testament:

“One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, ‘Do you want to get well?’ ‘Sir,’ the invalid replied, ‘I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Get up! Pick up your mat and walk!’” (John 5:5-8).

In this example, the invalid had suffered for many years because of the philosophy that the solution of his problems rested with someone else that should pick him up and carry him into the pool. However Jesus challenged this philosophy of inability when he told him to get up, pick up his mat, and walk on his own. The invalid tried and succeeded.

Rev Titos Nzucule told a story of an African hunter who was guiding himself with the philosophy of inability. One day, a Portuguese merchant came to the kraal of the African hunter and asked him to go hunting with him. The merchant had a gun, bullets, truck, and a lamp because the hunting took place during the night. The African hunter went with the merchant. The lights of the vehicle caught the eyes of an animal. It was a gazelle. The hunter took the merchant's gun and killed the animal ...the story continued until the dawn of the day, and the truck was full of big and small animals. They decided to return home. The Portuguese merchant passed by the kraal of the hunter and dropped him and gave him a rabbit while the truck was full of all kinds and sizes of animals. The hunter felt that the merchant had been unfair to him... but the hunter had offered nothing but expertise in this campaign. This is how the philosophy of poverty/dependency works. The hunter had no gun, no ammunition, no lamp despite his capacity to buy all these things since he had herds of many

cows and goats. He had the ability of hunting well but he wanted someone else to make him do it.

All progress we see around the world today has come into existence from the minds of people like us. They started from nothing and ended up with ability to build towers, cities, big sea vessels, big airplanes, et cetera. Until when will the African Church be dependent for its survival? When will the African church begin to think on its own and solve its problems on its own? The Church of the Nazarene in Africa started its existence almost the same time it started in the West. The Church of the Nazarene in Africa celebrates now 95 years of its existence in this continent. If it is unable to stand on its own, then it is abnormal; it is a dwarf.

### **How Can the Church Solve So Many Problems?**

One of the laypersons from one of the new areas in Mozambique said that the most needy person in the Church could give 30,000.00 Meticaís (R10) a year toward the scholarship endowment for the training of pastors for the future. According to Mozambican statistics in the present moment such an amount can produce about 1,950,000,000.00 Meticaís, which is far above the total annual budget of the College in that country. And if such an amount were repeated five times (in the space of five years), the financial problems of the students who are preparing for the ministry in the College might be solved forever. If we had made the same calculations for all our institutions in all of the geographical areas served by our institutions, we would reach the same conclusion that Africa has the ability to solve the problems of training our pastors and leaders for the new century.

Secondly, the family members of the student preparing for the ministry do not help the student to pay his school fees because the family expects no revenue from him after his graduation. Moreover, the graduate will be dependent on his family even after starting to serve the Church because he will be expected to serve the Church free. This is incredible because even in the secular world no soldier is expected to prepare himself militarily and defend the country after training without support. This practice is unbiblical and deserves our theological reflection.

Thirdly, when God chose the Levites to serve the people in the tabernacle and when He told Moses to tell the people that the Levites would not be given heritage in the land because their portion would be the offerings that

the people brought into the tabernacle for the worship of the Lord, the people of Israel, despite their rebellious attitude shown in the desert, and despite the extreme poverty in which they were living, accepted the challenge of supporting the priests and Levites (Leviticus 7:28-38; 10:8-20; Numbers 1:47-54; 3:13; 4:1-49; 8:5-26; 16:41-17:13; 18:1-20; 35:1-8; Deuteronomy 18:1-8).

In the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples had a bag of money from the offerings of the people. This money was enough to support them during their tours back and forth to Jerusalem and Galilee in their ministry. In the New Testament literature, passages abound which teach that the worker is worthy of his salary. From these passages we can conclude assuredly that it is the will of God that all those whom God calls to the ministry should have adequate salary to live with. We do not need to make research in order to see that there is a flagrant difference between what the Word of God teaches and what is practiced in the Church of the Nazarene in the African continent as it relates to the salary of the preacher of the gospel. The concept of tithing should be taught right from the time the church begins to exist, rather than to postpone that for a later time. The local church should be taught to start paying salary to the lay pastor who starts a new church, rather than to wait until the time the church receives a new well-trained pastor.

I hope to have given some proposed solutions, which requires that our philosophy shift from that of poverty towards a philosophy of progress. My hope is that other Nazarene theologians will think with us of practical solutions for pastoral theology so that we can move from desperation to a theology and a practice of progress!

## Response

Rev Friday Ganda  
Mission Coordinator, District Superintendent, Ethiopia

In introducing his topic on “Hope”, Rev Mandlate stresses the philosophy of poverty as the philosophy of desperation and an enemy of hope. He emphasizes that this prevents people both in the society and the Church from doing anything to resolve or to get out of their situation.

As he explains further on, this philosophy is “the main source of the majority of problems the Church is facing here in Africa” (Mandlate:1). He also looks at three other main issues:

- Low annual enrolment in ministerial programmes to match the growth of the Church.
- Low number of youth willing to remain in ministry after graduation because of low pay.
- Difficulties of engaging pastors’ children in the ministry.

I agree with him when he says, “Since the beginning God has demanded man’s participation for the solution of his own problems” (Mandlate:2).

In addition to the points that Rev Mandlate has given in answering the question, “how can the church solve so many problems” (Mandlate:3), I have some thoughts.

I will start by asking a question: Have the leaders been open and honest to help African Christians claim ownership? When we as leaders encourage and guide the African faithful to know that the church belongs to them, I believe they will stand on their feet to do what they can for the survival. What people should give must not be only money. I believe in giving anything that one can find, be it grains, materials, or other kinds of farm products. Physical participation could also be a possibility. This will help our people get involved without feeling discouraged that they must only bring money to support the ministry.

Secondly, I would like to challenge our leadership in Africa (the African) to be positive in the ministerial work. The youth are listening to and watching what we say and do. Whatever we do should be a model for the

youth and our younger children. How can my child want to follow in my footsteps if I am not positive about my work and do not love it? We need faithful leaders who show great support for their church. We are still in the growth process.

Thirdly, my income with other support has helped my child to get what he has; he therefore needs to start building on that. Different churches in different fields and districts are at different levels. Their income may not be the same. The young graduates should be able to understand that, as they come out of the colleges, there is nothing on the plate waiting. They are coming to build on the foundation that has been laid by the present leadership.

I do not want to encourage them to build on ambition which may not give the right guidance. Whatever guidance we give should encourage and help the youth to open up their lives as they humble themselves for the greater opportunities that are there in the Church.

Our theology has continued to show an eschatological outlook. We have preached faith whereby Christians are encouraged to hold fast to the hope which is forward looking and forward moving, and which is also revolutionizing and transforming the present. Poverty, despair, and hopelessness cannot uphold our faith.

Our church has always pointed to the challenges that are facing us and has proposed solutions. Looking at the top priorities of our church at the Regional level, we see:

- a. Disciple Making for Children, Youth and Adults - which leads to the building up of a people with hope in a church they would call theirs for life;
- b. Pastoral Education and Training - which offers help to the needy from within and without in different fields;
- c. Compassion Evangelism - which demonstrates the selfless love and hope of Jesus Christ as seen in the church in Africa responding to the suffering by stretching her arms of compassion to the drought stricken, hungry, and displaced, et cetera.

There is light at the end of the tunnel as we unite together as leaders and theologians to offer hope to the continent.

## Response

Rev Joseph Kisoi Masika  
Lecturer, Department of Religion,  
Africa Nazarene University (ANU), Nairobi, Kenya

The Philosophy of poverty is a very relevant subject to address in the context of the Africa Region or continent. Poverty is a major factor affecting the effective extension of the Kingdom of God in Africa. This subject is not only a major concern in the Church of Nazarene but also for the governments in Africa and the church of God in Africa as a whole. Having observed the Church of the Nazarene, Africa Nazarene School of Extension, and African Nazarene University for several years, I strongly agree with Mandlate when he says that there is:

- Too low annual enrolment in ministerial programmes to match the needs of the church in the new century;<sup>133</sup>
- Too low numbers of youth willing to engage in the ministry after graduation because they will be required to work without adequate salary to face living expenses of today's socio-economic reality; and
- The problems and difficulties of getting pastor's children to engage in the ministry, despite the call to ministry, as a result of fear of suffering what they saw their parents pass through preaching without salary.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> It is regrettable to note that there is no single student studying in ANU who is fully supported financially by his or her local congregations. Many continue to struggle with small needs such as personal effects and a few have been forced to terminate their studies prematurely due to financial challenges. Many in the ANSE programme continue to cry for aid while accusing other people for their lack. On the same note enrolment at ANU in the area of Religion is too low and the future of the department is dim if new strategies of recruiting and financial support are not taken into consideration. The same seems to be the cry of many pastors in the Church of the Nazarene all over Africa and those who seem to have any education continue to grapple for the few paid administrative positions in the church without engaging in real ministry as such. One is left to wonder whether money is the motivating factor.

<sup>134</sup> However, I disagree with him when he fails to deal with the prevailing situation of poverty, despair, and resignation without bearing in mind the context in which the Church of Nazarene exists. To do so is to be unfair to the Church in Africa and unbalanced, and the

While the above is the true picture of the situation of the Church of the Nazarene in the Africa Region, we are left to wonder what the contributing factors are and what the possible alternatives are to avert this situation. While the African Christians should be addressing themselves as to how they can come out of poverty, the Western Christians should be asking themselves what their ministry or responsibility is to their African brothers.

Speaking to many people in regard to poverty and its effects on the Church of the Nazarene in the Africa Region, the majority echoed the words of J N K Mugambi who states:

“...Africa is faced with deep crises. It is faced with a food deficit; it is the most hungry continent in the world. It is faced with a debt crisis; next to South America it is the most indebted continent. It has the highest level of illiteracy in the world and half of the world’s refugees are Africans.”<sup>135</sup>

To add to the words of Mugambi, Africa today is facing the following challenges: economic crisis, debt crisis, population crisis, technological crisis, knowledge crisis; all these factors have a major effect on the Church of the Nazarene in the Africa Region in regard to the extension of the Kingdom of God on earth.<sup>136</sup> I strongly feel that any criticism that is to be

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chances of getting a solution for the problem are slim for the context or background in Africa has a bearing in the economic performance of the Church. It is not inconsistent with the truth of the Bible for the churches and people endowed with riches to help struggling churches and individuals (see in the Bible where Paul sends relief to struggling churches from other churches). This can be a prime biblical example to us that it is consistent with biblical truth for others in the body of Christ to help the Church in Africa in her struggles.

<sup>135</sup> J N K Migambi, *The Future of the church and the church of the future in Africa* in *The Church of Africa Toward a Theology of Reconstruction*, by Jose B. Chipenda, Andre Karamaga, J N K Mugambi and C K Omari (eds). (Nairobi: Motif Creative Arts Ltd, 1990), page 29.

<sup>136</sup> However, few of those I interviewed cited the syndrome of dependency, lack of teaching in the area of stewardship, and mismanagement of funds as major factors contributing to the poor state of affairs in the Church of Nazarene disregarding the context of the church in Africa. In addition to these factors, I see another factor contributing to this: our target audience. The Church of the Nazarene has continued to target the poorest of the poor in the society following the principles of John Wesley. Most of the Nazarene Churches target the slum dwellers and rarely do we target the upper and middle economic/professional people who can support the church (especially the church in East Africa). Finally, the Church of Nazarene is a young movement in some African Zones: most movements that are young begin their rising from the lower economic class. To be specific the church is young in

directed towards the Church of the Nazarene in Africa should be done in the light of this context/background and not in isolation, if we are to be fair.<sup>137</sup>

Rising from such a terrible background, the people of Africa are asking, how can we be expected to support the church locally and internationally? Many would say it is unthinkable and unkind to hold the African Christians (Nazarenes) accountable for the situation of poverty in which the Church finds herself today. Jesus said that the poor will always be with us and at times we may have to ask ourselves what our ministry is to the poor and not why they are poor. I am not saying that we should resign in despair and fail to do something about our situation, but I do suggest that some situations are imposed on us by natural and geographical factors that are beyond our control such as epidemics, drought, floods and the like.

Having observed the Church of the Nazarene in some parts of Africa for several years, I do realize that the challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene are not unique to Nazarenes only, but are characteristic of the whole church of God in Africa. But, as it has been affirmed by Mandlate and numerous other scholars, in Africa today we are in great need of the theology of hope. Despite all the very demoralizing and frustrating propaganda which we are faced with, tomorrow need not be like yesterday. Today, in faith we can commit ourselves to work for a better tomorrow, knowing that with God nothing is impossible. We dare affirm that since the God we worship is the creator and the director of all human history, tomorrow need not be like yesterday. In God's plan, there is nothing special about being powerful or being powerless. The most powerful can lose their power, and the powerless can be empowered by God's will. But this is possible only if love and hope are continually cemented by faith.

As a matter of fact, the churches in Africa are challenged by the scriptures to continually act as God's witness on earth in the name of Jesus of

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terms of leadership and in other areas in terms of time.

<sup>137</sup> As we criticize the Church of Nazarene in Africa, we should bear in mind that Africa South of Sahara, with its population of 450 million, enjoys a gross domestic product of a meager 135 billion dollars, equal to that of Belgium with its 10 million inhabitants. I draw this example because the Church of Nazarene Africa Region is found within this context (Africa). One is left to wonder whether these are some of the factors leading chronic dependency and bankruptcy in the Church of Nazarene and others in Africa.

Nazareth, whom we affirm to be Christ. Each Christian is challenged to act upon this challenge and endeavour to make it a reality. Do we witness with despair, or with hope? There is no use of witnessing without hope. In fact, if we witness with despair, we shall do greater damage because we may demoralize even those who had a little hope. So we must witness with hope for where there is no hope in the future, there is no power in the present. Hope is a psychological necessity for the healthy maintenance of the human community and the individual, and thus we must continue to minister with hope. Without hope life cannot be sustained. Hope rises above hard economic times. If you hope, you will inspire another to hope, and then others will follow. One good characteristic of hope is that it is forward looking and forward moving and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. I agree with Moltmann when he says: "Hope finds in Christ not only consolation in suffering, but also the protest of the divine promise against suffering. Hope is not content with things as they are in the present but strives to transform the reality and keep it in a state of change". In the light of this I strongly believe that things can be different and that ways and strategies need to be designed to change the present reality of poverty into what things can be in the future.

I hope that this discussion will stimulate further research, reflection, and discussion that will help bring about a solution to one of the church's most pressing problems: poverty. As Mandlate has echoed the words of John Parratt, "The weakness of African theology is that it does not have an eschatological outlook... This kind of theology will point to the problems without pointing to the proposed solutions." I thus propose that a team begin to work on possible solutions to avert the prevailing problem of poverty and dependency syndrome lest we continue to propagate the same kind of theology that we are seeking to do away with.

As a way forward I offer the following suggestions as part of the solution to the problem:

1) Management

The churches will need to review their management procedures in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness and productivity. The resources to be managed include personnel, finances, assets, time, donations, and grants in money and in kind.

2) Teaching on Stewardship

Most pastors, church staff, and lay leaders are both inadequately trained and emotionally unprepared for communicating about and actually raising the kind of money required to lead a church toward the fulfilment of its vision. There is a great need on the continent of Africa to teach Christians to be financially generous with God and their church. The local churches should organize workshops, symposia, seminars, and development education programmes on stewardship and tithing which should also be taught and preached as a biblical principle of giving. The heart of stewardship, which is total commitment, should be taught.

### 3) Establishment of Income Generating Projects

The church also needs to establish some income generating-projects such as schools, guesthouses, and rental houses and to open some businesses such as bookshops and commercial printing presses to help with support.

## 19

### **Lessons From the History of Higher Education in the Church of the Nazarene**

Rodney L Reed  
Chair, Department of Religion,  
Africa Nazarene University (ANU), Nairobi, Kenya

#### **Introduction**

As the Church of the Nazarene International approaches its centennial celebration it is appropriate—no, it is prudent—to reflect on our rich heritage to see what we can learn from it. As the saying goes, “If we do not learn from our past, we are doomed to repeat it.” And so, ironic as it may seem, I propose this paper, the subject of which is the past to be presented in the “Hope” section of this conference, for it is my conviction that we will only find direction for where we are going when we know where we have been. Thus, in the following pages, I want to examine briefly the history of higher education in the Church of the Nazarene in the United States and highlight four lessons we can learn by looking back at our history.

#### **Early Expansion**

Years before the union of the main parent bodies of the Church of the Nazarene in 1908 at Pilot Point, Texas, those parent bodies were already engaged in the process of educating their young and training persons for ministry. In 1899, the holiness people of the “old Southwestern” United States, pulled together some money, secured some land, and put up a few simple buildings in the holiness town of Peniel, Texas and Texas Holiness University opened for business that September with twenty seven students enrolled. The very next year, key leaders of the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America on the east coast of the United States founded the Pentecostal Collegiate Institute. Down in Nashville, Tennessee, under the leadership of J O McClurkan, the Literary and Bible Training Institute for Christian Workers was established in 1901. The following year, Phineas Bresee, after the determined perseverance of some key laywomen, consented to the establishment of the Pacific Bible College in Los Angeles, California. Thus, within the span of four years and completely independent

of each other, each of the four main parent bodies of the Church of the Nazarene had felt the need to educate their young and to train people for ministry in an environment that reflected the values and teaching of the Holiness tradition.

Across the United States (US), holiness folk who would one day become or already were Nazarenes were establishing institutions for higher education.

- 1900 Arkansas Holiness University in Vilonia, Arkansas
- 1905 Kansas Holiness College in Hutchinson, Kansas
- 1905 Central Holiness University, originally located at Pilot Point, Texas
- 1907 Illinois Holiness University in Georgetown, Illinois
- 1909 Shingler Holiness College in Donaldson, Georgia
- 1909 Oklahoma Holiness College, in Bethany, Oklahoma
- 1913 Idaho-Oregon Holiness School in Nampa, Idaho

In just fourteen years at least twelve educational institutions were established that would eventually claim the allegiance of the Church of the Nazarene. The Nazarene predisposition toward education soon found its way here to Africa where we find Nazarenes launching a Bible school in the recently founded hospital at Pigg's Peak, Swaziland in 1920 which would eventually move to Siteki and become Swaziland Nazarene Bible College (now Nazarene College of Theology).

All of these and others that were to follow indicate the strong commitment of the Church of the Nazarene to higher education. If we were to examine these schools more carefully, we would find stories of vision, sacrifice, and conviction. We would find people who were willing to sell or mortgage their own properties in order to establish or further the educational enterprise of the Church. All of this highlights the commitment of the Church to higher education. This leads us to our first lesson from the history of higher education in the Church of the Nazarene:

**Lesson #1: From the very beginning, the Church of the Nazarene has believed that educational preparation is**

**essential to effective ministry and to the Christian life.**

**Competition and Consolidation**

However, it is perhaps the case that the young denomination's passion for education outpaced its ability to adequately support it. For we soon find these fledgling schools struggling financially (one actually declaring bankruptcy), with inadequate student enrolments, facilities and resources, and competing with one another for survival.

As early as its first General Assembly in Pilot Point, Texas the church recognized the need to coordinate and harmonize its educational endeavours. At that historic assembly, an education committee urged the establishment of a Board of Education, which would conduct that work. By 1911 we find E P Ellyson, the third General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene and president and faculty member of several of the church's schools, writing to his fellow General Superintendent, Hiram Reynolds, about "a detailed plan which he hoped would curb institutional rivalries, promote the wise investment of available resources, and encourage higher academic standards."<sup>138</sup>

Eventually it was realized that the church could not adequately support all the institutions that claimed her allegiance and a policy was implemented in which the church would officially sponsor and seek to develop only six of those schools in the United States. Consequently, some schools merged, others were absorbed by larger ones, and others tried to maintain themselves on an independent basis. But eventually, only those that submitted themselves to the authority and direction of the church, and thereby found official support from the denomination, survived and even then often not without heroic struggles.<sup>139</sup> This brings us to the second and third lessons from our history:

**Lesson #2: The Church of the Nazarene's educational aims will always be better served when a spirit of cooperation exists between its educational providers, rather than a spirit of competition.**

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<sup>138</sup> Smith, p. 258.

<sup>139</sup> This too finds demonstration in the history of Nazarene theological education in Africa with the merger of the three schools in Central Africa to form Nazarene Theological College of Central Africa.

Perhaps a certain amount of fair competition could be good even for educational providers, but we must always keep in mind that we are all on the same team, working together for a common goal: the fulfilment of the Great Commission mandate. Our real “competitor” is the Enemy of our souls. If we compete, rather than cooperate with each other, we play into his hands.

Even the solution that was eventually arrived at to curtail the “institutional rivalry” of which Ellyson spoke was only partially successful. That solution was for each school in the United States to draw its support and recruit its students from a designated territory around that school and to avoid at all costs drawing support or recruiting students from another school’s “turf”. This carving up of the United States into educational zones or regions may have mitigated much of the direct competition, but it did little to promote cooperation. Only in recent years have our sister colleges and universities in the United States begun to seriously work together to accomplish their common purposes.

We, in Africa, have a chance to do better. While several of our educational providers have been in existence for many years, the recent rapid growth of the church on our continent provides us with an excellent opportunity to begin building from the ground floor an educational delivery system for the whole of Africa that features a common vision and shared resources, rather than a “survival of the fittest” mentality in which we are all fighting for a bigger piece of the “pie.” In Africa, we say, “I am because we are.” This community-based philosophy of life we must apply to our educational endeavours and shun the individualistic “private property” model that we have seen develop in America.

We have an opportunity for nothing short of an integrated, coordinated educational delivery system for the whole region in which each component fulfils its role with the support and aid of all the other components—a role which is part of an overall strategic plan to fulfil the Great Commission.

Where is that integration, coordination, and strategic planning to come from? This is our third lesson from our history:

**Lesson #3: The Church of the Nazarene recognizes the need for a strong agency that will advocate, coordinate, and harmonize our educational endeavours and**

**develop and strategically deploy our educational resources.**

That was why the original General Board of Education of the Church of the Nazarene was established in 1911. It is why the present International Board of Education was established in 1989. And it is why the Office of the Regional Educational Coordinator was established in 1983. We give thanks to God for the direction and guidance given to us from the office of the International Board of Education and our Regional Education Coordinator. And we can envision in the future educational leaders across the region coming together under the auspices of these two offices to dream, plan and envision just what such an integrated, coordinated, educational delivery system might look like in our setting.

Conforming to such a model will involve change. Change is always difficult and at times painful. Fortunately, here in Africa, we are already well on the way toward this model. Furthermore, our final lesson from the history of our educational endeavours provides us with additional hope because...

**Lesson #4: The Church of the Nazarene's educational providers have shown a consistent willingness to change with the times or to shift paradigms in order to meet new needs and challenges.**

Several of the schools mentioned above began as secondary schools and then later added Bible school training. Some of these and others that began as Bible schools and colleges soon aspired to be degree granting liberal arts institutions because it was felt that the laity as well as the clergy deserved a full-orbed yet holiness education. A key moment in this particular paradigm shift came when James B Chapman, later destined to be a long-time General Superintendent, presented his 1920 address as president of the General Board of Education. Timothy L Smith summarizes Chapman's address:

Only an educated ministry could conserve and spread the Wesleyan gospel, Chapman declared. Holiness theological seminaries were not enough, however, for they got men too late to mold them. Nor would a strong Bible school and ministerial training institute provide future pastors and foreign

missionaries with the solid preparation in arts and letters necessary for Christian leadership. The Nazarenes must concentrate instead on building substantial liberal arts colleges, he said, and be willing to spend money on the gymnasiums and laboratories which some thought quite unnecessary for the training of ministers.<sup>140</sup>

Ironically, decades after all the original Bible colleges had become liberal arts colleges, the church recognized the need for a Bible school in the United States and established one in Colorado Springs, Colorado (1967). The establishment of a graduate-level theological seminary, the offering of theological education by extension, the programmes at our liberal arts universities for non-traditional students, and non-traditional programmes (i.e., night classes or non-residential degree programmes) and lately the introduction of internet-based “education online” are all examples of the willingness and creativity of our Nazarene educational providers around the world to “think outside the box” and try something new in order to meet the demands of new times and places.

As we, in Africa, look to the future, we, too, must be as willing and creative in our approach to meeting the educational needs of our people. We cannot afford to stagnate! We must adapt! Though the gospel never changes, the ways and means by which we communicate it and instil the knowledge of it in the minds and hearts of our people must forever be changing or we will fail in our mission.<sup>141</sup>

## Conclusion

Paul Bassett, in his seminal work as part of the second volume of the *Exploring Christian Holiness* series, likens the manner in which we understand the significance of our Christian history to the manner in which the rower of a small rowboat who sits facing rearward, steers a straight course. The rower “chooses some landmark behind the boat and keeps

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<sup>140</sup> Smith, p. 324.

<sup>141</sup> Though I don’t know personally, I suspect the merging of the three theological schools in South Africa into the one, Nazarene Theological College, is an example of what I am referring to here. For in the post-Apartheid era such a redundancy of schools was, I am guessing, not only seen as inefficient, but discriminatory. Thus, a new paradigm of integration was called for.

aligned with it as he proceeds toward his destination.”<sup>142</sup> I believe that if we keep these four “landmarks” from our past in view, we will steer a straight course toward our God-intended destination.

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<sup>142</sup> Paul Merritt Bassett and William D Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness, Volume Two: The Historical Development* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985), page 20.

## Response

Rev Collen S Magagula  
Principal, Nazarene College of Theology (NCT), Swaziland

Reed's essay comes as a long awaited challenge for us to take a better look at ourselves as educational providers in Africa. We are challenged to take a more realistic view of both our successes and failures. He achieves this by highlighting selected incidents in the life of the North American segment of our church. He draws informative conclusions which serve as principles, and landmarks that can be ignored only at our own peril as institutions of higher learning. The lessons he arrives at are worth repeating here and they are as follows:

- Lesson # 1: From the very beginning, the Church of the Nazarene has believed that educational preparation is essential to effective ministry and to the Christian life.
- Lesson # 2: The Church of the Nazarene's educational aims will always be better served when a spirit of cooperation exists between its educational providers, rather than a spirit of competition.
- Lesson # 3: The Church of the Nazarene recognizes the need for a strong agency that will advocate, coordinate, develop, and strategically deploy our educational resources.
- Lesson # 4: The Church of the Nazarene's educational providers have shown a consistent willingness to change with the times or to shift paradigms in order to meet new needs and challenges.

Understanding our history will not only give direction for where we are going but will sensitise us of our present status - hence, leading to an appreciation of our identity. Such an identity lies in the recognition of our cultural diversity which enriches the African tapestry. Africa has experienced a lot of development in all spheres of life, of which education played a vital role. There were also numerous harsh realities which to a certain extent shaped the world-views of our people. The saying is true, 'once bitten...twice shy'. The continent has survived colonialism and its ravaging effects, apartheid and the hatred it breeds as well as economic deprivation despite the abundance of vast natural resources. There have

been wars and persistent civil disorders, hunger and malnutrition, natural disasters, as well as diseases that culminate in the loss of life. Lesson # 4 is a recognition of the need for change thus keeping our education providers on the sharp edge of effectiveness.

The Church of the Nazarene has invested huge sums of money and continues to do so towards the professional preparation of men and women for various roles of ministry. Missionaries have done a commendable job on this continent and the ball is now in the court of the indigenous people. The question that comes to mind is: Has Africa learnt anything from her rich heritage? Are we now free of the “think and do for us” syndrome? There is the need to address the problem of a brain-drain from the church into the secular world. We hope the opportunity is abundant for those already trained to exercise their expertise and leadership skills to the highest structural level of the church (local, district, field, regional and even general). This can compliment our efforts as educational providers!

I fully concur with Reed’s lessons #2 and #3 as these are fully in line with the structure and direction education is taking on the continent. While there is room for development, ANCA (Association of Nazarene Colleges in Africa) has been the foundation for the realization of the African dream and NES (Nazarene Education Services) has played the pivotal role of stirring all the education providers to realise their potential. ANCA has brought together at various times all the stakeholders. This has enabled them to get to know one another and foster a spirit of cooperation and sharing of ideas. This has been the beginning of greater things, as this will later develop into an easier exchange of faculty, students, and other resources.

As Reed has drawn valuable information from the history of our counterparts in the West, it will be a good thing if those same concepts were to be identified from the immediate history of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa. Our history will thus need to be well documented in such a way that it will help us avoid repeating some of our errors. We need to involve everyone in doing this (especially at the grassroots level) in order for our education to be meaningful and thus avoid a situation of “us-and-them” between the different segments of the church and the educational providers. The lessons identified in the essay will help us to remain rooted in a solid foundation which will help us to cope with the times while remaining unshaken.

## 20

### **When the Bull Stops Bellowing: Hope for African Theologians and Educators of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa**

Rev Patrick Thomas

Principal, Nazarene Theological College (NTC), Muldersdrift, South Africa

The proverbial world that is a village has never rung truer than it does in this, the twenty-first century. Technology has made possible the dissemination of information and ideas at a very rapid rate to a vast number of people and to a great number of countries. As a result, a vast array of information is readily at hand and has, sort of, joined the world together even though it is still divided by national borders and oceans.

The Church of the Nazarene has not been exempt from this phenomenon. We are all aware of the extent to which globalisation has affected our lives; whether we admit it or not. It is, however, our response to globalisation as theologians and educators of the Church that is of cardinal importance, and that has occasioned this essay. Globalisation tends to swallow the weak and timid, drowning their voices until, too tired of not being heard, they fall silent and follow the direction of the powerful. This phenomenon is evident all over the world and African theologians and educators risk falling into the same trap. We are like bulls; strong, courageous and filled with the same power of the God who saves all mankind. Yet we are falling silent because we perceive that we are not heard. The African bulls of the Church of the Nazarene dare not stop bellowing because if we do, hope in our contribution to the theology of Holiness will slowly fade. The aim of this essay is to encourage theologians and educators to contribute to theological debates in the Church of the Nazarene, as well as to share insights into theological education from an African perspective.

I believe that globalisation has impacted the way we do theology and education in the Church in at least three ways. (1) It is now "easier" to communicate with theologians and educators across continents via electronic mail. This enables greater familiarity among all concerned and creates a greater awareness of the conditions (social, economic, and

political) under which we all find ourselves. (2) There is the possibility of a uniform level of instruction that could be maintained on a global scale. This would enable students and faculty from different world areas of the Church to transfer and study anywhere else, bearing in mind, of course, the monetary expenses involved in such an exercise. (3) Of major importance is the potential that exists for mutual sharing of information and, specifically, ideas that could contribute significantly to the soundness of holiness theology and the effectiveness of education done by the Church of the Nazarene as a global role-player.

The Church of the Nazarene, with its broadest base of theologians and educational structures and support being in the United States, has the responsibility of sharing, as it is able to, with those who have fewer resources and who would, undoubtedly, benefit from such sharing. However, it is at this point where a plea for caution and consideration would be in order. I once attended a conference of South African theologians where the speaker related the following story: He started by relating an old South African saying that declares, "education does not bite". This saying serves as an encouragement to young people not to be afraid to learn, as education can only benefit those who have it. However, he wondered why the saying should be stated in this way. Does education bite, and how would it do so? It was only when he was much older, and educated himself, that he finally grasped the meaning of the old saying. Education does bite in the sense that it has the potential to make those who have the privilege of possessing it arrogant and haughty. The plea is from my heart and I sincerely hope that it would not be construed as presumptuous or arrogant; that is not the intent. I will start by saying that I am of the firm conviction that there are no hierarchies as far as human life is concerned. But, the fact that the Church of the Nazarene's resources are in the United States, opens the door to conceptions that only the United States has something to contribute as far as theology education is concerned, and in that sense, "education will bite". We will feel dwarfed and be tempted to fall silent. Now, it is true – and acknowledged – that the US constituent of the Church has, for many years, provided resources of all kinds to other world areas, and we are grateful. But, it is time that we as Africans begin to contribute. I am not contending that we have *never* contributed; I am suggesting that we work *proactively and together with* our US, English, Australian, Philippine, Korean, and European

counterparts. Every group, irrespective of their origin in the world, must make use of every opportunity to make valid contributions to the process of education in the global village of the Church of the Nazarene.

Here is the dilemma: I would love to contribute to this process; but I am African. It is not an apology; I am *proud* to be African. The problem, however, is that to the uninitiated, “Africa” conjures up images of wild animals and people parading around dressed in skins. When they are not killing each other in civil wars, they are dying of starvation or AIDS. When not being drowned by floods, they are fried by a merciless sun beating on them from “wide African skies”. They live in mud huts and travel on the backs of elephants or on ox carts. I can go on and on about what Africans are perceived to be but I think the picture is clear. The truth of the matter is that because of these perceptions we are tempted to believe that our worthiness as humans is diminished. And when this happens we fall ever so silent until our mighty voices are no longer heard. The fact that we are African does not mean that we have nothing to contribute to the rest of the world – even if all of us *did* live in mud huts.

Let us bellow loudly; we are just now starting on the difficult journey of reclaiming our identity and selling ourselves to the world. Those who are familiar with the South African president Mr Thabo Mbeki’s “African Renaissance” initiative will know what is being referred to here. The “Renaissance” is criticized as an orchestrated initiative, and can therefore not be a true revival such as that which occurred spontaneously in Europe during the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. That may be true, but for Africans it becomes a *conscious* effort at returning, at least in some way, to the glory of our ancestors in Egypt and Ethiopia. We do not know exactly what happened between then and now but admit that we have a long way to becoming what we once were. We therefore ask you as African theologians and educators in the Church of the Nazarene to raise your voices and bellow. The baggage we bring along with us is heavy – we *expect* that our views will be considered primitive or inferior but let us bellow anyway.

Coupled with our emerging identity is our resolve to operate in our own right as Africans. We make no bones about the fact that we view our world through uniquely African eyes; our ideas are uniquely African, and our problems are uniquely African. What this means is that we all construct

our realities differently, and African uniqueness is not necessarily irrelevant to global issues. It is important, therefore, that we see and report on our world from *our* perspective and not be forced into imitating Europe or America. When doing theology and educating, one always starts from where one is, with the result that what may be totally irrational to one, may be completely rational to another – it depends on the context. The problems of AIDS and poverty are part of the African context. Starting where one is means that God has to be made relevant to people who are suffering as a result of these problems, and that, in dealing with these and a host of other issues, there can be no denial of the realities. So, when we do theology and address what to others may appear irrational or “silly questions”, it may be that we are just being African. Bellow for all you’re worth.

We are Christian *and* African. Let us be proudly so in doing theology and educating. For when the bull stops bellowing the silence is deafening and our hope for a truly relevant African Church of the Nazarene fades into the shadows.

## Response

Dr Leah Marangu

Vice-Chancellor, Africa Nazarene University (ANU), Nairobi, Kenya

I agree with Rev Thomas that globalisation can swallow us and make us timid and drown our voices until, too tired of not being heard, we fall silent. In this respect, we need to ask ourselves; if we are partners in this global village, do our partners consider the issue of individual differences within a “village”? How does a village treat a toddler, a child, a teenager, a young adult in a village setting? We need to ask ourselves other questions as well: In this “global village” at what stage of development are we? How long do we perceive ourselves to stay in that stage of development? What kind of nutritional diets do we need to consume so that proper development will take place that enables us to be of equal stature with other global village players? We need to know that the diet of a toddler is different from that of a five year old and that of a young adult. Let us analyse carefully and thoroughly our developmental needs. This will enable us to equate ourselves with other bulls in the global village so that when we bellow, our voices will not be drowned.

Rev Thomas is right in saying that we are like a bull strong, courageous, and filled with the same power of the God who saves all mankind. Yet we are falling silent. If the reason, as he puts it, is because we are not being heard, we need to ask ourselves the question why we are not being heard. When children talk to us through crying, we hear the language even more clearly than some of the words they say when they are mature enough to talk. How have we communicated our messages that we are not being heard? If we must continue to bellow, we must choose the tune that identifies our bellow so that we may be heard.

I agree with Rev Thomas that globalisation has impacted the way we do theology and education in the Church and he is citing at least three ways. The first one is easier communication via electronic mail. While this is true, one question that comes to my mind is, what percent of our population is impacted by this technology? How do those who have access to this technology share the knowledge gained with those who have not? Is this technology widening the gaps within the African village between the haves and the have-nots? How do we prepare our population to go out and share

with those who do not have this opportunity? Secondly, Rev Thomas is addressing the issue of having the possibility of a uniform level of instruction that could be maintained on a global scale. While that is true, I caution that there is a possibility of individuals ignoring diversity of cultures, levels of living, and many other factors that, if ignored, could result in cultural trauma and lack of initiatives and development. We need to identify diversity and embrace those diversities among us. Thirdly, Rev Thomas indicates that it is now easier to share information that could contribute to soundness of holiness theology and the effectiveness of education done by the Church of the Nazarene as a global role player. While I agree with him, I have my concerns that those who have access to this information, those who are imparting it, as well as those adopting it from one global village corner to another, must consider the different geographical and environmental conditions that the information must be subjected to so that it can be interpreted and interpolated to suit the local situations.

Rev Thomas addressed the issue of the Church resources base being in the USA. While that is the case and while it is human to share the resources others have, we need to also ask the question what our responsibility is in receiving these gifts. Is it our responsibility to receive the gifts so as to give us strength to produce ours that will make it possible to also share them in 10 years to come, or must we be expecting to be given those resources in 20 years to come? What is the target date that we must set for ourselves to be givers of services to the needy? We need to create our own strategy that will ensure that this receiving of gifts does not last forever.

On the issue that education does not bite, I need to say that in order for our people to embrace a true transformation that will give them humility, there is need to have our African and may I say Nazarene Church leaders to live by example. I am reminded here of one incident that happened in Congo many years ago where a church minister (a missionary) shared the bread during the holy communion and the congregation could not understand why they shared bread only during the holy communion but could not share it after church at this missionary's home. Does it mean that sharing is confined only **inside** the Church and not extended **outside** the Church? What about the other facets of our lives? Do we tend to categorize jobs and people we associate with and jobs and roles we perform in our Churches and communities?

I am not sure if I understand Rev Thomas as saying that the Church hierarchy is created by material possession. If that is the case, then it is very unfortunate. What we need to teach our people is to experience self worth. You may have much. Yet the more you get the more dissatisfied you may become. We thank God for those brothers and sisters in the Church in the USA who share, not because they have enough, but because God has created in them the heart of caring and willingness to share with others the little or much they have. Likewise, let us stop talking about how little we have, but talk about how much we have to share with others like the widow in the Bible who shared her little flour with prophet Elijah. Yes indeed! It is time for us Africans to start sharing the little we have and God will bless us. What will drown us will come from within us more than from without. If within us we are confident that our contribution matters, then it does not matter how little we contribute towards helping others. We need to ask ourselves what measure we use to compare our worth. I believe that if we value our possessions as God given, then even with our mud huts, we will create a different image of ourselves. By so doing we will stop belittling what we are and adopt a positive image of ourselves.

I agree with Rev Thomas that we need to bellow loudly but at the same time, we need to ask ourselves: “how shall we bellow?” When we bellow, what voice do we transmit? Are we confident of our voices or are we already starting with the assumptions that our voices will be considered primitive or inferior? If that is where we are starting from, then I say, let us pause and gather courage and confidence, then bellow.

When we look at other nations such as China and Japan today, we see that they are bellowing their own way. Although for a long time their technologies were considered inferior, they knew that they had to bellow their own tunes. That is why we are witnessing today their technologies having dominated the global market. We need to ask ourselves why are the Chinese and Japanese not viewed as primitive when they approach their economies in unique ways that meet their needs. We need to convince ourselves that we are self-worthy and that our methods of doing things and our lifestyles are not primitive. To me, a primitive way of life is that which does not embrace rational behaviour and it is not limited to “Africanism”.

## **Response**

Rev Errol E Temanie

Pastor, Promosa Church of the Nazarene, South Africa

To begin with, a word of gratitude to Rev Thomas for the spirited exhortation to African theologians and educators in general and Nazarenes in particular is in order. The exhortation to African theologians and educators is twofold: to begin writing and publishing theological literature and for those who have already begun without much help and success to not stop writing and speaking. It comes at a most opportune time, as the current century is aptly dubbed the *African Century*. To begin, there are a number of pertinent observations arising from the paper that I would like to turn our attention to. Then I would like to address a few critical remarks on the essay.

The first observation relates to the *spirit* or *tenor* of the essay. Rev Thomas (:1, 2) expresses a concern that this may be misinterpreted. He pleads for “caution and consideration” in addition “The plea is from my heart and I sincerely hope that it would not be construed as presumptuous or arrogant; that is not the intent”. It is a genuine concern for a number of reasons: in communication it is not always what you say that is important but rather how you say what needs to be said without being offensive to anyone and yet influence the very party to whom you address yourself. The nature of his plea is sensitive. He does not want to come across as unappreciative to the role that has been played by missionaries in general and the Church of the Nazarene in America, in particular. This is not to bite the hand that feeds you or has fed you or still needs to feed you in the future. Then another reason why it is important for him to be understood in the correct spirit, and perhaps this is his most important concern, is the unity of the Church. It is accepted that though there may be many different (American, Asian, African, etc.) branches of the Church of the Nazarene, in the end the church is ONE. It is true that the spirit of the essay oscillates between serious and urgent pleas to confrontation. There is (:2) the plea that if and when African theologians and educators are given a chance it will be noticed that they have something valuable to contribute to augment theology. Then there is the almost sarcastic confrontation (:2) of the typical negative perception and viewpoint of an African by the

“uninitiated”. In this case the main culprits have to be Western Europe and Northern America however it is not limited to these geographical areas only. It is sad to say but there are many Africans who have the same mindset of the continent. Rev Thomas is very alert in pointing out that such a mindset is dangerous for the community of the Church and for Africans themselves. It has a debilitating effect and prevents African theologians from believing that the same power of God’s Spirit is operational in them as in any other child of God.

The second observation is the call for *collaboration* or *partnerships* between theologians of different geographical areas in the world. Rev Thomas states, “...I am suggesting that we work proactively and together with our US, English, Australian, Philippine, Korean and European counterparts”. The partnership must not be unequal nor must the approach be active from one side and passive from the other. To put it differently, Africa will have to be clear on what the items on the agenda for discussion must be and to initiate research in those areas using the advantage they have with the brothers and sisters across the world. This is helpful for Africans do not need to pity themselves and wait to be invited to relate the African experience only. Africans can and must host their own conferences such as this one and articulate very eloquently their spiritual insight and knowledge of the things of God Almighty.

The third observation has to do with *self-belief in the work of salvation God wrought*. Africans must not wait for others to say, “Hey I think you have something to contribute,” rather Africans must know that they have something to contribute. The negative stereotype of what an African is should be avoided at all times. It has to be understood that to be African is to be human. There are differences between the peoples of the world. Those differences are facts and facts are not to be ignored. The fact of the matter is that even between Africans from Malawi and Africans from South Africa, for instance, there are serious differences e.g. accent, skin colour, dress, and language. However these are differences on the surface. What is much more important to grasp is that “in Christ” there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free man, male nor female, no alien or stranger but we are all children of the living God. There is only one Lord and Spirit that indwells all of us (Galatians 3:26-29, 4:6-7, Ephesians 2:14-16, 19).<sup>1</sup> After

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture reference from the Good News Bible: Today’s English Version

the Apostle Peter arrived at the home of Cornelius (different population group than Peter) to preach the good news of the kingdom, and the latter subsequently repented, the former announced, "...I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. Those who worship him and do what is right are acceptable to him, no matter what race they belong to" (Acts 10:34, 35). Later when Peter was questioned on why the Gentiles also received the Holy Spirit, his response was simple yet forceful, "These people have received the Holy Spirit, just as we also did. Can anyone then stop them from being baptized with water" (Acts 10:47). It will thus appear that as African theologians and educators these are the verses we need to remind ourselves of.

The fourth observation is the sober **reality** of the task at hand. Rev Thomas (:2) states "...admit that we have a long way to becoming what we once were" and also "The baggage we bring along with us is heavy". In this sentence he not only refers to the daunting task at hand but also supplies an example of Africa's former glory in Ethiopia and Egypt. Rev Thomas gives the example through design with the anticipation that it will serve as a stimulus for the task at hand. The task is also made more difficult when it is considered that Africa lacks the necessary infrastructure, financial, logistical, and technological resources. This is where the assistance of the world family of Nazarenes becomes pivotal.

The fifth observation is a **warning** or a **threat**. The choice for theologians and educators of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa is a simple one: to be heard or not to be heard with the resultant loss of not "augmenting theology" and an African church that is "irrelevant". Rev Thomas states "The African bulls of the Church of the Nazarene dare not stop bellowing because if we do, hope in our contribution to the theology of Holiness will slowly fade". In view of the consequences being so severe for the African church the unparalleled selection for African theologians and educators is "...to raise your voices and bellow..." or "let us bellow anyway" or still "Bellow for all you're worth".

The sixth observation is when Rev Thomas helps us to understand **how** theology and education is done in Africa. He states that the starting point has to be where you are in your given history. This is theology in context – Africa. The world and all the phenomena including Scripture must be looked at "**uniquely**" from and through African eyes.

After having observed what is most obvious to many of us allow me to share some critical comments. It is assumed that no response will be accurate without some critical comment. Let me not be a disappointment.

In speaking about the great blessing of new technology like computers, emails and the Internet, the unequal distribution of such technology across the world has to be noted. It has to be noted that of all the other continents Africa is lagging far behind. There are very few African countries where the new technology is readily available. Though we refer to the new technology as common it has to be borne in mind “common for whom?” Also, if the new technology is as advantageous as it is predicted, then it means that Africa may suffer as a result of this. It may mean that information may not be readily available to certain parts of Africa, thus information is not mutually shared. It may also mean that the “easy communication” may well be not so easy after all and the loss of the “uniform level of instruction”. The new technology may only further exacerbate the already high levels of inequality in African States and between African States. In doing theology it will appear that Africa must not forget its developmental strength.

The above comment leads me to the next comment and that is Africans must take responsibility for the “images” people of the rest of the world have of Africa. The images of civil wars, poverty, malnutrition, bad governance, coup de tats, and donkeys as the modes of transport are a fact. The major reason why they exist is because Africans themselves provided them. The images, it has to be admitted, are not entirely fair and balanced. To be African has to do with a lot more than the above images. Admitting mistakes of the past is African and part of the recovery and discovery of what it is to be an African theologian or educator. Africans are not asking for pity or sympathy but rather for understanding and acceptance as fellow and equal colleagues in doing theology and education.

It is at times not clear if Rev Thomas only refers to doing theology or does he include the socio-political, economic, and developmental challenges facing Africa. The reference (:2) to NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development), which is the African Union’s policy instrument, is a case in point. This will indicate a role much larger than merely doing theology.

There is a presumption that the African theological articulation by Africans will be considered not worth listening to. It is not clear what informs this

presupposition. The reader is left guessing. Is it merely because it is African or because it is from Africa that it is summarily dismissed? It is not clear. It is also not clear who will be dismissive of Africa's worthwhile contribution towards the development of holiness theology. The guilty party/parties is/are not mentioned in particular. Again the reader is left to infer.

Factors of poverty, HIV/AIDS, and hunger are not uniquely confined to the African Continent. It may well be that it is more severe in Africa but it is not unique to Africa. These socio-political and economic ills are not rightfully Africa's ills. They are not a blessing but rather social ills that must be eradicated. It is right that Africans themselves must articulate how they view hunger as Christians. In doing so Africans must not isolate or distance themselves in the process from the very audience it seeks understanding from. I know it is not the intention of Rev Thomas to do so but caution is necessary nonetheless.

Rev Thomas does not tell us who can do theology in Africa. I surmise that he took for granted the reader knows. The fact is that when an ordinary person thinks of theology then immediately he/she thinks that is for the theological seminary or the university professor to do. Is it the domain for the chosen few or can anyone do theology? The reader is left guessing.

Finally bellowing must be distinguished from quality or content. It is necessary to bellow but noise must not become a substitute for good quality holiness theology and education. The bellowing is welcome but it must be of decent quality.

On the whole the plea of Rev Thomas for African theologians and educators to take up the pen and start writing and for those who are already doing so to continue is a much needed invitation and exhortation. Taking the position of Rev Thomas into consideration, Principal of Nazarene Theological College in South Africa makes the call so much more worthwhile. God has indeed blessed our local churches in particular with pastors and lay-people alike with the inbred ability to do theology, in practice. The greatest advantage of this paper by Rev Thomas is that he shows us that we can do theology not because of our problems but in spite of the challenges and problems we face as a Continent – the Continent of Africa. It is now the time to “bellow for all you're worth”. God bless Africa.

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### **Hope: Focusing on the Fundamentals When the Foundations are Falling**

Rev Gabriel J Benjamin

Pastor, Nazarene Community Fellowship, Phoenix, South Africa

As I contemplate the questions meted out in the theme of hope I wonder what I would say that would make any significant difference? The challenge is to move from the way things are to the way things ought to be. What could I say that would usher in a different perspective that you have not already given thought to?

As I put pen to paper, convinced that the pen is mightier than the sword, threats of war in the Middle East are looming across the globe. Perhaps it is a starting point in answering the question: “What will the Church of the Nazarene be like fifty years from now?” Obviously we are living in extremely uncertain times. Postmodernism will have us believe that there are no absolutes, everything is relative, and nothing is foundational. The Psalmist however asks the question: “If the foundations are being destroyed what shall the righteous do?”

It is intimidating to embark on such an assignment (HOPE) where the parameters are vast and the scope too narrow. One can hardly be conclusive. Numerous issues spring to mind encompassing all aspects of the church from “practices to systematics”. I fear more questions would be raised than I would be able to answer. I choose to mention first issues that may be regarded as ‘disturbing trends’. As stated earlier you may have already given thought to these.

Firstly, is the message of holiness causing us as a church to become exclusive rather than making us distinctive? The experience I had within the Pentecostal churches as a youth led me to think spiritual gifts were the ‘full gospel’. Every service had to be punctuated by ‘prophecy, healing, tongues’ and other exhibitionist gifts. I realised then that when one aspect of theology or doctrine is preferred and emphasised by a church it may lead to a sense of exclusivity. The nation of Israel was a chosen people to be priests to all other nations. That message of “inclusion” entrusted to them

made them messengers of exclusion, setting stringent laws on proselytism and prejudicing other nationalities. It is not uncommon to feel out of place and un-spiritual around people who speak in unintelligible languages and look down upon those who do not exhibit extreme evidence of charismata.

This kind of exclusive attitude I have since learned is not only characteristic of the charismatics or Pentecostals. In similar ways those who preach holiness tend to marginalize all other doctrines or denominations. Having entered into my local congregation about seven years ago I asked the leaders what the doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene was. In chorus like fashion without hesitation they answered: "Holiness unto the Lord is our watch word and song". Most members that I consulted with have had the impression that the Church of the Nazarene is the only church preaching holiness. Has the message that has been entrusted to us left us feeling that everyone else has a 'secondary task'? Have we concluded that we have exclusive rights to the proclamation? Perhaps it needs to be stated that we ought to be distinctive by lifestyle and not exclusive by message.

The second issue in regard to disturbing trends is the issue of the content of the messages that emanate from the pulpit. Some are preaching morality and cloak it as a message on holiness. So long as we preach morality we are dealing with humanity and its behaviour. When we preach holiness we are dealing with God, man, and salvation. Others are preaching legalism and walk away feeling smug that they have "chastised the bride of Christ". In our training and teaching programmes we need a genuine understanding of the concept of holiness. The call is to teach this experience of God's grace under the conviction that it is real and not only an academic exercise.

The third area of concern is the programme driven, production-based church. There are those who equate the value of the scriptures with the programme of the church, or the presence of God with the venue of the meeting. When do church programmes become 'canonised' as church traditions? In as much as there are books on church growth there are seminars that follow the launch of these books. "Seeker sensitivity" is the current buzzword with the many churches that are playing the numbers game. At what point does seeker sensitivity become compromise? Churches have become production based. Churches are deemed successful by the number of people they seat. Assemblies highlight the statistical

reports and figures are proudly displayed. Whether these are true reflections seem insignificant. It is easy to record high figures when we church the church and preach to the converted! What is the Church of the Nazarene's "sense of great commission"? Do we perceive Christ's commission to be about numbers and production only? Or do we perceive it to be about people and their development? A successful church is not judged by its seating capacity but by its sending capacity. What is the sending capacity of the African Church of the Nazarene? Are we just a receiving church or are we a sending church?

The fourth disturbing trend is a condition that has prevailed mainly amongst the evangelical churches. The issue is that of wanting to maintain a sense of political correctness. In most cases it means keeping silent, in some cases it means washing ones hands, and in other cases it means speaking the language of those in power in order to maintain the status quo. This same spirit prevailed during the time of Christ's crucifixion. Pilate could have spoken and acted with authority but he chose to wash his hands instead. In Luke 23:38 the Roman soldiers put a sign over Jesus' head. It was written in the three official languages of the day. Certainly this was their attempt at being politically correct yet they were morally off the mark. In not wanting to cut across the grain the missionary church leaders remained silent about social evils such as the oppressive apartheid regime. While wanting to do the right thing the church missed the opportunity to do the righteous thing. Dr Charles Malik, president of the 13<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly commented: "The needs of the world are much deeper than political freedom and security, much deeper than social justice and economic development, much deeper than democracy and progress...the deeper needs of the world belong to the sphere of the mind, the heart and the spirit, a sphere to be penetrated with the light and grace of Jesus Christ."<sup>143</sup>

If the above shortfalls of the church and these disturbing trends are going to be remedied then we need to return to the foundations that are laid down in the Bible. The hope for the future must not be confused with wishful thinking. Our hope lies in the foundation of the Word of God. As I mentioned in the opening paragraphs of the paper, the times we live in are uncertain and volatile. We are sure of only one thing - God's Word! We

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<sup>143</sup> United Nations Prayer Breakfast 2002

must adhere to the four foundations of our hope to prevent our church from drifting away from our 'sense of Great Commission'.

The first is eternity. King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes: "He put eternity in their hearts..."(NKJV). Humanity in its experience craves quality and perfection and these are usually measured by longevity and durability. Even though we know that moth and rust ultimately wins we still prefer iron to wood, diamond to glass, and leather to plastic. There is an innate desire for something eternal. A funeral notice seldom fails to surprise us, but we respond as though death is an alien concept. C S Lewis illustrates this by saying:

"We are so little reconciled to time that we are even astonished at it. 'My how he's grown', we exclaim or 'How time flies!' as though the universal form of our experience were again and again a novelty. It is as strange as if a fish were repeatedly surprised at the wetness of water and that would be strange unless the fish were destined one day to become a land animal."

The Church of the Nazarene has to primarily proclaim the Good News and that is that God through Christ restored a lost kingdom to humankind; we need *to seek it first* and *keep it* by also seeking its righteousness. This is an eternal kingdom.

The second foundation is holiness. This implies perfection, morality, and divine law. The tragedy of our world is that it does not know where to find direction for holy living. A story is related of a man who daily synchronised his watch with the clock outside the watchmaker's workshop. One day the watchmaker asked him, "Sir, what do you do because you seem to be very time conscious?" The man replied, "I am the timekeeper at the factory just down the road. I get to sound the bell daily at 4o'clock for the change of shift." The watchmaker responded, "Well, my clock seems to lose its time and I set it daily to the 4 o'clock bell that you sound!"

All too often the world sets a standard that the church imitates and yet the church is called to set a standard that the world ought to live by. Thus far the church may have succeeded somewhat in setting a standard but even a clock that does not work shows the 'correct' time twice a day, but it is not keeping the time. An objective concept of holiness can only exist if God

exists and, because we as a church know this to be true from scripture, reason, experience, and theological tradition we cannot stop, must not stop and will not stop proclaiming HOLINESS. (Not morality in itself nor legalism but holiness.)

The third foundation is accountability. This foundation must exist if there is an established foundation of a holy God. It must also entail confession, remorse, and repentance. The Church of the Nazarene is accountable to God for the message of holiness entrusted to it. The mindset of the world has been altered by modern sciences like psychology. It is of great help when conducted within a moral framework. Left as it has been, it has produced an excuse for sin. Humanity can now 'legitimately' argue that amoral and unprincipled behaviour is a result of sickness and not sin. When this becomes the mindset then the cure lies in the message of entire sanctification. When our 'genetics' are blamed for the sin in our world we take no responsibility. Everything that humankind does wrong then becomes someone else's fault.<sup>144</sup>

This is a call for us to be answerable corporately and individually for any action that contravenes God's holy character. The church is called to demonstrate transparency and teach accountability to friends, family, and government, in relationship to God.

The final foundation of hope is compassion. This was the motivation behind Christ's coming. It was compassion that motivated all of His miracles. It was compassion that moved the early church to missions, and compassion remains the hope for the future. If only the world knew this kind of drive. If only disagreements were resolved within the context of the command "love thy neighbour". If only we truly believed that the church is the 'Body of Christ', we would incarnate that Christ-like compassion that opened blind eyes, turned an immoral woman into an evangelist, and brought reconciliation between God and humankind.

AIDS may have no cure but compassion provides hope. Leadership without compassion is an ego trip and leaves no room for relationship. A church where there is only teaching and no fellowship is a school. A church where there is only fellowship and no teaching is a social club. But a church where there is no compassion is no church at all.

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<sup>144</sup> Zacarias, Ravi. *If The Foundations Are Destroyed*. 2002. p 26.

The thoughts offered up in this paper are merely catalysts that need a substrate. Any forum reflecting on these thoughts may find them inconclusive but the intention is to spark a reflection on the foundations of our hope.

“I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day”(Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States).

## **Under the Curse *or* the Curse? Hope for the Church of the Nazarene in Africa**

Rev Rob A Fringer

Visiting Lecturer, Nazarene College of Theology, Siteki, Swaziland

In a world and culture in which women are still being discriminated against, I am proud to be part of a denomination that values and encourages women in areas of leadership. Moreover, I am honoured to be one who currently has the privilege to serve under and alongside a godly female pastor, both in the parish and in the classroom. One thing for which I am less than ecstatic is the stark reality that there are still many in the Church of the Nazarene (and the church universal) who do not see this as a privilege. In contrast, they regard the mere idea of women ministers as unbiblical and ungodly. The problem is, of course, much larger than this one issue. In actuality we commonly are not dealing with the issue of ‘women in ministry’ but rather with the underlying issue of ‘women in control.’ After all, the place of a woman is below her husband, or at very best, beside him, right? The heart of this matter is either consciously or unconsciously rooted in a person’s understanding (or lack thereof) of ‘woman.’

While I cannot deny that the Bible is full of stories which have painted a rather subservient picture of women and will not deny that Scripture has often been interpreted (or misinterpreted) to defend such a stance, one thing I must not deny is the reality that God’s Word, from beginning to end, clearly declares humanity in the created and redeemed order, both male and female, as fashioned and functioning on level ground. Stated more plainly, man is in no way superior to woman; and yet, man is not inferior to woman. We have been created to complement one another and are, therefore, equally inferior apart *and* equally superior together.

Many of those who regard women as inferior have often treated Scripture as though chapter two or three of Genesis is its beginning; however, the

unequivocal reality is that Scripture begins in chapter one. And so, our discussion begins here, in verse 27 of chapter one, where we read:

And God created *adam* (Heb. humanity) in His own image, in the image of God He created him; **male and female He** created them (italics and bold added for clarity and emphasis).

It is unfortunate that the bewildering grammatical structure of this verse has left some to focus on the unimportant, and further, led others to ignore the verse all together, or, at the very least, ignore the focal point. *Male and Female He created them*; this is the story of our beginnings. This is who we are! Both genders have been created in God's image and yet there is the strange and ironic reality that both genders are needed to fully see this image. We have been created with the desire and necessity to live in community with God and with each other. Without each other we are nothing; together we are one body. It would be like telling your left arm that it is not as important as your right arm and is therefore not needed (cf. 1 Corinthians 12).

In chapter two of Genesis, where the story of humanity's creation is retold from a different perspective, we see this same truth being posited. Genesis 2:18 reads:

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable (Heb. equal) for him."

God voices that man (*adam*) was not intended to be alone but rather was intended to live in community, in relationship. Therefore, he created a woman to be equal, and thus, compatible, to this man. The emphasis of this whole story is not that man came first and thus is superior, but, rather, both man and woman were created from the same flesh and bone (cf. Genesis 2:23), and having been separated they longed to be reunited into one flesh (cf. Genesis 2:24). It is absurd, as well as unscriptural *and* ungodly, for anyone to derive a hierarchical doctrine of man's dominance over woman from either of these two creation accounts.

On the other hand, if someone did want to find a foundation by which to build a biblical understanding of man's position as 'ruler' over woman, then he or she may look no further than Genesis 3:16b, "your desire shall be for your husband, and he will rule over you." I can picture a slight

smirk presently coming over some readers' faces; yet, before anyone starts to build some monumental construct upon this paltry foundation, be warned...he or she is on shaky ground. While I will not refute the statement made by this passage, nor the implications and effects on humanity resultant from this statement, likewise, I will not deny its context. These are neither words to celebrate, nor are they words of blessing; rather, these words are spoken in the context of God's curse on humanity's sin. So I say, you may indeed rule over your wife, or any other woman for that matter, but in so doing you are continuing to spread the curse for which Christ himself gave his life to abolish (cf. Galatians 3:13).

In Christ we are a new creation, the old has passed away (2 Corinthians 5:17), and along with the passing of this 'old,' so passes the curse of sin. Now "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Through the redemption, which is Christ Jesus, we are a restored people. This means that we have been recreated in God's image and must therefore presently live as God originally intended. In God's perfect creation we were created as equals, to live in relationship and to complement one another. Through Christ, the curse is broken and we can once again live as equals. In fact, we *must* live this way or we inevitably taint the perceived image of our creator; we distort the image of Christianity, and non-admittedly, we denounce Christ's sacrifice on Calvary.

So to those men who see women as inferior or subordinate, and to those persons who do not believe that women have a place in ministry or behind the pulpit, I leave you with the following warning—Christ has already broken the curse of man's 'rule' over woman. You may continue to live your life under the curse but in so doing you are no longer just one who is *under* the curse, you *are* the curse!

What will be the role of the Church of the Nazarene in an age such as ours? Will we continue to live under the curse of Genesis 3:16, or moreover, will we aid in promoting this curse? In the church it is customary to talk about 'hope.' Yet it seems that often this *hope* is restricted to the future. This

line of thinking is neither healthy nor biblical. Christ's death brought the future near. Christ's death opened up a whole new reality for us. We as the church must presently live in this new reality. We must be a people who are aware of the power of Christ's death to break the curse of sin and we must show the world that this New Kingdom is governed neither by the standards of culture nor by societal norms. We must be a people who presently promote change: a people who live out *hope*. The Church has the responsibility to continue to break the curse of sin and to spread the hope of equality. There is hope for the Church of the Nazarene in Africa but it is to be found in the endorsement of the same values for which Christ gave his life. If we fail to live out the reality of this New Kingdom then we, above all, are guilty of leaving the world around us with no hope!

## 23

**The Future Reach of Africa's Missionary Pastors**

Dr J Matthew Price

Principal, Institut Biblique Nazaréen, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire;  
Student, French Language School, Albertville, France

The definition of missionary is broadly defined as those who are sent by God to minister in a culture unlike their own. This definition includes a Western missionary going into an African culture as well as an African missionary going into an American culture. The idea of missionary can also include an African pastor going into an area of another language group or with distinct cultural differences. The phrase “missionary pastor” is understood here to mean someone who is in a God-called ministry to others not like one's self while serving in a foreign culture. There is now a global need for missionary pastors within the holiness tradition.

Tradition is not only the practice of looking backward, but also of looking forward. Scriptural holiness is rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century holiness movement in the United States and the even older British roots of evangelical Methodism. So what does the future hold for the spreading of scriptural holiness as taught by European and American missionaries in the diverse lands of Africa? The answer to this question is not meant to provide fodder for an intellectual symposium, but as a forum for focusing the future reach of the Good News in its fullest hope for sinful humanity— hearts and lives set free and made pure.

Teaching the holiness tradition in Africa needs to ask at least two important questions: What theological traditions, Christian and non-Christian, are already present on this continent? And, how does one go about tradition-building anyway? In the recent past, building the holiness tradition meant simply to transplant ideas from the United States or Europe into African soil and hope that it would take root.

In her 1998 fiction novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver described how an American missionary to Africa brought vegetable seeds for planting a garden to provide food for his family. The plants took root, grew, and blossomed. However, the blossoms withered and fell off the

plant, producing no fruit. Frustrated, he finally listened to the advice of a local African woman. She told him the native insects did not pollinate the foreign plants, no matter how brilliantly they blossomed. A similar scenario could play out on this continent regarding the teaching of scriptural holiness. Will this rich theological tradition blossom beautifully, but wither away producing no real or lasting fruit?

The missionary described by Kingsolver had planned ahead but without insight into the place he was going. He used his past experiences with gardening and farming. What his plans left out, however, were the insights from African farmers needed to make garden seeds bear fruit. What insights should be at the forefront of theological education to insure the fruition of the great truth of scriptural holiness on the African continent? Missionary pastors can find these insights through improved theological education. Theological education can be enhanced in at least three areas: to reach new peoples through critical contextualization, to offer more educational depth and breadth, and, most importantly, to look to the future with the hope of a missionary pastor.

Theological education for missionary pastors needs an emphasis in critical contextualization to help them understand and evaluate the context in which they live and minister. The older approach, known simply as “contextualization”, at times, resulted in masking indigenous traditions with the transplanted forms of the new “missionary” religion. For example, in ancient Europe, the celebration of the Incarnation (Christmas) was tied to the pagan celebrations of winter’s arrival, e.g. Saturnalia and Yuletide. The missionary forms were lost over time, so that only the indigenous meanings remained and are now tied almost exclusively to commercial interests.

Critical contextualization, however, has four unique steps in the process of engaging cultures in which all of us minister (Hiebert et al, 1999). The first step encourages the Christian minister to make accurate observations of religious phenomenon within the host culture. A missionary pastor needs to ask honestly: What is going on in this culture? The second step is an objective analysis of what is observed: What does this practice mean for the host culture? Then, the cultural practices observed by the missionary pastor need to be evaluated according to the revelation of God’s Word. Further, reality tests need to be made that compare the host culture’s

practices to other cultural practices around the world. Step three asks: What are the implications of integrating this cultural practice according to the Scripture? And, why is there conflict or no conflict between this cultural practice and the rest of the world? Finally, the missionary pastors organize their ministries to bring about transformation in the lives of those within their host culture through interaction with the Gospel. This last step asks: How does the Church incorporate relevant cultural forms and practices into its ministry to the world?

Theological education for missionary pastors also needs more educational depth and breadth. Ministers of the Gospel in Africa need opportunities to pursue the highest levels of their intellectual abilities. There is a need for African theologians, authors, and professors. So, there needs to be a commitment from the African church to develop faculty members at the highest possible levels of education in their area of the continent or language group. The commitment to educate at the highest levels needs to correspond to educating missionary pastors at the lowest levels, which means, according to Dr Ken Walker, to bring ministerial education to “the masses.” In fact, our best educators should be the ones developing certificate programmes and low literacy programmes. The development of educators also includes the enriching and equipping of lay ministry with its necessary Sunday School teachers, discipleship leaders, and youth and children’s workers. The Church of the Nazarene can and must offer more opportunities for God-called missionary pastors and laypeople to enter the journey of intellectual and ministerial preparation to help them serve a growing and changing world.

Theological education for missionary pastors should create a missionary hope for the continent of Africa and the world beyond. A recent *Trans African* magazine illustrated how Africa is becoming a sending church, no longer just a recipient of missionaries. The church on this continent is beginning to see the world through global lenses (Jenkins, 2002). Africans are unusually gifted with the ability to learn and speak several languages, including Portuguese, French, German, Arabic, and English. These languages have been called “colonial” languages, remnants of a sometimes terrible era in African history. But, the Wesleyan “optimism of grace” acknowledges the ability to use these languages as a head start for African missionaries to reach South America, North America, Europe, and Asia with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is only a glimpse of the vision God has for Africa. The future of the holiness tradition around the globe now lies in the hands of thousands of African pastors, theologians, teachers, and lay workers. There is little time to look backward. In words of theologian Jürgen Moltmann, “We do not drift through history with our backs to the future and our gaze returning ever and again to the origin, but we stride confidently towards the promised future” (1967, 298). Our focus should be on future generations of missionary pastors and their churches to whom the promise of scriptural holiness will come to fruition.

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## 24

### The Hope of Holiness Education

Dr Daryll Gordon Stanton

Lecturer, Africa Nazarene University (ANU), Nairobi, Kenya

**Thesis Statement:** Holiness education will have a major impact on where the Church of the Nazarene will be in Africa in the twenty-first century.

#### **Introduction: The Dream**

The Kenyan government awarded Africa Nazarene University (ANU) its charter on the eighth of October 2002. This opened the door for holiness education to have a major impact on the Church of the Nazarene in Africa in the twenty-first century.

A long process led to the awarding of this charter. Twenty years ago at the Africa Regional Conference in Mbabane, Swaziland, university level holiness education was just an idea discussed by members of the regional education committee. Members left the conference praying that God would bring to reality a dream of preparing both lay and ministerial leaders at the university level for the Church in Africa.

In the early 1980's, African countries were not granting church related university charters. Then Zimbabwe and Kenya led the way. Following the provisions of the Kenyan Universities Act of 1985, Nazarene leaders spent countless hours preparing necessary documents and curricula to enable ANU to receive its Interim Letter of Authority from the Kenyan Commission of Higher Education in 1993. Hundreds of volunteers and Work and Witness team members have contributed their time, money, and expertise, especially with campus development, helping to make ANU possible. The Charter means ANU has full academic approval as a holiness university to:

- Develop youth for effective Christian living,
- Develop a community of scholars,
- Prepare Christian leaders at the degree level, and
- Develop appreciation of our African heritage.

## **The Church of the Nazarene in Africa Hopes to Develop Youth for Effective Christian Living in the Twenty-first Century.**

Nazarenes know that their youth are not merely the Church of tomorrow. They are a vital part of today's Church. There are a variety of institutions in Africa which assist the Church in developing youth for effective Christian living:

- 286 primary schools,
- 7 secondary schools,
- 2 vocational schools,
- 1 teachers' training college,
- 1 nurses' training college,
- 3 degree-granting colleges, and
- 1 university.<sup>145</sup>

ANU is the university for the Church of the Nazarene in Africa. "It is the aim of Africa Nazarene University to teach, challenge and inspire students to seize the opportunities while in the University to prepare for effective Christian living."<sup>146</sup>

Frequently parents choose ANU for their sons and daughters because they value the Christian environment in which they will study. Earlier this year, the father of two ANU students, a prominent pastor from Nakuru, Kenya, visited ANU and spoke in our chapel. This parent, Rev Daniel Gitau, urged the ANU community to pray for one another as John prayed for Gaius in 3 John 2: "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." He suggested six reasons Christians can fail to prosper.

- (1) Rebellion - The devil is the leader of rebellions. For effective Christian living our youth must find Christ as their example and leader.
- (2) Jealousy - Sometimes we pray for others to be blessed, and then we are angry when their "blessing" seems better than ours does. Rather than dwelling on what others have, our youth must be

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<sup>145</sup> Africa Region Church of the Nazarene *Action Planner*, Florida South Africa: Nazarene Publications 2003

<sup>146</sup> Africa Nazarene University. *Bachelor of Theology Bulletin 2001-2003*. p. 3.

- thankful for their “blessings”.
- (3) Pride – “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).
  - (4) Unwillingness to be where God wants us to be – We need to be in the right place at the right time to receive the blessings.
  - (5) Lack of faith – Our youth must learn that without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).
  - (6) Murmuring - The Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness for their complaining.<sup>147</sup>

### **The Church Needs a Community of African Scholars to Articulate its Beliefs**

To develop a community of scholars is another of ANU’s major objectives. “We at Africa Nazarene University have as one of our objectives to help both students and staff to be all we can be and do what will enhance the lives of others.”<sup>148</sup>

There are eight Nazarene institutions on the Africa Region which are recognized by the International Higher Education Council<sup>149</sup>. All are charged with sending out into the world thinking, loving servants of Christ<sup>150</sup>. ANU is one of these eight. All these institutions of higher education adhere to the “Educational Mission Statement “ of the Church and must “...seek to provide a curriculum, quality of instruction, and evidence of scholastic achievement that will adequately prepare graduates to function effectively in vocations and professions such graduates may choose.”<sup>151</sup>

Dr Jerry Lambert, Commissioner of Education for the International Church of the Nazarene, has been very supportive in the development of ANU. He notes, “From the earliest days of the groups that eventually formed the Church of the Nazarene, education in a Christian environment has been a

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<sup>147</sup> Gitau, Rev Daniel. “Will the Church in Africa Prosper?” ANU Chapel Message, 11 February 2003.

<sup>148</sup> Africa Nazarene University, *Bachelor of Theology Bulletin 2001 –2003*. p. 3.

<sup>149</sup> *Church of the Nazarene Manual*, 2001-2005 ed., Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001. ¶ 901.5

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 380.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 380.1

priority.... With the advent of Africa Nazarene University, a new dimension has been added to the proud heritage of preparing God's people for service."<sup>152</sup>

Following the award of the ANU Charter, Dr P Ken Walker, the Africa Region Education Coordinator, expressed ANU's significance saying, "Truly, Africa Nazarene University has become a 'flagship' for Nazarene Education in Africa."<sup>153</sup>

### **To Meet Present Day Needs, the Church Must Prepare Christian Leaders at the Degree Level.**

The Church needs more African leaders who are trained at the degree level to meet the demands of both a rapidly growing Church and the rising level of education. Dr Louie Bustle, the World Mission Director, recently reported that the Church is active in 146 world areas. He indicated that the Church on the Africa region received 36,000 new members during the past year. Having 252,645 members it is second in size only to the United States of America.<sup>154</sup>

The Church in Africa has many non-degree institutions. However, ANU is empowered to grant certificates, diplomas, pre-university programmes, baccalaureate degrees, master's degrees, and even doctorates, according to the needs and demands of the Church in Africa.

Since October 2002, the ANU leadership team has been aggressively planning and implementing more ways to offer degree level education. In addition to its current bachelor degrees in computer science, commerce, and religion plus its masters' degree in religion, ANU will soon offer bachelor degrees in information technology, teacher education and mass communication, plus the masters' of business administration. Additional master's degrees and even doctoral degrees within this decade are expected. Truly ANU is positioned to prepare and send out our youth in a wide range of vocations as well as at multi-levels of academic achievement.

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<sup>152</sup> Lambert, Dr Jerry D. "Nazarene Education Heritage Passed on to Africa Nazarene University, *Trans African*, 2002, No. 3: p. 12

<sup>153</sup> Walker, Dr P Ken. "Charter Day", *Trans African*, 2002, No. 3: p. 6.

<sup>154</sup> Bustle, Dr Louie. "Intermission" Email Newsletter, March 2003. Kansas City, MO.

## **The Church of the Nazarene in Africa Must Develop Appreciation of Our African Heritage**

Africa Regional Director, Dr J Fred Huff, Chairman of the ANU Board of Trustees notes, “We are a university in Africa for Africans to study and to receive an education which will equip them for a life of service to God, country, family, and mankind.”<sup>155</sup>

Rev Ezekiel Kigathi, a Kenyan youth leader who visited ANU earlier this year, reminded the university community that despite all the hopeless situations surrounding us, it is possible to maintain hope. John 10:10 notes that the devil came to steal, kill, destroy; but Jesus came to give life - and to give it abundantly. However, Jesus expects our participation. Rev Kigathi suggested five things that African youth need to do if they are to take the opportunity of being all that God wants them to become. The hope of holiness education must:

- (1) Help motivate our youth to lives of success, believing in themselves - in their hearts - that they can excel through God’s grace.
- (2) Help our youth change their outlooks from that of their secular peers, and get them ready for God’s best possibilities for their lives.
- (3) Help them change their language, getting rid of negative words, envisioning that things can be better. Although this may be hard, it can be done.
- (4) Challenge our youth to be willing to begin where they are. Things do not simply work out automatically. They will have to exercise patience.
- (5) Also help our youth to see that blessings also come by age. Thus time is required. Our youth must grow to the point that they are able and responsible.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Huff, Dr J Fred. “A Momentous Occasion!” *Trans African*, 2002, No. 3: p. 7

<sup>156</sup> Kigathi, Rev Ezekiel. “Hope for the Youth of Africa”, ANU Chapel Message, 20 February 2003.

All Scripture Verses taken from *Holy Bible*, New King James Version. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1982.

### **To Conclude**

The door is open wide for holiness education to have a major impact on the Church in Africa in this century. Let us challenge our youth to effective Christian living. We can achieve this as we develop a community of African scholars to articulate our faith in Jesus Christ. ANU is leading the way as it prepares both ministers of the Gospel and lay Christian leaders at the degree level. There is much to appreciate of our African heritage. Yes, Africa has difficulties to face. But, we expect a better future in Africa. Because of all we, as Christians, have already received from God, we know there is infinitely more to be expected.

## **Part 6: GREAT COMMISSION**

### **25**

#### **The Fulfilment of the Great Commission: A Mozambican Perspective**

Mrs Violeta Mandlate  
Lecturer, Seminario Nazareno em Mozambique

Evangelistic campaigns, mass evangelism, and evangelistic preaching from the pulpit are important methods in the fulfilment of the Great Commission, in winning souls for Christ, and in the growth of the Church. In Mozambique the most important has been personal evangelism.

Mozambique experienced this method after independence was won in 1975 because the new government of Mozambique chose Socialism (Communism). This system prohibited churches from open-air evangelism. Children and youth younger than 18 years old were told that God does not exist, and they couldn't be evangelized. For true Christians and the churches of Mozambique, it was a very hard time.

The Church adopted the method of personal evangelism, and it gave good results. There were few believers left in the churches because many turned back from their faith. The church leaders trained these few, instructing them to evangelize first their own children, siblings, and other relatives. We know that Africans have large extended families, so that meant there was a vast field to evangelize. The other field of personal evangelism was with work associates and schoolmates. Nazarenes spoke with them about salvation by the blood of Christ. The youth that were still in the church were encouraged that no one could control their personal conversations, so they could evangelize their schoolmates and friends. This method was very valuable in the winning of souls. Personal evangelism culminated in evangelism from the pulpit and in revival. In 1983 one of our local churches grew more than 100% by using this method of personal evangelism.

When new people come to the church for the first time, they feel welcome

when they are well received by those already in the church. They need to find friends. When the church people do not appreciate or value the new ones, they are losing an opportunity to evangelize. This method of making visitors feel welcome was also effective during the time of crisis in the Church in Mozambique. Friendship, greetings, smiles—these are a good method of evangelizing. When new folk are not given attention by the church people or the pastor, they leave and never again return to church.

Another occasion of evangelism that should not be overlooked takes place at the time of deaths. This method is as effective today as it was in the past. The church comes close to the family that is saddened. Sometimes we only have one person of the church in the whole family or even one child of the family in the church. When someone in the family dies, the church responds to comfort this brother or sister in Christ during this time of pain and sadness. The church people make time to go to the house of the grieving family to pray, to preach the Gospel of consolation, comfort, and hope of eternal life. The church accompanies the grieving family on the day of the funeral, and on this day many people come to be with them at the burial. Then the minister preaches a message which explains that death is not the end of everything, that there is another life after death, so that while we are alive physically we should prepare for the future life. The preacher lets the people know about the two places that people go to after death, either to eternal life in heaven or in hell, and that people, while living, choose where they will go. Then the preacher makes an appeal to those who want to accept Christ as their Saviour.

One lady was converted at the funeral in January 2003 of the wife of our pastor Chilengue. On the last day of the services with the family, Rev Manuel Tsambe was the preacher of the day. God blessed his preaching. This lady was present and was drunk. She says, “Every morning, before I would leave the house, I would look for something to drink. When the preacher read [in the Bible] that in the place where Christians go there will be no drunkards, that it is a holy place where only holy people enter, these words touched my heart. I confessed that I was a drunkard, and since that day I want to always stay on the pathway that Christians are taking.” Even though she was drunk that day, we prayed with her, and she accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour. She went home; near her house we have a Church of the Nazarene where she started attending with her whole family including her husband. Many, many times people have been converted

through this method. When a family who does not know the church experiences the Church of the Nazarene through the sadness of death, the family becomes a friend of the church, and the church gains access to the family and can evangelize this family.

Not only in moments of sadness, but also in moments of joy like at weddings can we evangelize because Africans invite many people to weddings. Many of those who come are not Christians; they see the beauty of the wedding and hear the advice given to the newly-weds on the Big Day. Those who are married are reminded of their vows. In this way people decide to join the church that gives good advice to old and new families.

Many methods of evangelism from an African perspective exist, not only these methods that I have mentioned. It is necessary that Africans utilize their means and methods. We should not hesitate. Experiment and you will see a good harvest. May God bless Africa in her task of evangelizing the African world.

## **Response**

Rev Goodwin Chirwa

Pastor, Manzini Church of the Nazarene, Swaziland Central District

What the Great Commission is and how the Church in Mozambique has tried to fulfil it as told by Violeta Mandlate is very good and refreshing if you are a Christian whose spiritual heartbeat is of “Making Disciples” (Matthew 28:19)<sup>1</sup>.

The key note of the Great Commission is to “make disciples”. To “make disciples” in the Greek Bible is in the imperative mood which is defined as command or entreaty<sup>2</sup>. In such phrases the will of Christ is making a direct, positive appeal to the believers’ will to the extent that the believer wills to allow his will to be characterized by the great commission<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, biblically speaking, a good church is that which “makes disciples”. This is top on the list of such a church to the degree that a visitor will get the impression just on his first visit. The will of the Mozambican members who did not drift into socialism was marked by this kind of characteristic to disciple and commission the true new Christian for personal evangelism at the expense of mass evangelism, the other important wing.

God is not tempted by evil but he takes what is bad and uses it for the good of His Kingdom. He did the same with socialism in Mozambique. It was at this time that the church in Mozambique weeded out the half-hearted Christians. This is a process difficult for most pastors to do. But for our churches to grow we need to find the committed Christians. We do need to weed out, and focus on the few Christians who will make things happen. This is the breed of believers that will beget committed Christians in turn.

Socialism in Mozambique is like the persecution of the early Church where Christians, when faced with persecution, ran out to the world and spread the gospel through personal evangelism. In Mozambique they did the same. Take note of the present church growth and compare it to growth before socialism. We can conclude by saying, personal evangelism is a New Testament standard of fulfilling the Great Commission but is neglected. It is put in its best use mostly when the church is faced with

persecution or hard times.

I am happy to know that mass evangelism; preaching from the pulpit at funerals and weddings, are now taking place in Mozambique. I am sure the experience they had of doing personal evangelism has equipped them to easily conserve the converts. I say this because without such an experience the church loses a lot of converts. One who is a church growth analyst can easily depict the fact that Africans are very strong in the area of mass evangelism, pulpit preaching, and the like. They preach a moving message and a lot of people are converted. It just ends right there. Such preaching becomes an end in itself because the majority of Africans have a systematic pattern of poor disciple making after such campaigns. This kind of evangelism is biblical but we have made it defective by not making disciples which improves the quality and quantity of our church people. We do not take the altar call as serious as we should, as in the case of the lady drunkard in the Mozambican church who, after conversion, was helped into a church.

In Africa we seem to agree with the saying that “most people talk about personal evangelism, write about it, preach fervent sermons about it and in isolated cases you find a few people who do it”.<sup>4</sup> In view of Mrs Mandlate’s paper, in practice they do not agree with this saying. Their personal evangelism strategy has made them strong disciple makers to the extent that any occasion is a harvest of souls. The Great Commission is top on their list of things. They know where and how to make the connection with the lost as our Sunday School theme of 2003 says.

Furthermore, as they are effective in wining souls, they do not depend on church structure, both buildings and leadership. They depend on individual ministry such as that of saving the lost through spiritual gifts. Church structure, especially with leadership in Africa, is the number one stumbling block to church growth. One should know that personal evangelism does not depend upon church structure. I can assume that the socialist government in Mozambique demolished the church structures driving it into a biblical democracy. The early church is a good example. When the people fled because of persecution, the apostles, who were at the top of the church structure, remained in Jerusalem. As an African Church the

Mozambican part is seriously challenging us to re-visit our church structure, i.e. the way in which we lead, so as to remove all impediments to church growth. This will free the people. Church leaders should know that the power of a church to grow rests in the hands of the church members.

The church members are the ones who do the bonding with the new converts. They do this by creating a friendly atmosphere which the new converts find in the church. They help him find new Christian friends. They become a new family that laughs and cries with this member irrespective of his status in society. We see this in the way the Mozambican church treats funerals.

Lastly but not least, the church in Mozambique did personal evangelism in respect of the homogenous principle. This principle works very well if used well in traditional societies like in Mozambique. Under circumstances, which are normal for this principle, the changes evolve, but once you bring certain agencies like war and socialism it brings in a revolutionary pace to church growth<sup>5</sup>. This is true because war creates anxiety which brings in a realization that only God is the answer. It also dismantles the social structure of higher, middle, and low classes which complicate the task of evangelism. Here in Mozambique discipleship was made simple. It was a leper telling another leper where to find food (2 Kings 7:8).

All in all, as Mrs Daphne Mathebula, the Selection Committee Chair, prayed that I might be blessed as I interact with this paper, I was indeed more than blessed and inspired to re-visit my attitude in disciple making. More-over, I was revived and have developed good insights which, I pray will result in helping my church become a soul wining church.

1. All Scripture quotation are from the *New American Standard* (NAS).
2. Pershbacher, J Wesley. *Refresh Your Greek*, P.121
3. Dana and Mantey. *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* P. 175
4. Edwards, Gene. *How To Have A Soul Wining Church*. P. 13
5. Hesselgrave, David. *Communicating Christ Cross Culturally*. P514

## Response

Rev Friday Udofia  
Lagos Pioneer District, Nigeria

In reading this paper I could not but think about the situation in Nigeria which is to some extent comparable to the Mozambican perspective of the Great Commission as portrayed by Mrs Violeta Mandlate. The bulk of this response will focus on this comparison.

I want to commend Mrs Mandlate for her paper which shows how our church in Mozambique endeavoured to fulfil the Great Commission against all odds. While taking note of the different evangelistic methods, she depicts personal evangelism as the method that was effective during the Socialist government. The paper oozes with enthusiasm as she relates how they did it and why. She also notes the importance of the whole church in creating an environment that is conducive to the growth of the converts. At the end of her paper, she challenges Africans to use “their means and methods” to evangelize – a point I would like to pursue later as it relates to the situation in Nigeria.

The paper, however, gives a very narrow perspective of the fulfilment of the Great Commission in Mozambique for it focuses on the period of Socialism and seemingly in the Church of the Nazarene only. It would have been helpful if the scope were indicated. It leaves the reader with questions concerning the current situation. Is personal evangelism the only method used even now? If not, what other methods are currently effective? Another weakness of this paper is that it says nothing about discipleship which is an important aspect of the Great Commission.

As indicated earlier, I would like to compare and contrast the methods of evangelism in Mozambique and in Nigeria based on the statement that “... many methods of evangelism from the African perspective exist ... It is necessary that Africans utilize their means and methods” (Mandlate, page 2).

The body of Christ has made a remarkable evangelistic breakthrough in recent years in Nigeria. The ultimate desire of the Church is to remain faithful to its head, Jesus Christ, and to be in total obedience to the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Both the Great Commission quoted above and the Great Commandment, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... And... your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:37, 39) are central to the understanding of the mission of the Church in the world.

The Church is in the serious business of proclaiming the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to Him personally and to be reconciled to God. He gave the Gospel for one purpose – namely, to get people saved or to make known God’s love to man. The Good News must be preached that all nations come to repentance.

The Holy Spirit is actively at work. The Church is tirelessly “going” for the Lord, using every available means and method to reach out to the lost souls in our nations.

As in Mozambique, Nigeria uses various methods in fulfilment of the Great Commission such as personal evangelism, meeting with and confronting sinners one on one, and an extended family method where one could go and minister to extended family members wherever they are for the purpose of bringing them into a right relationship with God.

Unlike Mozambique, other methods employed in Nigeria include mass evangelism (such as open-air meetings), where many people are reached with the message of salvation at the same time. JESUS Film equipment is another wonderful evangelism tool, where thousands can be reached and persuaded with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And the list goes on and on! Yes, we have seen zealous, aggressive, enthusiastic, and vibrant local churches and ministries pooling their resources together to see to it that souls are won to Jesus Christ, and God’s kingdom is expanded in Nigeria and even beyond.

However, the most effective method of evangelism in Nigeria today is the church-planting approach. This is a method of inviting sinners and bringing those that have just accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour into the fold in preaching points and local churches. This wonderful method

came to bear in Nigeria during and after the civil war that lasted for three years (1967-1970). What was left after the civil war was diseases and famine. The arms of flesh had failed them. Many Nigerians began to learn to put their trust in God after they lost nearly everything including relatives, friends, wealth, and homes. We have also adopted the church-planting strategy in our Church and the result is incredible.

Consequently, our churches are packed and our pews filled with thousands of members. But how many of these people are genuinely converted or transformed? Some of the Christian leaders here, especially those of the Pentecostal and Charismatic divide who do not believe in theological training, are not any different from their members.

To these groups, prosperity gospels, magical healing, and tongues-speaking are the major thrust of their messages, which quickly brings material benefits to them. The message of the “cross” is always absent in their preaching. And Christians who want to shy away from genuine Christian commitment, responsibilities and accountability have found hiding places in these congested religious camps.

As a result of this unfortunate development, we have Christians who are attending churches on Sundays, but are not truly converted. And as such they cannot abide in the Vine to be able to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

The Church is seen here to be very busy making converts rather than disciples, thus posing a great challenge to the fulfilment of the Great Commission. No wonder the impact of Christianity is not felt so much in this part of the world!

The answer is clear; the Church has consciously or unconsciously neglected the concept of discipleship, which is the overall goal of evangelism. This important aspect of the Great Commission is taken for granted, and the outcome is superficial with irresponsible converts flooding our churches. What difference could they make in the society?

No wonder the Western assessment of African Christianity is: “...one mile long and one inch deep”. Also John Wesley once remarked, “How dare you lead people to Christ without providing adequate opportunity for discipleship? To do less is to beget children for the murderer – the devil”. The Church would do well to quickly avert this danger.

So what we have are Christians who are cheating and defrauding their employers, business partners, customers, neighbours, and some even defrauding churches as a direct consequence of the neglect of discipleship. We also have some Christian leaders who are more like butchers than shepherds. We have millions of converts, but few disciples, which is evidently less than the demands of the Great Commission. The Church must understand the importance of discipleship to stay alive and growing to the glory of God.

What then is discipleship? Basically, discipleship has to do with training and growing in Christ-likeness. It is a lifestyle of training believers in order to have Jesus Christ formed in their lives by the power of the Holy Spirit, which will make it easy for them to obey rather than disobey God. It also has to do with leading Christians to spiritual growth, formation, and maturity. Accountability and maturity are the twin products of effective and consistent well-designed discipleship programmes in the local church. Some of the discipleship programmes in the local church that have been proven to be very effective in producing accountable disciples and disciplined witnesses over the years are: Sunday School classes, Bible studies or fellowships, accountability classes, and Christian mentoring sessions.

Our position on this subject of discipleship is clear: We are committed to being and inviting others to become disciples of Jesus. With this in mind, we are committed to providing the means (Sunday School, Bible studies, small accountability groups, etc.) through which believers are encouraged to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith and in their relationship with each other and with God. We are to encourage the mutual support provided through such means as Sunday School classes, discipleship groups, Bible study groups, prayer meetings, accountability groups and Christian mentoring as necessary to our spiritual formation and maturity.

Finally, it is seen from the above arguments that it is not enough to go about winning souls for Jesus Christ; we must make sure that the image of God is formed in their lives. We are commissioned to make disciples, not just converts who fill our pews. To do otherwise is to “beget children for the murderer – the devil”.

May the Lord help the Church to use every available means not only to

help sinners open up and accept Jesus Christ into their hearts and become born again, but also to make disciples out of them! In as much as we are committed to sharing the Good News of the love of God for the hopeless world, we must be very ready, as well, to commit ourselves to effectively disciple these converts until they are truly restored to the very image of God.

This is what will, for sure, bail the Church in Nigeria in particular and Africa at large out of the woods. We must be committed to take the Church to the Promised Land, by His grace. It is our prayer and hope that the church-planting approach to the fulfilment of the Great Commission will also be effective in other countries of Africa and the world at large. We shall be able to make more Christ-like disciples for the Kingdom of God. He has promised He is going to be with us to the very end of the age.

## 26

### **The Excitement of Holiness Evangelism**

Dr Wally Marais

Coordinator for Church Growth and Evangelism, Africa Region

The first four years of my Christian life were a search for that something more in my life. Reading through the book of Acts and walking with Jesus through other scriptures convinced me to keep searching. Many options were presented to me. It was only after I had heard that Jesus wanted to sanctify me and to continue His powerful ministry through me that I trusted His Holy Spirit to fill my life. Now after almost 50 years of witnessing His power working in and through me, I am more excited than I have ever been about the living Lord Jesus Christ doing Jesus things through me, thereby building His church and extending His Kingdom.

My concern is that we not separate Evangelism from Holiness, for we will either be all out for souls and now and again preach of a second crisis or we will become so concerned with our personal holiness that we will neglect to reach the lost for Christ. This paper is a call back to Holiness Evangelism, which always has been part of the great commission that Jesus gave to His church. Also it will help to bring back into focus the need for seeing that the experience of entire sanctification is as important as the new birth; they are both part of the discipling process.

What a privilege it is to be involved as part of the Body of Christ in what is known as The Great Commission. Matthew recorded it this way, "*Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age'.*" (28:18 – 20)<sup>1</sup>

In these words of Jesus both His grace and love are revealed for all nations in the world. He did not merely make a statement but called men and women to be involved in taking this message to their world. He wants everyone to hear this message, and His grace makes it possible for anyone to respond, but more than that He desires that all of those who do respond

will come into a love relationship with the Father, the Holy Spirit and Himself. John A Knight expresses it well when he says, “The gospel is a person, not a book (not even the Bible). Christ does not have a gospel, nor preach it merely. He is the gospel. He is the “good news”. Our message is not a principle, nor a perspective, but a Person.”<sup>2</sup> Peter discovered this same truth. Jesus had become both His Lord and Christ after he too had been filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:36). He testified that the coming of the Holy Spirit had purified his heart (Acts 15:8-9) and that God’s will is that they be holy, doing holy things in the unholy world (1 Peter 1:14-16). The Good News is that the living King Jesus wants to bring all people into His kingdom by grace through faith and that He wants to reign as King in and through them now. Once made King He would perfect their intentions to serve Him, and they would be excited about holy living.

As Jesus continues His ministry through His new body, the world will see the power of His rule already at work in this world and everyone will be given opportunity to also enter His Kingdom now. No one deserves to be invited into the Kingdom of God, for all are sinners. Jesus came to solve the sin problem in all men. That is why Jesus wants them to hear this message because He is man’s only hope. Man out of fellowship with God is lost in this world and the call of Jesus is to this lost world. Man outside of God’s power in his life is under the control of a principle of self-first, a problem which can only be solved through the impartation of God’s love through the infilling of God’s Holy Spirit. Leading many into this experience of having made Jesus king in their lives and witnessing the changes that He has brought about convinces me that Holiness Evangelism can change the face of Africa and transform the communities for Christ. Holiness Evangelism keeps both works of grace before the people and they soon understand what is meant by full salvation. This is the message that must be preached to the whole world, not merely a born anew experience but also the experience that brings the expulsion of the sin principle from their lives through the infusion of God’s love into their hearts. Jesus, through ‘Spirit given’ and ‘Spirit empowered’ ministry gifts, wants people to see the power of His Kingdom at work. Clear and balanced teaching about the gifted ministries is so important as Jesus pointed out in the great commission. Jesus had a preaching, teaching, and a healing ministry and we can do no less.

Some ways that can help to get Holiness and Evangelism teachers and preachers to think and to practice Holiness Evangelism are found in the Great Commission.

First is the understanding of “Go and make disciples”. Jesus must not be seen to be speaking purely as a soul winner. He was not thinking only as an evangelist but as a teacher who was enlisting learners. They would be incorporated into His Kingdom as followers of His teachings. They would bring themselves under His authority as their leader. Baptism was the sign that they were ready for a deeper relationship with the Father, and the Holy Spirit and Himself as their Lord and Master. This was an outward sign to all that Jesus was now their Lord and that they were now totally committed to Him and His teachings. Being baptized in the Name of the Spirit meant that they were opening their lives to be filled with the Spirit of their master and Lord. Ralph Earle points out from the Greek that the verb is not *didasko* (teach) as it is in the King James version but rather as it is in the New International Version *matheteuo* (make disciples).<sup>3</sup> Paul Bassett adds to our understanding by writing the following about early Christianity, “No one understood baptism to be an abstraction or simply a testimony – it was a way into spiritual reality itself: the early Christians understood baptism as a saving moment. And they understood baptism, taken in its entirety, to be a sanctifying moment as well. It symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the believers at Pentecost.”<sup>4</sup> After they were baptized the priest would lay his hand on the head of the baptized one praying for him to be filled with the Spirit. Oil was then poured on the head symbolizing the entrance of the Spirit in fullness into the baptized. This meaning of baptism should be re-emphasised preparing the disciple for the fullness of the Spirit. Baptism must be included in the discipling process for that will help to bring the concept of Holiness Evangelism back into the mainstream of the church’s teachings.

Secondly, the church must look at the Great Commission from the context in which Jesus spoke these words. It is incorrect to see Jesus as a master wielding a whip and driving His disciples to go to all nations. It is equally wrong to place Jesus into a sergeant major position barking out orders to His deployed troops sending them out to do battle and to claim converts for His Kingdom. It is also incorrect to say that all we need to do is to announce the message and that God will draw those to Him that He has chosen to save. The context out of which Jesus spoke is far more appealing

than that. He makes it a joy and a privilege to serve Him. Bruner calls it “*the Resurrection Mission*”<sup>5</sup> and so it is. Why the disciples sudden motivation to respond to the call and to obey the commission of Jesus? Simply because they had witnessed that He was now alive, risen from the dead. Also He announced that all authority in heaven and all authority on earth had been given to Him. They worshipped Him because they knew His presence and His power to be that of Jehovah God. They were excited to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and He came on the day of Pentecost. No longer was Jesus just the Son of the living God, but now He was both Lord and Christ. He was alive in them and His Spirit was continuing His ministry through them. Jesus was alive, His presence in them made them holy and His power in them enabled them to do Jesus things. He was with them as He had promised. This was their motivation, the Power of the Spirit of Christ was working in and through them, and it is still the same today. This is the very heart of the Great Commission: Jesus is alive in His church and continuing His holy ministry through His united holy Body, His disciples.

Thirdly, Jesus has gifted teachers within His body, and they must be taught to teach others who in turn will teach others and the process must go on and on. Holiness Evangelism must be taught, not only when requested and not only during Pentecost meetings in the church but as part of the ongoing life of the church. They must be taught that the nature of the church is to be His Body worshipping in the beauty of Holiness and that they are God’s called out ones, a Holy fellowship. They are the Holy Body of Christ doing Jesus things, Holy things, which are the fruit and the result of the Spirit of Christ living in them. Purkiser writes, “The third gift on the Romans list is teaching – *didaskon* - this is instructing and grounding others in the truth.”<sup>6</sup> They must be taught the meaning of the sacraments; even the sacrament of the Communion is more than a mere remembering of what Jesus did on the cross. It is a grace moment to relive one’s commitment in His presence and to respond afresh to His love. It is aligning one’s life to His reign in their hearts. It is the discipling process in action. This sacrament was instituted directly by Christ Himself and comes under the command to teach all things whatsoever He has commanded.

This is God’s grace moment for the church in Africa to return to its roots of Holiness Evangelism.

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version* (NIV).

<sup>2</sup> John A Knight, *All Loves Excelling*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Earle, *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, p.28.

<sup>4</sup> Paul M. Bassett, *Volume One, Holiness Teaching*, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew, Volume II, The Churchbook*, p. 1072.

<sup>6</sup> W T Purkiser, *The Gifts of the Spirit*, p. 28.

## Response

Rev Paulo Moises Sueia  
District Superintendent, Matola District, Mozambique,  
Field Director, Lusophone Field

As a minister of the Word of God, I have tried to follow the steps of great people of God, who through their life and faithfulness served the Lord for many years under difficult situations and circumstances in our continent of Africa. We still have the privilege to talk with and to work with some of them in the ministry.

This is one of the reasons that I was a little bit reluctant in responding to the paper of one of those men of God. However, I felt an obligation to respond in order to reinforce the importance of the points which Dr Marais sets out on the theme of the Great Commission – The Excitement of Holiness Evangelism.

I do agree with him that we should not “separate evangelism from holiness”, because the Great Commission is for those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and saviour – the disciples. They were not sent before their salvation, but afterwards. As George W Peters says: “The Great Commission does not make Christianity a missionary religion, for no command could ever do this. The missionary nature of Christianity does not originate in a command; the command merely focuses it. The missionary nature itself springs from the God who is the source of Christianity”.<sup>1</sup> From this we can say that the resource of the Great Commission is upon “all authority of Jesus Christ” which is over the earth and heaven. It is so important to see that the Greek word authority used in Mathew 28:18-20 is “exousia”<sup>2</sup> which means “the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others.”<sup>3</sup> This is what is known by the moral authority or influence because it comes from God who is sovereign and righteous and therefore is right and must be obeyed. It is from this perspective that we can understand the words of apostle Paul in II

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<sup>1</sup> Peters, George W, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, p.178

<sup>2</sup> Earle, Ralph, *Word Meaning In The New Testament, Vol. 1*, p.103

<sup>3</sup> Vine, W E, *An Exposition Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p.89

Corinthians 5:14 “For Christ’s love compels us.”<sup>4</sup> And in Galatians 2:20 when he says, “I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me.” When the Holy Spirit dwells in all of us He is the one who will lead us to fulfil His task – the Great Commission. As Dr Wally says, if we preach a “born anew experience” we are still half way to “salvation business” because only the presence of the Holy Spirit will compel us to do the will of God.

What I would call every reader to reflect upon is when Dr Marais quotes as follows concerning baptism, “It was a way into Spiritual reality itself: the early Christians understood baptism as a saving moment. And they understood baptism, taken in its entirety, to be a sanctifying moment as well. It symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the believers.” And then he comments, “This meaning of baptism should be re-emphasised preparing the disciple for the fullness of the Spirit. Baptism must be included in the discipling process for that will help to bring the concept of Holiness Evangelism back into the mainstream of the church’s teachings.”<sup>5</sup>

First we need to understand that the background of the new converts of the New Testament times is different with our days and particularly for African people. It is just a matter of reading Acts 8:26-38 where we will find one of the new converts of those days – the Ethiopian eunuch. On his way back home from the temple where he went to worship Jehovah, he was reading the scriptures. The problem of this man was the need of someone who could expose the word of God. He had the “Bible” which he could read, but he could not understand. But our problem in Africa is that in many cases we don’t have the Bible and some don’t even know that the written Word of God does exist. I think that in the African environment we need to find ways which will help us to guide our people to understand holiness evangelism without any “scandal”. I wonder if a preacher in Africa in a rural area could do what Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch. If he does that he might find that more than 80% of those who are baptized are not in the body of Christ because of some strong beliefs in Roman Catholic teachings about baptism. On the other hand I am not in favour of

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<sup>4</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version* (NIV)

<sup>5</sup> Marais, Wally Dr. “The Excitement Of Holiness Evangelism”, p.2

those who defend the belief that after conversion a person should be taught for a period of time and that with some people they even take more than two years before they are baptized. I think we should help our people according to their situation, which is where they are at that particular moment of time.

We should reflect on Dr Wally Marais' challenge with a sense that we will not drive away from the real meaning of baptism and to step into the Roman Catholic belief concerning baptism.

## 27

### **The Great Commission: A Socio-Ethical Comment**

Rev Walter Motaung

Pastor, Orlando Church of the Nazarene, South Africa

#### **CONTEXT**

Perhaps the thought that every generation finds its era interesting is not far-fetched. This holds true for us today. Our world has interesting challenges. World leaders in their various fields (politics, economy, social, military, ecology, religion, etc) should find this era challenging in many ways. A good hint of that could easily be observed in the pace with which the United Nations and its various agencies, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and other world environmental bodies, conduct their business and follow their agenda. This is the era in which this denomination strives to fulfil Christ's last injunction – the Great Commission.

It is within that background that this brief paper will look at the Great Commission. More specifically, this paper will focus on the Great Commission in relation to its achievements, failures, and present/future challenges. This is not going to be a theological/religious reflection on the theme. It is hoped that others will follow that line of thought. My focus will be to discuss the Great Commission in the context of socio-political challenges that prevails in the world today. A particular focus will relate to the South African scene.

#### **SUBSTANCE**

It is within this world-context the Church of the Nazarene seeks to live and concretize the Great Commission. Until now, the denomination has understood the Great Commission as God's expression of his love for the lost and seeking to save them from a life of sin. Sin, in this view, is personalized individual behaviour such as adultery, theft, drunkenness, murder, etc. Salvation is understood in terms of a personalized decision to forsake that kind of life and follow Jesus. The missionary and evangelistic efforts of the denomination have been largely based on this understanding of the Great Commission.

It appears as though it has been difficult for the Church of the Nazarene to define sin in broader terms. Understanding sin in socio-economic and political structural terms has thus been foreign in the preaching and conduct of the Nazarene evangelists and church planters. On the contrary, they have seen it fitting to understand and define sin in a narrow sense.

### **SUCCESS**

It is that belief that accounts for the tremendous advances of the Church of the Nazarene in her world missionary effort. The reality that this denomination is continuing to advance into new world areas when other denominations are scaling their missionary activity down is enough to underline the previous point. Due credit befits the denomination for remaining steadfastly focused on what she regards as the primary mission of her existence.

### **FAILURE**

It is true, however, that as the Church of the Nazarene advances across the world it is coming into contact with serious structural and social challenges which beset the people they are trying to win for Christ. This is true not only around the world but also in this continent.

Paragraph 904.5 of the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene says that holiness should drive Christians towards the creation of a more just and equitable society and world. Judging from the priorities of the Church of the Nazarene, it would appear as though the denomination has opted to leave that challenge to individual choice. The Church of the Nazarene seems to have deliberately forgotten to create a denominational strategy and programme to concretize this challenge as set out in the *Manual*. I want to submit that, in taking this route, the Church of the Nazarene has gambled with an opportunity of proclaiming a holistic and truly liberating gospel. She settled for an emaciated gospel. This is the gospel of the spirit only that is accompanied by handouts that entrench dependency and eternal slavery.

A perfect illustration of this is found in South Africa. When the denomination advanced into this southern part of the continent nearly a hundred years ago, the superstructure of an evil socio-economic and political system was being erected in this country. The reaction of the church to such structural and systemic sin was a loud silence and an

attempt to pretend that it was not happening. This position crystallized in the early 1970s when this denomination withdrew from the World Council of Churches, because the council was accused by some of supplying the world with guns rather than Bibles through its Program to Combat Racism.

Perhaps one could understand the reluctance of missionaries to engage in matters socio-political because they did not directly disadvantage or affect them. What is unforgivable is that they displayed a typical American arrogance – the right to decide for others what is good and what is not good for them. In this context, they forbade anyone within the church membership to challenge the apartheid sin. Space does not permit for a list of instances to substantiate the foregoing point.

In one of his works, William Barclay observed that it is fairly safe to talk about God and angels in heaven. It becomes dangerous when you begin to talk about people on earth. This aptly captures the real and fundamental motivation behind the non-involvement stance of the Church of the Nazarene in matters that border on genuine social concerns. The Church of the Nazarene has chosen the easy way out - to supply bandages for wounds inflicted by unjust socio-political structures, rather than confront, challenge, change and remove them.

### **BETRAYAL**

The conspicuous silence of the Church of the Nazarene in the face of such gross social sinning is a betrayal to the black membership of the denomination and to black people in general. The Church of the Nazarene proved that she was so accustomed to affluence and comfort to the point that she lacked the capacity to understand oppression, let alone to deliberately acknowledge or talk about it. In taking this route, she thought that she was remaining neutral in the face of challenging questions of the day. However she was blind to the fact that in this world, you cannot be neutral, more importantly theology cannot be neutral. You side with either the powerful or the powerless. Unfortunately, the Church of the Nazarene sided with the powerful and affluent. This is also illustrated by the reality that her missionaries who came into our country to work among black people lived in white areas in town, not in the townships where their constituency was found. This poses serious incarnational (service) questions. It is no wonder then that among stories of goodness told about God's servants, there are also narratives about missionaries who behaved

like white South Africans in their treatment of black people.

### **CHALLENGE**

Given the momentum of the denomination, it would appear that the Church of the Nazarene has a challenging future. Here I propose what should be considered if the denomination is to genuinely serve the needs of its greater target missions effectively.

First, I believe that should the Church of the Nazarene continue in her position of non-involvement in matters terrestrial, she will remain guilty of using the truth of the gospel selectively. A clear example of this position is found in our International Headquarters. When Bill Clinton was accused of improper sexual conduct with Monica Lewinsky, the Board of General Superintendents made their voice heard and urged him to consider resigning. However, nothing has been heard from them concerning the butchering of the Palestinians by Israel with America's unqualified support and guns. Their voice is also not heard now when America is busy invading and destroying Iraq in the absence of sound legal and moral basis. They are saying nothing about America's policy of regime change in Iraq. (If they are saying anything at all, it is not audible enough). I submit that the truth of the gospel is not just relevant to matters of adultery, murder, and stealing. It is also relevant to the way in which you treat your fellow human beings. It is concerned with how you use the social, political, and economic power that you possess.

Second, by prioritising spiritual freedom over earthly liberation, the Church of the Nazarene is guilty of advocating a heresy. The scriptures do not elevate the spirit above the flesh. On the contrary, scripture suggests that living in the flesh is just as important as living in the spirit. And by incarnating human body, God in Jesus sanctified the reality of being in the flesh, of being a human being on earth.

Third, the distinctive doctrinal emphasis of holiness of the Church of the Nazarene needs thorough contextualization. Holiness of heart should reflect itself in the promotion of holy (and just) socio-political and economic structures, so that God's people 'may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness' (1 Timothy 2:2). What kind of holiness is it that burns in the face of personal sins and says nothing when confronted by social and structural sins which insult what God has made in his own image.

Lastly, if the Church of the Nazarene hopes to be a home not only for the affluent but also for the poor, then the denomination needs to abandon the myth of neutrality in matters terrestrial because it is unlike Christ. When he was on earth, Christ consciously chose a side. You do not need a doctor's degree to understand that he sided with the poor and outcast of society, not with the powerful. It is the powerful who felt uncomfortable with him and ultimately crucified him. Without this change the Church of the Nazarene will exist for herself and the affluent, and not the poor. She cannot exist for the poor if she refuses to speak their language or relate to their existential situation, their fears and aspirations.

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## Response

Rev Hlabane Frank Mahlaba

District Superintendent, Limpopo Northwest District, South Africa

In my opinion the writer has precisely identified an important aspect of the Great Commission which has sadly gone largely, if not completely, neglected by the Church of the Nazarene in her quest to fulfil the great commission. True yes, the gospel is calling men and women to turn from their sins to God, but the call to repentance also calls men to create a just and equitable society. Any proclamation of the gospel that calls individuals to repentance and then falls short of addressing the earthly sinful socio-political conditions of the saved person is tantamount to raising Lazarus from the dead but leaving him to live in society still bound with strips of linen with which he was buried. While this Lazarus will indeed be living and walking about, his freedom will be limited, and secondly those he ministers to will not get a good view of him and thus be hindered to fully understand and appreciate the relevance and liberating power of his message.

The writer rightly points out that the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene encourages its members to promote racial understanding and harmony by working for a just, equitable order. However, this largely remains a written statement or position that does not find any significant practical advocacy and application

Indeed when it came to challenging the evils of apartheid in South Africa, which evils greatly undermined the Great Commission, many members of the Church of the Nazarene including this respondent, looked for leadership and guidance outside of the denomination. The likes of Archbishop Desmond Tutu of the Anglican Church and Dr Beyers Naude of the Dutch Reformed Church and others became the guiding lights.

It is important for us in the Church of the Nazarene to know that repentance from personal sins and the challenging of socio political injustices are complementary. The gospel cannot go very far without losing credibility if it does not openly address inequalities and injustices.

I wish to re-emphasise what the writer has already pointed out: Firstly the denomination must abandon its position of neutrality. If you keep quiet when people are being hurt and suffering, you send wrong signals: one, people may think that you see the problem but are afraid of the challenge which would then imply weakness on your part. Two, you may risk being perceived as condoning the position of the oppressor and therefore insensitive to suffering and as such holding an un-holistic view of sin and God. One philosopher said the man in the middle makes the worst of the two options. Maintaining neutrality in the face of structural socio-economic and political evils under the pretext of giving safe passage to the gospel into the lives of people without troubling the waters that trouble them may greatly hinder the sufferers from accepting a gospel which does not care about their problems. Keeping quiet when duty demands that we speak is tantamount to betrayal of the Great Commission.

The neutral position of the denomination has made us fail to prepare people who could meaningfully participate in socio-political transformation of the country. This failure further compounds the problem in that as a denomination we have not been able to develop the necessary critical skills and confidence to deal with socio-political transformation issues. In other words we do not have the reputation that we can competently counsel with or play an advisory role to people involved in socio-political change. This limits our witness as a church because influential politicians and other agents of socio-political change remain largely inaccessible to us and are thereby deprived of the positive influence that our message would have on their character.

Furthermore this non-vocal stand of the denomination, especially in South Africa, delayed the break of racial and ethnic divide within the Nazarene family which would have given the necessary impetus and momentum to both the message of holiness and the Great Commission.

I must admit that this situation has made me and other Nazarenes feel like strangers in our own country. Anybody who cannot make a public statement to address genuine social concerns in his own country becomes a stranger to his own people. He cannot be silent and not hurt himself and

his people. Exercising the right to be silent when duty demands that we speak is cowardice and failure to give leadership.

It is therefore necessary that we urgently set up a denominational programme to promote participation in socio-economic and political transformation thereby widening the scope of the Great Commission. As much as we are setting up structures and availing opportunities of involvement in ministry, involvement in social issues must become a priority. Nazarenes must understand that there are certain problems that affect our spirituality that will not go away until their environmental causes are dealt with.

Secondly, it is important that when necessity calls from time to time, the church should have a spokesperson who would make statements putting forward or clarifying the position of the church on certain social issues of national concern on print and electronic media. If this is not done by the Regional Director there should be a designated competent national in each country who would do this job.

Thirdly, it will also help us if our current leaders and theological students would now and then be exposed to socio-political issues.

However, it is important that in balancing the message of the Great Commission by tackling socio-political issues we should not go to the other extreme by neglecting preaching personal repentance and holiness; it is changed people who change the world, and real change starts from within and flows out to our life situations.

It is time for the Church of the Nazarene to balance her proclamation of the Great Commission. The time is now.

## 28

### **Trying to Fulfil the Great Commission in Madagascar**

Rev Richard Ravelomanantsoa  
Pastor, Antananarivo and Morarano Churches, Madagascar

We are a missional church. The command of our Lord is to preach and teach **all** that our Lord has given to us. This means that we cannot be satisfied with just profession or faith alone. Our task is to preach and teach full salvation.

Being a missional church in Madagascar and carrying out that command is both a strange and challenging work. It is strange because it is a new concept for people in the ecumenical churches. It is challenging to the 1% who have a concept of evangelism but exclude part of the “all”.

#### **Problems and Challenges**

***The concept of sin:*** In both the ecumenical and most evangelical churches the concept is similar: the principle of sin will always be with you and so acts of sin are to be expected. In both cases they are urged to pray and ask forgiveness of their sins continually.

***The concept of salvation:*** The classical churches are not missional. Christian faith is the result of being able to take part in communion. This is granted following infant baptism and one year of catechism received during teenage years. Communion is the confirmation of faith in Christ according to the Apostles Creed.

The challenge we meet from this means that they are “Christianised” but not “Evangelized”. A response of someone like this following the JESUS Film is: “We are already Christians, why must we ask Christ to come into our lives?” In other words, they are saying we already have the truth by the means of baptism and communion.

The churches that are evangelical bring people to be born again, that is, justification, regeneration, and adoption. Sanctification is included theologically with the new birth. Salvation does not include deliverance or cleansing from the sin nature.

Pre-evangelism is necessary to show that their concept of truth regarding salvation is not biblical. Visiting the families in an area where evangelism is to be done and establishing relationships through small groups is essential if trust is to be built. This helps the people to be open to the teaching of the biblical understanding of salvation.

Another aspect we face is among the evangelical churches, which represent about 1% of the population. While they have a concept of mission and evangelism, and so preach and teach the biblical way of salvation by repentance and faith in Christ, they still struggle with sin. They teach that this struggle is natural for this life and the principle of sin will not be removed until death. In other words, they do not teach **all** that Christ has given to us.

### **Biblical responses to these problems and challenges**

Regarding these problems and challenges in Madagascar, we need to see the biblical response to the human problem -- the two aspects of sin: the sinful nature (Genesis 3; 6:5, Psalm 51:5, Romans 5:12-14) and the acts of sin or personal sin (Romans 3:23; 1 John 3:4).

When we talk about salvation, we deal with the sin problem. In God's disposition, salvation deals with a two-fold solution. Firstly, personal sin is dealt with by being born-again through:

Forgiveness that gives pardon from the guilt and penalty of sin

(1 John 1:9; Acts 10:43),

Justification that gives fulfilment of the demands of the Law

(Romans 3:21-25; 5:1),

Regeneration that gives new life through Christ

(John 3:1-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17),

Adoption that gives reception into the family of God

(Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 1:5).

Secondly, the sinful nature is dealt with through entire sanctification, subsequent to regeneration, which gives cleansing or purification (Acts 15:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

It is not in God's manner to solve the problem half way. He does it completely and totally once and for all through Christ (Hebrews 7:26-27). The Scripture teaches and we must make clear that the problem is not only the acts of sin but also as Paul says what causes us to sin is the sinful nature

(Romans 7:17). We lovingly teach that the blood of Christ can cleanse us from sin's power (Romans 7:24-25). It is an act of God, what we call His second work of grace, following conversion (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

In this case, as a result, we no longer have to struggle with this sin in the believer but rather he is at "rest" (Hebrews 4:3-11).

When we talk about full salvation, we mean entire sanctification. God makes us free from the root of sin. Full salvation does not mean that we stay at initial sanctification, being forgiven from our sins. God wants to do more until we are delivered from the sinful nature, which is the cause of human-nature problems. That is the complete restoration of the man to the resemblance of God's image.

### **Our Great Commission in Madagascar: A Holiness Evangelism**

With that biblical point of view, we will have a holiness evangelism. Our missions and ministries will be shaped with that biblical concept. The presentation of the gospel doesn't change: the cross, the resurrection, and the indwelling presence of Christ in the life of the person. But we will teach also the concept of sin to convince the believers to experience the sanctified life, to come to the point that we could live free from sin. Confrontation and temptation will still be there but there is no conflict or struggle anyway (James 1:12).

In the Malagasy context, it's hard to point out someone's sin or errors or mistakes face to face; it may close the door to the relationship. Anyway, we need also to tell God's truth in a loving way and not be hard.

## Response

Rev Don Gardner

Field Director, Africa East Field, Nairobi, Kenya

In his introductory comments, Rev Ravelomanantsoa points to a problem which describes a form of Christianity which can be called “nominalism,” which pervades the majority of mainstream denominations and churches throughout East and Central Africa, as well as Madagascar. Profession of faith alone is not enough! The Scriptures say, “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe and shudder”(James 2:19, NASB). But, they are still demons – Satan’s emissaries. Their belief alone has not changed their very nature. The theologies which teach that the principle of sin will always be there and is unavoidable and untreatable by salvation or sanctification – lock believers into a hopelessly helpless state of never being totally forgiven or fully delivered. There is never true hope that one can live a holy life, pleasing to God, and without sin. This breeds “nominalism”, a scourge of the church that “...just barely gets a believer’s foot in the door of salvation...” and gives no reason or hope for change in character in Christ, or for a deeper walk with the Lord. It promotes doing only the bare minimum action on the part of the believer to be called “Christian”, with the hope that it is just enough to enter in. Yet they struggle with sin. They are not satisfied with just a profession of faith, although they teach theologically that profession of faith is enough.

As Ravelomanantsoa has described, in both the ecumenical and most evangelical churches, the biggest problem is there is little or no change in the way people live, among those who call themselves Christian believers. It is a nominalistic faith. Often, there is little evidence that baptism or communion has brought regeneration, nor has it made a difference in the heart and character of the individual believer. Where is evidence of transformation of character? Where is evidence of restoration to the image of God? Regarding the mechanical, human actions of Communion and Baptism: can simple acts of men provide the means of grace for salvation, regeneration, or renewal to the image of God which is holy? These acts are based on ritual, formulae, and tradition. They are works of man, one to another, but can they in and of themselves effect salvation or holiness?

Ravelomanantsoa has rightly identified the need for establishing

relationships with small groups as essential for effective evangelism. Good relationships foster trust and establish opportunities for others to see within us the difference that comes from true salvation and sanctification. Scripture says “they will know them by their fruits”, and those fruits of the Spirit swiftly become self-evident in the sanctified believer. The unbeliever and the nominal believer will not miss seeing the fruits exhibited within a sanctified believer.

The challenge of the Great Commission to the Church is to “go”, “make disciples”, “baptizing them”, and “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (portions: Matthew 28:19-20, NASB). To answer that challenge, churches that are Great Commission churches MUST be “Missional” in their approach. The churches that are Great Commission churches bring people to be born again (justification, regeneration, and adoption) and bring the biblical concept of sanctification as a second definite work of grace, as deliverance from or cleansing from the sin nature. This recognizes the biblical evidence of the sin problem – the two aspects of sin; the sinful nature and the acts of sin or personal sin, as Ravelomanantsoa has so well stated and referenced in his paper.

In addressing the Great Commission and our response to it, Christ’s teaching calls for a life-changing decision and unwavering faith. Relationship with the living God brings change. He also commanded his followers to “wait for what the Father has promised...you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit...and you shall be my witnesses.” We cannot neglect the importance of the proximity of these teachings to one another, nor the results of that baptism as related repeatedly throughout the book of Acts.

A W Tozer (1979, 29) says, “In my sober judgment the relation of the Spirit to the believer is the most vital question the church faces today. Satan has opposed the doctrine of the Spirit-filled life about as bitterly as any other doctrine there is. He has confused it, opposed it, surrounded it with false notions and fears. He has blocked every effort of the Church of Christ to receive from the Father her divine and blood-bought patrimony. The church has tragically neglected this great liberating truth – that there is now for the child of God a full and wonderful and completely satisfying anointing with the Holy Ghost. The Spirit-filled life is not a special deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His

people”.<sup>157</sup>

The response of the Church to the problems Ravelomanantsoa has identified, must be to be fully “Great Commission” in our preaching and teaching, as well as in our going and discipling. There are the elements of “knowing, being, and doing” in the fulfilment of the Great Commission by the Missional church. We must KNOW our Saviour, in a relationship that transcends human understanding. We must be able to KNOW we are saved, beyond doubt. It is necessary for “making disciples”. We must BE children of the King, disciples that are filled with His Holy Spirit to overflowing. It is this baptism of the Holy Spirit that makes us witnesses – “...And you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses...” And that baptism of the Holy Spirit is how we are empowered to BE his witnesses to DO the Great Commission, which is to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...”(Matt. 28:19-20, NASB).

God’s nature is to solve the problem completely and wholly. His nature does not allow the ongoing presence of sin. May God help us to experience fully, to live fully, and to faithfully teach the full gospel of Jesus Christ. And this in order that we may be restored to the original image of God, in which both the sins of man and the sinful nature of man are dealt with completely and wholly through regeneration and sanctification through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Holiness! It is our hope and our calling. Holiness is the hope for Africa. It is the hope for all.

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<sup>157</sup> Tozer, A W. *Gems from Tozer: Selections From the Writings of A W Tozer*. Camp Hill: Christian Publications, 1979.

## **Response**

Rev Ronnie Roux

Pastor, Grace Church of the Nazarene, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

I can sympathise with the sentiment expressed by Rev Ravelomanantsoa in his work on trying to fulfil the Great Commission.

It is indeed a difficult task especially when our doctrine seems irrelevant to the times. Perhaps we have to face the fact that the Wesleyan Arminian doctrine of entire sanctification leaves many unanswered questions in the light of the modern shift in the Christian religion. It is especially true of those who have been indoctrinated by the Calvinistic doctrines of “once saved always saved”, and the “cheap grace” doctrines that promote “sinful saints” in an entertainment arena called the “Church”.

Perhaps it is true that the message of heart holiness is a “strange and challenging work”. But evangelistic preaching has resistance in most societies in the world today. Even in the UK, since the end of the Second World War, the Christian church has been on the decline. The same holds true for Australia and New Zealand. The task is all the more challenging to those who are called of God to take the Good News into the world. Was it ever easy? Even in the very early stages of the Church’s growth there were anti-Christian movements in high places that opposed the true Church. But, thank God we never have to depend on ourselves, He promised never to leave or forsake us. Success lies in finishing the task allotted to us and not necessarily by statistical demonstrations.

Unfortunately, we are in a world that demands proof and numerical evidence of our effectiveness. We forget that part of the Great Commission where Jesus said, “... and I will be with you to the very end.” Jesus is more interested in the souls of people than any one of us ever could be. He feels our disappointments and our discouragement probably more than we realise. But He asks us to persevere. In fact, I have personal experience of the same problem that is being experienced in Madagascar. Port Elizabeth, where I am ministering, has come under the spell of the Charismatic movement. It has been difficult for the past three years to attract people in a city of many churches where holiness is a strange doctrine. This has been the case for several decades now. There is a

marked decline in interest in our message. We also ask questions like the Rev Ravelomanantsoa does. I have constantly been talking to the Lord about the situation. I even whispered a desire to return to the Church in Cape Town where my ministry was more encouraging. But, even recently the Lord told me to stay where I am. It has renewed my resolve and my desire to carry on. He is with me and He knows the future. All I can do is continue to evangelise and never to compromise the message of heart holiness. Yes, we also face a strange and challenging work not quite the same as in Madagascar, but very similar in spiritual character.

Perhaps I could encourage my brother in Madagascar with my experiences. One of the first messages I preached in my present church was about being strong and very courageous. God was really talking to me as I later discovered when I went through a very difficult time dealing with a rebellion by some leading members in my congregation as well as having to face the leaders of my district. I could have capitulated then, but very distinctly God encouraged me through His word in a wonderful way to remain where I was. My congregation of 28 people became 16 members and some of them subsequently left for jobs in other parts of the country and to overseas. I took in nine members, leaving me with 16 members now. We have a lovely sanctuary and very little overhead expenses. The only difficulty we are facing is attracting more members.

It is a very introspective ministry where we constantly look at ourselves and sometimes have to face questions from others about our lack of growth, etc. But it is not all negative. In fact, once I realised that God wanted me here, I began to enjoy what previously bothered me. Jesus warned us about the times we are living in. Matthew 7:21 was an eye-opener for me. I also looked at the “many” and the “few” in Jesus’ ministry in Matthew’s Gospel. Although I am eager to win the hearts of many, I realise that God is busy speaking through our ministry of holiness and the seeds that we sow will positively affect some. In due time there will be a harvest if we do not give up.

About the *concept of sin*, we need to be aware of what our “target groups” have been taught. If a stream is poisoned at the fountain, the whole stream is polluted. The fountain, in this case is the doctrine of sin. People need to know, regardless of what they have been taught, that the Bible says the penalty for sin is death. It is death for whoever sins. Whether he is a saint

or a sinner, the same penalty applies.

Emphasis on the doctrine of sin has many implications even for the entirely sanctified. Holiness is impossible for the sinner. Some uneducated saints fall into a deceptive trap about the difference between carnality and infirmity, as we understand the term in our theology. While entire sanctification cleanses the heart from the cause of sinning, i.e. original sin, infirmities will always be a part of our humanness. It is necessary to paint the line of distinction although it will be a very broad line. A clear definition of sin will help the saint and the sinner to realise the possibility of Scriptural salvation. Holiness of heart is the work of God in response to a consecrated, born again child of God, hungering and thirsting for this experience. It is unfortunate that not much is seen of the necessary hunger for this “second work of grace”. Here is where we who tackle holiness evangelism need to be very clear in dealing with preconceived ideas about *the concept of salvation*. The Bible is very clear from beginning to end that “without holiness...” there is no salvation.

*Pre-evangelism* can be done by building up a rapport between ourselves and our target groups. It is probably true that we will win to Christ only those whom we have won to ourselves. How we accomplish such interpersonal relationships depends a lot on our own heart condition. What we are speaks louder than what we say. People read our hearts, not our lips. Much prayer must precede every contact we make with potential converts. It is God’s love that we need to share with people. Doing good deeds for the community and for individuals outside of the church is possibly a very good way of getting the attention of the communities we are serving. Sometimes it will seem like we are spinning our wheels in the mud and getting nowhere, but we need always to courageously and purposely continue to do good to others who do not necessarily deserve it. That is one of the reasons I am now serving the Lord in His kingdom; somebody in the church was good to me and my family.

*Biblical responses...* Speaking the truth in love must always have preference over doctrinal correctness. It is one thing to boast about our Scriptural exactness, but it is also intimidating to a sincere seeker. Many people enter into doctrinal debates because they are unsure of their beliefs. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 3:15 to wait until we are asked before we pounce on a listener with evangelical jargon that does nothing but antagonise.

Nonetheless, we need to spend much time in prayer and study to ensure our own knowledge of truth. We are blessed as a denomination with a wonderful treasure of literature and many gifted writers who have helped countless numbers of ministers to understand God's word and to apply its truths.

***Our Great Commission*** not only in Madagascar, but throughout the entire world, is holiness evangelism. Thank God for the "John the Baptists" who bring people to the initial stage of salvation through repentance and the new birth. The fields are ripe out there. Many of these souls are waiting to hear the Good News of Full Salvation. This doctrine of Entire Sanctification- is critically important for those souls. If we do not do the job, if we fail to tell them (Ezekiel 3:17 – 21), who will?

## 29

### **Pulling Back From the Brink: A Wesleyan Perspective on the Contemporary Evangelical – Islamic Confrontation**

Ubaid Al-Massiah

We should chiefly exercise our love toward them who most shock  
either our way of thinking, or our temper, or our knowledge,  
or the desire we have that others should be as virtuous  
as we wish to be ourselves<sup>158</sup>.

As we enter a new century, the world is facing a new schism, a confrontation between Western and Islamic societies on a global scale. Evangelicals are at the centre of that confrontation: the standard bearer for western society is an avowedly evangelical leader, the leading western nation in the conflict is the one in which the church is the strongest, and popular evangelical theology has come to view Islam in apocalyptic terms. If it takes two people to dance this dance of conflict, then it is clear that evangelicals are moving in close step with their Muslim partners.

Our Wesleyan-holiness heritage demands that we approach this confrontation from a different angle. First, a Wesleyan spirit of humility and self-examination forces us to recognize that people who call themselves Christians are perpetrators as well as victims in this global drama. Second, the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace forces us to recognize that God's grace is at work in the hearts and lives of Muslims also, continually drawing them towards him and his salvation. Finally, the Wesleyan spirit of social action and reconciliation demands that we see Muslims as part of our "global parish," that we seize every opportunity to do good to them too, actively assuming the role of peacemakers in the face of a potential cataclysm.

#### **Evangelicals at the Point of a Global Schism September 11 and Global Terrorism**

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<sup>158</sup> John Wesley, Recommended Reflections #4, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection in the Wesley Century*, T Crichton Mitchell, ed. Vol II of *Great Holiness Classics*, Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1984, p 213.

On 11 September 2001, the world awoke to a frightening reality, a well-organized attack by Islamic fundamentalists that levelled a leading symbol of Western economic power - the twin towers of the World Trade Center. This attack simply underscored a new reality of the post-Communist era: the sharpest remaining global division lies between radical Islam and the Western economic system. Two wars in two years against perceived symbols of radical Islam have only served to reiterate this reality. For many evangelicals, the events of September 11 simply served to confirm what they had already concluded regarding the threat of global Islam. In response to September 11, evangelicals across the world have said with a sigh, "Perhaps this incident will cause the west to wake up to the true threat of Islam." With the demise of the Soviet Union, Islam has gradually replaced Marxism as the paragon of evil in evangelical mythology. In pre-millennial eschatology charts, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Mu'amar Gaddafi, and Saddam Hussein have succeeded each other as the personification of the anti-Christ. As the Palestinians and Israelis have continued their "dance to death," the post World War II evangelical alliance with Israel has drawn Evangelicals into ever-closer ties. Evangelical frustration with the slow process of evangelism among Muslims combined with persecution faced by evangelicals converting from Islam, have caused many evangelicals to come to associate Islam, persecution, and martyrdom as synonymous concepts.

### **Persecution and Martyrdom**

The popular association of Islam and persecution is graphically portrayed in the November 2002 issue of *Holiness Today*, entitled, "Persecuted but not Forgotten". The centrefold sheet highlights sixteen countries in which persecution of Christians is occurring. Twelve of the sixteen nations are Islamic states.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> The Centrefold is based upon information provided by the evangelical watchdog group, "Voice of the Martyrs." The twelve Islamic nations highlighted by the article are Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The four non-Islamic states that were cited are China, India, Bhutan, and Nepal. Note that not one of these countries is an Orthodox or Catholic nation. In response to my "Letter to the Editor" of 29 November 2002 in which I raised some of the same arguments presented in this paper and questioned a few of the facts in this centrefold, Carmen Ringhiser wrote, "the magazine [*Holiness Today*] must stake its authority on sources like the Voice of the Martyrs." Carmen Ringhiser, personal e-mail, Tuesday, 17 December 2002. "Persecution and Martyrdom," in *Holiness Today*, Vol. 4, No.

When one compares the November 2002 issue of *Holiness Today* with a book such as *By Their Blood, Christian Martyrs of the Twentieth Century* an attempted global survey of persecution in the twentieth century, the differences are striking. Touted as a contemporary update of the classic *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* and written just twenty-five years ago, only 65 of its 580 pages deal with Muslim persecution of Christians.<sup>160</sup>

11, pp. 24-25.

<sup>160</sup> James and Marti Hefley, *By their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979). Hefley and Hefley deal with persecution initiated by Muslims in the following manner:

REFERENCES TO PERSECUTION INVOLVING ISLAM OR NATIONS WITH SUBSTANTIAL MUSLIM COMMUNITIES		
Bangladesh	157-158	Atrocities committed against Christians by Pakistani troops during Bangladesh's war of independence
Indonesia		No mention of Islam on Christian atrocities. Deals with persecution of Christians by tribalists and Japanese
Malaysia	186	One page referring to imprisonment of believers in Malaysia
Singapore		"An oasis" of religious tolerance
Philippines	196-197	Deals with Catholic and Evangelical violence; two pages devoted to concerns arising out of social conditions in Mindanao; no specific reference to Islam
Middle East	317-334	Country by country study of the Middle East
Sudan	349-358	Study of persecution of church in pre- and post-independence Sudan
Ethiopia	367-368	Douglas Hill killed by mad Muslim in the Ogaden
	372-373	Don McClure killed by Somali bandits in the Ogaden
Somalia	374-378	Survey of persecution since the Ethiopia/Somalia conflict in 1975
Chad	381-384	Islam a factor in post-Independence persecution of the Church
Mali		Only persecution by Marxists specifically mentioned
Guinea		Only persecution by Marxists specifically mentioned
Nigeria		No specific mention of persecution by Muslims
Tanzania		"There have been no Christian martyrs to violence in mainland Tanzania"
Uganda	425-439	Islam mentioned as a factor in the numerous rounds of persecution in Uganda over the centuries
Total pages with reference to Muslims	65	

The classic *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* itself, written in a medieval English context, does not cite a single incident of persecution by Muslims. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, W. Grinton Berry, preparer, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988).

A more recent, if more anecdotal study of twenty Twentieth century martyrs lists only one from an Islamic context. See Susan Berfman's *Martyr's: Contemporary Writers on*

The world has changed in the last quarter of a century, but clearly our popular stereotypes have changed to an even greater degree. It was no small irony to me that as I was reading the November 2002 issue of *Holiness Today*, a close friend of mine who had been travelling through the Orthodox heartland of Northern Ethiopia found himself unable to visit the church leaders he came to see: a severe wave of riots had broken out against evangelical churches. One evangelical was killed and several pastors faced extended imprisonment without trial.<sup>161</sup> Perhaps the reason that persecution by such traditional communities receives so little notice in evangelical culture today is because we view them as allies against the greater contemporary enemy of our culture, Islam, and we do not want to embarrass those we perceive to be our allies.<sup>162</sup> But the gospel does not permit us to “wave the bloody shirts” of the church’s favourite martyrs in order to feed our culture’s war lust, while we ignore examples of martyrdom that square less easily with our world view.

### **The Rip in the Global Fabric**

My great fear concerning Christian/Muslim relations at the beginning of the third millennium is that we are witnessing a rending of the fabric of Western-Christian/Muslim relations that will lead to tragic consequences.

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*Modern Lives of Faith* (Marknoll: Orbis Books, 1996). Robert Ellsberg’s essay entitled “Little Brother of Jesus,” (pp. 285-298) deals with the death of Father Charles De Foucauld at the hands of Tuareg rebels in 1916. It may be pertinent that this work reflects a Catholic, as opposed to Evangelical, perspective on martyrdom at the turn of the century.

<sup>161</sup> To corroborate this story, I asked another friend living in the area at the heart of the conflict to summarize the results of the unrest of November, 2002. His response was that this unrest cannot be separated from an extended wave of persecution that has lasted twenty-four months and has resulted in the deaths of five evangelicals in the surrounding area. Both of these two individuals wish to remain anonymous. It should also be noted, however, that the event that triggered the unrest of November 2002 was an extremely provocative denunciation of Orthodoxy in a public crusade by Evangelical leaders. The story of the persecuted church in Ethiopia, a story that includes persecution by animists, by Marxists, by Muslims, and by Orthodox, is comprehensively dealt with in John Cumber’s *Count it all Joy: Testimonies from a Persecuted Church* (Kearney, Nebraska: Morris Publishing, 1995).

<sup>162</sup> This presupposition ignores the role played by Orthodox communities in the persecution of evangelicals in Islamic nations. Historic and registered Christian minorities often file complaints against unregistered evangelical groups to Muslim administrators. What we as evangelicals perceive to be persecution by an Islamic government, is sometimes perceived by those Islamic administrators to be actions taken to protect their own Christian minorities against proselytism by unregistered groups.

To see the potential consequences of such a rift, one need only look at the total breakdown in Palestinian/Israeli relations since the beginning of the second Intifadah in 2001. With successive acts of terror and western retaliation against such terror attacks, we are witnessing a steady downward spiral in western/Muslim relations. Following terrorist attacks in Bali, Indonesia in November 2002, and numerous attacks in Pakistan in 2002, the numbers of westerners in these countries has substantially diminished. If further terrorist attacks occur following US military action in the Middle East, one can imagine a much greater loss of civil rights for Muslims in majority Christian nations than has already occurred. It is easy to blame our responses on the other party. But we must acknowledge that "it takes two to tango," and we evangelicals are dancing the dance of death with the Muslim world.

### **A Wesleyan Response**

There are three elements of Wesleyan theology that compel themselves to be recognized in the context of this present crisis. Wesley's method of self-examination carries with it a sense of personal humility in relationship to holiness. This sense of self-examination and humility forces us to admit that Christians are perpetrators as well as victims when it comes to persecution. Second, while much of the evangelical tradition focuses on the total depravity of humanity outside of God's grace, which results in the demonization of Islam, we as Wesleyans recognize that there are aspects of God's prevenient grace at work in the life of all humanity, even those far from God. Finally, the Wesleyan tradition is also immersed in the call to engagement and reconciliation with our opponents, and the call to be active peacemakers in the world.

### **The Wesleyan Method of Humility and Self-examination**

In his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, John Wesley begins his "Advice for the Entirely Sanctified" with the words, "Watch and pray continually against pride."<sup>163</sup> Serious introspection demands our confession that we live in a world in which Christians and Muslims are mutual persecutors and mutual victims. To give a very common example, in both my country of citizenship (the USA) as well as in my adopted country, there are communities that will say with pride, "there will be no

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<sup>163</sup> John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," in *The Wesley Century*, T. Crichton Mitchell, ed. Vol. II of Great Holiness Classics, Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1984, p. 204.

mosque built in our town,” even as they decry the failure of Islamic nations to permit greater freedom for the construction of churches.<sup>164</sup>

At a much deeper level, we must confess that people calling themselves Christians are also persecutors in the global confrontation between Christianity and Islam. This is nowhere more clearly seen than in countries along the fracture line between the Orthodox Christian tradition and Islam, such as Chechnya in Russia, and Bosnia and Kosovo in the former Yugoslav republic. In these locations, Orthodox believers have rallied their supporters for Crusades against the Islamic world, and terrifying atrocities have been committed. Who can forget the untold thousands of men pulled away from their families on the hillsides of Shrebrednitza never to be heard from again?<sup>165</sup> Before we wave the bloody shirt of Christians persecuted by Muslims, we should also confess that there are places in the world where evangelicals in power imprison each other’s evangelists and restrict the freedom of sects with which they disagree.<sup>166</sup> Finally in the context of Islam, we must confess that our Jewish friends view their position in Islamic societies as far more secure from persecution than their position in Christian societies.<sup>167</sup> Did not Jesus teach us to pray, “Forgive

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<sup>164</sup> Sometimes, this is expressed in a more self-righteous manner, “until Saudi Arabia permits us to build churches in the heartland of Islam, we will fight any construction of a mosque in our community with all of the powers at our disposal.” Members of my own family have been among the most vocal evangelical leaders opposing Saudi efforts to build an Islamic University in Washington D.C. This is a controversial issue, but there are many evangelical missiologists who are quite concerned about the western church taking a position of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” in this regard. To paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi, “an eye for an eye leaves none of us with a place to worship!” To deny Saudis the right to build mosques in the US might appear justified. But what about the Indonesian or Nigerian Muslim who would have worshipped along side the Saudi in that mosque? Why should that person, once denied their place of worship now support the rights of Christians to build a church in their own previously tolerant nation?

<sup>165</sup> Many evangelical leaders are fond of placing the blame for the Shrebrednitza massacre squarely on the shoulders of the United Nations. Before we do so, we should carefully examine which nations were the ones who were the leaders in restricting funding for this mission, thereby preventing adequate arms and resources from reaching the UN peacekeepers. We should also examine the positions of these same evangelical leaders regarding funding for UN peacekeepers in Bosnia.

<sup>166</sup> If anyone demands an example of this, I will be glad to share personal experiences that I am not at liberty to put in print.

<sup>167</sup> Perhaps the most definitive recent study of the historical status of Christians and Jews under Islam is that of the Princeton University scholar, Mark Cohen. Cohen argues that across history Jews have enjoyed a secure, stable, if “second class,” citizenship in Islamic

us our trespasses, even as we forgive those who trespass against us”?

### **A Wesleyan Notion of Prevenient Grace**

When I first met the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene while preparing for missionary service in 1992, I still remember a question posed to me by Dr Janine Van Beek. “You are preparing yourself for missions among Muslims. Is there anything positive that you can say regarding Islamic cultures and traditions?” Dr Van Beek was expressing a question that is solidly within the Wesleyan tradition. In what way is God’s prevenient grace already at work in the lives of those individuals that God has sent me to evangelize?

I find among most Muslims I meet a profound outrage at injustice, even if that injustice is sometimes selectively expressed. Most of my Muslim friends also have a strong commitment to public standards of morality. In these senses, I can acknowledge God’s prevenient grace at work in the lives of many of my Muslim friends, often as a direct result of the Islamic teachings within which they have been raised. This sense of injustice and this commitment to public standards of morality serves my Muslim friends better than the hopeless moral relativism of Western secularism. In that sense, I may praise God for the good side of their Islamic upbringing, and pray that God will help me find touchstones within those traditions that I may use to lead my Muslim friends for Christ.

### **A Wesleyan Call to Engagement and Peace-making**

Finally, Wesleyans can best understand our obligations with regard to Islamic cultures when we observe Wesley’s tradition of engagement and involvement with people. It is impossible to argue that John Wesley was an internationalist, or a complete pacifist, or that he escaped the ethnocentrism and religious prejudices of his day.<sup>168</sup> His anti-papist

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cultures. In Christian cultures, by contrast, Cohen argues that Jews have been treated as “chattel,” the personal possession of the ruler of the day, to be disposed of at his whim. Upon first reading Cohen’s assertions, I was offended by his thesis and refused to accept it. While I am critical of certain details of Cohen’s argument, after extensive study of his sources, I have become convinced that it is broadly true, and that it reflects the classical worldview of Jewish scholars in comparing the position of Jews under Islam and under Christianity. Mark R Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 52ff.

<sup>168</sup> While Wesley was not a complete pacifist, it is noteworthy that he is highly critical of war. In his Sermon “On Original Sin” (1759) (*Works of Wesley*, 9:192-464), he probes, “Now, who can reconcile war, I will not say to religion, but to any degree of reason or

positions are well known.<sup>169</sup> Not unnaturally, Wesley expresses the same type of bigotry towards Islam.<sup>170</sup> However, we cannot escape the

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common sense?" (9:221). However, his primary focus in this regard is to raise the question of how Christian princes can make war on each other.

Of particular relevance to the right of conscience in opposing war are Wesley's criticisms of the policy of King George with regard to the American War for Independence. In his essay "On National Sins and Miseries" (November 7, 1775) (*Works of Wesley*, 7:400-408), Wesley forcefully and unequivocally condemns King George's war in the colonies.

That he was not afraid to criticize his sovereign when the Red Coats were in harms' way may be seen in a second essay of the following year entitled, "A Seasonable Address to the More Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain Respecting the Unhappy Contest Between Us and Our American Brethren With an Occasional Word Interspersed to those of a Different Complexion By A Lover of Peace" (1776) (*Works of Wesley*, 9:119-128)

<sup>169</sup> An interesting note with regard to Wesley's position on the rights of Catholics is his statement in his journal for Sunday, November 5, 1780, where he states that he preached from Luke ix. 55: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of;" "and showed, that, supposing the Papists to be heretics, schismatics, wicked men, enemies to us, and to our Church and nation; yet we ought not to persecute, to kill, hurt, or grieve them, but barely to prevent their doing hurt." (*The Works of Wesley*, 4:193) The relevant question, naturally, concerns what rights he is willing to deny Catholics in order to "prevent their doing hurt!" There is much insidious persecution that occurs under the justification of "preventing" our opponents "doing hurt." *The Works of Wesley*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. complete and unabridged (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986).

<sup>170</sup> In the manner of his day, Wesley referred to Muslims as "Mahometans," or followers of Muhammad. In his sermon entitled "The General Spread of the Gospel," (*Works of Wesley*, 6:287-287) in his second series of sermons, published 1788, he refers to a world survey of religions by a widely travelled man by the name of Mr. Brerewood from just prior to his era. According to Wesley, Brerewood divided the world into thirty parts, of which nineteen were heathen, six Mahometan, and five Christian. (6:277). Of the Mahometans Wesley goes on to observe, "A little, and but a little, above the Heathens in religion, are the Mahometans. But how far and wide has this miserable delusion spread over the face of the earth! Inasmuch that the Mahometans are considerably more in number (as six to five) than Christians. And by all the accounts which have any pretence to authenticity, these are also, in general, as utter strangers to all true religion as their four-footed brethren; as void of mercy as lions and tigers; as much given up to brutal lusts as bulls or goats. So that they are in truth a disgrace to human nature, and a plague to all that are under the iron yoke. (6:278). The cure for this state of affairs, says Wesley, is the leaven of true holiness, outward and inward, in which the gracious promise of God to write his law upon our hearts will be poured out upon his church. (6:283) "The grand stumbling block removed out of the way, namely, the lives of the Christians," he writes, "the Mahometans will look upon them with other eyes, and begin to give attention to their words.... And then, the grand stumbling-block being removed from the heathen nations also, the same Spirit will be poured out upon them; even those that remain in the uttermost parts of the sea." (*Works of Wesley*, 6:284-285).

implications of Wesley's commitment to live out the social implications of the gospel in his own nation, and his commitment to a life of reconciliation and peace making.

"Blessed are the peacemakers," Wesley asserts in his "Sermon on the Mount III," because, "they endeavour to calm the stormy spirits of men, to quiet their turbulent passions, to soften the minds of contending parties, and, if possible, reconcile them to each other. They use all innocent arts, and employ all their strength, all the talents which God has given them, as well to preserve peace where it is, as to restore it where it is not."<sup>171</sup> Even more convicting than the responsibilities of the peacemaker is the all-embracing sweep of those whom we are obligated to make peace with. "[I]n the full extent of the word," he writes, "a peace-maker is one that, as he hath opportunity, 'doeth good unto all men'; one that, being filled with

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In "Part 1: The Past and Present State of Mankind," in his essay "On Original Sin," (1759), (Works of Wesley, 9:192-464) he condemns Sales "whitewashing" of Islam in his translation of the Quran. Regarding Muslims, he asserts that they, "not only appropriate to themselves the title of Mussulmen, or True Believers [*note Wesley's inaccurate translation of the word "Muslim", which means, "one who submits [to God].*"], -- but even anathematise, with the utmost bitterness, and adjudge to eternal destruction, all their brethren of the Sect of Hali, all who contend for a figurative interpretation of them." (6:216). He proceeds to condemn Muslims not only for their gross misunderstanding of God, but for lack of love of each other, as demonstrated by the fact that Turks and Persians slaughter each other in cold blood over the shape of each other's turbans. (*Works of Wesley*, 6:215-216).

However, regarding the final destiny of Muslims, Wesley writes in his sermon (Third Series), "On Living Without God," (*Works of Wesley*, 7:349-354), Let it be observed, I purposely add, to those that are under the Christian dispensation; because I have no authority from the word of God, "to judge those that are without;" nor do I conceive that any man living has a right to sentence all the heathen and Mahometan world to damnation. It is far better to leave them to Him that made them, and who is "the Father of the spirits of all flesh;" who is the God of the Heathens as well as the Christians, and who hateth nothing that he hath made. (*Works of Wesley*, 7:353)

<sup>171</sup> "In its literal meaning," Wesley writes in full, "[peacemaker] implies those lovers of God and man who utterly detest and abhor all strife and debate, all variance and contention; and accordingly labour with all their might, either to prevent this fire of hell from being kindled, or, when it is kindled, from breaking out, or, when it is broke out, from spreading any farther. They endeavour to calm the stormy spirits of men, to quiet their turbulent passions, to soften the minds of contending parties, and, if possible, reconcile them to each other. They use all innocent arts, and employ all their strength, all the talents which God has given them, as well to preserve peace where it is, as to restore it where it is not." (*Works of Wesley*, 6:284)

the love of God and of all mankind, cannot confine the expressions of it to his own family, or friends, or acquaintance, or party, or to those of his own opinions, -- no, nor those who are partakers of like precious faith; but steps over all these narrow bounds, that he may do good to every man, that he may, some way or other, manifest his love to neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies.”<sup>172</sup>

John Wesley sought to live out the whole gospel in the world that was his parish, the towns and villages of the United Kingdom and the new settlements of North America. We must seek to live out that gospel in the world that is our parish. The full gospel compels us to include the Muslims of our community in our own immediate parish, and to reach out in reconciliation and peacemaking to Muslims in other parts of the world.

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- \_\_\_\_\_. ***The Works of Wesley. Edition 3<sup>rd</sup>. Complete and unabridged. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986.***

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<sup>172</sup>Wesley continues, "He doeth good to them all, as he hath opportunity, that is, on every possible occasion; "redeeming the time," in order thereto; buying up every opportunity, improving every hour, losing no moment wherein he may profit another. He does good not of one particular kind, but good in general, in every possible way; employing herein all his talents of every kind, all his powers and faculties of body and soul, all his fortune, his interest, his reputation; desiring only, that when his lord cometh He may say, "well done, good and faithful servant!" (Works of Wesley, 6:284-285)

## **Response**

Rev Philip H Troutman  
Coordinator of Area 2, Mozambique

To begin, I congratulate Ubaid Al-Massiah on his most timely paper. The growing rift between Western Civilization and the Islam world is definitely dangerous. A “clash of civilizations” can only lead to destruction for both the West and Islam. September 11<sup>th</sup>, Afghanistan, and Iraq could be only the beginning of a much more horrific conflict on a global scale. This must be prevented at all costs!

But for me as a Wesleyan-holiness minister, even more disturbing is the growing tendency in Evangelical circles to “demonize” Islam which expresses itself in an active antipathy by Evangelicals toward Muslims – especially Arabs and Palestinians. Such anti-Muslim sentiments are completely out of character for followers of the Saviour whose commandment is, “Love your neighbour as you love yourself” (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31), as well as “Love your enemies...” (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35).

Each of Ubaid’s three main points are insightful applications of our Wesleyan-holiness heritage to what is perhaps our generation’s most pressing socio-political, cultural, and religious issue.

First, especially compelling is Ubaid’s call for Christians to humbly admit our own guilt – at least corporately – for directly persecuting Muslims as well as for supporting the cause of those who do. The Crusades, in which thousands of Muslims and Jews were slaughtered over a period spanning almost three centuries, are the classic historical example – and one which to this day Muslims have not forgotten – or forgiven! The massacre at Shrebrednitza of several thousand Muslim men and boys by Serbian<sup>173</sup> troops is a most horrible recent example. Less obvious, but perhaps more insidious, is the United States government’s policy of unwavering support for Israel while often turning a blind eye to the desperate plight of the Palestinian people. And the fact that the current US President is an evangelical Christian has not escaped the notice of the Muslim world.

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<sup>173</sup> Serbians are traditionally Orthodox Christians.

So, Ubaid is right: Clearly, if we are to have any chance at all of reaching for Jesus some significant number of the more than 1 billion Muslims in the world today, we must face up to the fact that, historically, those who call themselves Christians have too often betrayed their Saviour in their treatment of Muslims. Acts of corporate Christian repentance for the pain and suffering that has been caused to Muslims in the name of Christ could go a long way to stop the downward spiral of worsening relations between global Islam and the so-called “Christian West”.<sup>174</sup> True Christian humility calls us to lay aside our politics and be willing to weep (as our Saviour does) with all those who have suffered persecution, and do what we can in our own context to mitigate or completely eliminate such persecution. And particularly as Wesleyans, we must seek to live out our theology of “love made perfect” in relation to all people groups, not just the current political favourites. This may set us against the majority in some (particularly US) Evangelical circles, but then we Holiness people are used to being in the theological minority!<sup>175</sup>

Second, Ubaid is also very correct in his assertion that the Wesleyan understanding of prevenient grace requires us to look for the Holy Spirit’s “prevening” activity among all peoples of all religions, including Muslims. God’s image is still clearly visible in all peoples, whatever their religion or ethnicity. Sin cannot erase God’s image in humankind – however much it may deface it.

We freely acknowledge that adherents of certain non-Christian religions, including Islam, can be basically kind, generous people, with very high morals, and sincere yearnings for communion with the divine. But we maintain that this is not due to any essential truthfulness of those religions,

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<sup>174</sup> A notable act of corporate repentance for Christian persecution of Muslims was the three year Reconciliation Walk from Cologne to Jerusalem by over 500 Christians, which culminated on 15 July, 1999 with presentation to the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and top Muslim clerics of formal apology for the Crusades. Also notable was the controversial apology for “sins of the Church” made by Pope John Paul II in March, 2000. In my view, such collective acts of contrition can only help to strengthen our witness to Muslims.

<sup>175</sup> In particular, we must be willing to critically examine much of what passes for biblical “exegesis” in today’s Evangelical community, particularly in reference to End Times prophecy and the presuppositions about Israel and Islam made by dispensationalist theology which right now holds sway in so much of the Evangelical world.

but rather constitutes clear evidence of God's prevenient grace at work in their lives, cultures and religions.

In particular, I agree with Ubaid that Muslims' strong sense of injustice and adherence to moral absolutes are indeed signs of God's prevenient grace at work in the hearts and minds of Muslim people. And surely, that most fundamental doctrine of Islam – that there is only one, true God – is clear evidence that Muslims are being helped on their way to the truth by a loving God who yearns for reconciliation with all His children. Certainly, Muslims are closer to a correct understanding of God than are, say, Hindus, Buddhists, or adherents of various New Age philosophies!

Notwithstanding this, I believe a cautionary reminder is in order. Even while we acknowledge certain good aspects of Muslim culture as signs of God's prevenient grace, still we must maintain our clear theological stand against the *religion* of Islam. We rightly reject Wesley's own culturally-conditioned bigotry toward the "Mahometans"<sup>176</sup> as individuals. But as Christians, we must stand against Islam, because it is a false religion, a satanic deception which leads its followers to eternal damnation.

Although Islam is by far the most successful deception Satan has ever perpetrated on mankind, we harbour no illusions that Islam is somehow *more* evil than other false religions. From a theological point of view, all non-Christian religions are equally satanic in origin. Whatever their genesis, whatever their doctrines, and even whatever part they play in the cultural heritage of a particular people, we must maintain that all non-Christian religions serve primarily to divert their followers from the only true, saving faith – faith in JESUS CHRIST. We must stand unequivocally for the salvific uniqueness of Jesus Christ, who alone is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6), in whose name alone there is salvation (Acts 4:12). All Christians, but especially *holiness* Christians in particular, must continue to "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3), which declares that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11).

Third, Ubaid's final point is especially important. In today's world, if we are to avoid continuing escalation of the confrontation between politicised Evangelical Christianity and Islam, it is we Christians who must take the

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<sup>176</sup> See footnote no. 13 of Ubaid's paper for relevant quotes from Wesley's works.

initiative in seeking peace and reconciliation with Muslims. We, not they, serve a Master who said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). It is the New Testament, not the Koran, which enjoins, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18), and assures us that, “Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness” (James 3:18). So as Christians, specifically as *holiness* Christians, we should look for creative ways to “follow peace with all men” as we seek to make actual in our daily lives the “holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

A final note: As we work to carry out our Lord’s commission to us to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) and our own special task of “winning Africa for Jesus”, we must recognize that all non-Christian religions are in real competition with Christianity for the hearts and minds of humankind. The *followers* of these religions are not our enemies<sup>177</sup>, but the false beliefs they teach are inimical to Christianity.

This is especially true of Islam. Islam is the most “missionary” of the non-Christian world religions, and its missionary enterprise is far better financed than is the Christian world mission. Islam is also the world religion most vehement in its denials of the central truths of Christianity. The Trinity, the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the need for a Saviour, Jesus’ death and resurrection – all these and many other key tenets of the Christian faith Islam categorically denies,<sup>178</sup> and actively seeks to persuade others to its point of view.

Further, Islam presents a special problem to Christianity precisely because of the otherwise true principle of *monotheism*. Christians agree with Islam that there is only one true God. But there our agreement ends. Islamic teaching insists that the *Allah* of the Koran and the God of the Bible are one-and-the-same. As Christians, we must strenuously deny this: Firstly, on the grounds of the name given to God. The personal name of the God

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<sup>177</sup> Though they may consider us to be *their* enemies, we do not consider them to be ours. For Christians, only the *devil* is truly our *Enemy* (1 Peter 5:8), along with his demon hosts.

<sup>178</sup> See article by John Ankerberg and John Weldon, “Are Allah and the Biblical God the Same?” available at <http://www.johnankerberg.org/Articles/islam/IS0403W1.htm>.

of the Bible is “I AM”<sup>179</sup>, not *Allah*. Secondly, the God of the Bible is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which Islam specifically denies of *Allah*. And thirdly, because many essential attributes of Yahweh the God of the Bible – love, holiness, Fatherhood, a desire for relationship with his creatures – are never mentioned in the Koran as being attributes of *Allah*, or are specifically denied to be true of him<sup>180</sup>.

In Africa in particular, Islam represents a special challenge to Christianity because of its emotionally compelling (though historically spurious) claim to be “an African religion,” while characterizing Christianity as a Western, colonial, or “white-man’s” religion. We know this accusation against Christianity is false, but we must admit that much of the history of Christian missions in Africa does appear to support this charge. In order to belie this distorted view of the Christian faith, we must be careful in our evangelism and discipling to guard against any tendency (conscious and/or unconscious) to “westernise” our converts. And we must build up a strong core of African theologians who can contextualize Christianity in general, and Wesleyan-holiness theology in particular, for their own peoples and cultures.

In closing, I reiterate that Ubaid’s call to “pull back from the brink” is timely indeed. As Wesleyans, we must devote the time needed to form an authentically holiness plan of engagement with the Muslim peoples and their evangelisation around the world.

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<sup>179</sup> Hebrew *YHWH*. Traditionally here in Africa, as elsewhere, we pronounce God’s name “Jehovah”. However, in view of the woeful inadequacy of this transliteration, most Christian scholars today transliterate it “Yahweh”.

<sup>180</sup> Ankerberg, *op.cit.*

## 30

### **Great Commission: Evangelism in Africa From the Perspective of the African Renaissance**

Rev Meshack M Mashinini  
Chaplain, Military Hospital, Pretoria, South Africa

Nowadays it is commonly accepted that Africa is the cradle of humanity. This assertion is grounded on the scientific research which, among other things, argues that human beings have occupied Africa longer than any other area on the planet. It is also asserted that the earliest ancestors of the homo sapiens originated in Africa round about seven million years ago. One of the fascinating findings has to do with the question of population diversity that is characteristic of Africa. Hence Africa is home to five of the world's six major divisions of humanity. Therefore it is important to note that Africa accounts for the use of almost 1500 languages which are the offshoot of the families of languages; among them are Afro-Asiatic, Niger-Congo, Austronesian, and the Khoisan languages. The implication is that Africa "gave birth to the languages spoken by the authors of the Old and New Testament and the Koran, the moral pillars of Western civilization" (Diamonds: 1997).

It must also be pointed out that Africa is regarded as the cradle of human civilization. Africa is credited, along with China, Sumerian, and Mexican Indians, for the invention of writing that date as far back as 3000 BC. It is in Africa where hieroglyphic writing was invented, a system that later influenced the beginnings of Western civilization. In Genesis 2:13; 10:8-12 and 1 Chronicles 1:8-10 the Scripture states that the Cushites of Ethiopia were the compatriots of Nimrod, the Cushite who was the founder of the Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations. Such texts accentuate the fact that the Sumerians and Africans were related and most importantly it acknowledges that the origin of the Sumerian civilization (the bedrock of Western civilizations) is Africa (Adamo: 1998).

I believe that such a consciousness and deeper understanding of African history and its contribution to world civilization needs to be tapped into, to be appropriated and used as a point of entry not only in affirming the

dignity of the African people, but also in using it as a tool to concretize the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the collective consciousness of the African people. I hold the opinion that the question of sin and salvation as it relates to the African people is compounded by the fact that as Africans, we are ignorant of our contribution to the advancement of humanity. Our African-ness has always been perceived as representing backwardness, barbarism, and superstition. I think as Africans we can attain a sense of personal integrity through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but also by consciously accepting and celebrating the fact that Africa is the source of the religious consciousness of humanity. Indeed it was the religious belief system of Africa that promoted the practice of circumcision and propounded the notion of the remission of sin through animal sacrifice and this was almost 2000 BC. In fact, that practice preceded the first animal sacrifice to God by Abraham which sealed the covenant between Yahweh and Abraham.

The Church must acknowledge that it is the ancient African religion that laid the foundation of science, art, learning, engineering, and architecture as reflected in the splendid construction of the pyramids (Williams: 1987). I think the Church, both in its theology and praxis, needs to articulate a spirituality of the African renaissance. This will act as a frame of reference for an evangelization of Africa that acknowledges the African contribution in the formation of biblical religious tradition. The challenge facing the evangelization of Africa is to reconnect the present generation of Africans with the ancient ancestors, the role they played, and their contribution to the development of biblical faith. To evangelize successfully as Africans we must cite the role of our predecessors such as the exemplary role of the wife of Moses the Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1-9) as well as the role of the military man in David's army in 2 Samuel 18:21-22, 32-33. Furthermore we need to examine the role of Africa in the defence of Judah against her enemies (Isaiah 20:1-6, 18:1,7, 2 Kings 19:9), the story of Jehudi the African princess who read Jeremiah's scroll (Jeremiah 36:1, 21, 23), the role of Ebed-Melek the Cushite diplomat who rescued Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38:7-10, 12-13, 39:16-17) and most importantly, the role of Zephaniah the African Prophet (Zephaniah 1:1-2, 10).

I think that the Church must apply its mind to how to tap into some of the few citations of the Africans within the biblical tradition and utilize such sources as a means of creating space for the Africans to reclaim their rightful place as active participants in salvation history. Therefore as

Christians in Africa we need to broaden the concept of the African renaissance from the narrow paradigm of the democratisation and neo-liberalization process that is unfolding within the political and economic sphere of African life. Evangelization from the perspective of Africa's initiative must demand repentance from sin and a deliberate consciousness-raising of the collective African consciousness that has shaped and has been shaped by the biblical tradition which acts as an affirmation of the imago Dei of the sons and daughters of Africa. Afrika Mayibuye!

## 31

### The Great Commission

Mrs Thembi Mogorosi

Educator, Pastor's wife, New Creation Church of the Nazarene, South Africa

Entire sanctification is the prerequisite to evangelism without which all the other good equipment and ideas are ineffective. I firstly wish to thank Dr Edward Lawlor for his book, *The Covenant Supreme* and Dr Harold Ivan Smith for his book *The Quotable Bresee*. They have been of great help as I was compiling this paper.

#### **Definition of Words**

Entire Sanctification: It is the crisis experience that happens after a person has become a Christian.<sup>181</sup> The Holy Spirit sets him apart for a holy purpose (sanctifies) when he gives himself fully to God. The Holy Spirit cleanses a consecrated Christian from original sin. He helps him to love God completely and to love others as himself. He gives a Christian power to live a life that pleases God. It increases the desire to grow in grace.

Evangelism: It is the work of telling the good news (gospel) about Christ to people who are not Christians.<sup>182</sup> Its purpose is to bring these people to faith in Christ.

Prerequisite: According to the South African Student Dictionary, a prerequisite is something that must happen or exist for something else to be possible. Webster's Pocket Dictionary says it is a requirement or condition for further action.

Part of our mission statement as Africa Region Nazarenes talks about us as a Christian holiness family. Mentioned as one of the purposes of the church is winning the lost which is one of the main reasons for Christ to see His disciples after the resurrection. He entrusted His deathless cause to

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<sup>181</sup> Truesdale, Albert and Lyons, George. *A Dictionary Of The Bible In Everyday English*. Missouri: Beacon Hill. 1986. p89

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.* p95

a band of men and women, giving them a prophetic promise,<sup>183</sup> “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The responsibility of propagating the message of the gospel was put squarely on their shoulders. Christ knew the “burden was too heavy and the toil too great for human hands. He also knew when the doors open for the Holy Spirit, the work would move on with divine ease.”<sup>184</sup> He told them to tarry until the Holy Spirit has come. Nothing short of the burning heart was going to meet the needs of the dying humanity.<sup>185</sup> “It is not by might nor by power but by the Holy Spirit” (Zechariah 4:6) that we can have the burning heart. The disciples applied their surrendered hearts to the everlasting fire.

Of all the covenants mentioned in the Bible, the one that has the promise of Christ regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit stands supreme. To those left behind on the Ascension Day this covenant meant everything. Without it the brightest star had gone. Without it they were a deserted company and they were *without hope*. But with it the world for Christ was assured.<sup>186</sup> This promise was Christ’s contract to give them power to witness. Every man would acknowledge Christ because of it. But everything was centred around the second crisis, entire sanctification.

From experience we know that “without the help of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for us saints to convey to the sinner a single spiritual truth”.<sup>187</sup> What is needed is that we be as the disciples were, filled with the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere under which the church best fulfils its mission in the world is the atmosphere of Pentecost. The greatest need of sinful humanity today is to see Jesus. He can be seen only as we who see and know Him bear witness. When He blesses us with a clean heart, He gives us love and passion for Christ. With it comes the passionate desire for the salvation of others. The Holy Spirit opens the channels of communication between God and man, and His power works through him in convicting

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<sup>183</sup> Lawlor, Edward. *The Covenant Supreme*. Missouri: Beacon Hill Press. 1952. p15

<sup>184</sup> Smith, Harold I. *The Quotable Bresee*. Missouri: Beacon Hill Press. 1983. p47

<sup>185</sup> *ibid*, p 25

<sup>6</sup> *The Covenant Supreme*. Missouri: Beacon Hill. p11

<sup>187</sup> *ibid*, p47

and converting others.<sup>188</sup>

As a sending church, whether we are in Africa or any other part of the world, we would do better if we concerned ourselves more with entire sanctification. All others would fall into place because then, we would only produce people with burning hearts for souls. The moment the promise was fulfilled, the disciples' part of the covenant was also kept. They lost no time in witnessing<sup>189</sup> because the Holy Spirit enabled them. He created an incredible yearning to win the lost for Christ. They kept on in spite of the opposition and persecution they suffered. "The Holy Spirit became their defence, their power and their glow. He turned cowards into heroes, He touched stammering lips and they burnt with a divine eloquence, He gave them power which persecutors could not withstand."<sup>190</sup> Men and women literally changed their world as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. I agree with Jerald Johnson in Harold Bonner's book, *Proclaiming the Spirit*, when he says, "We have a generation to serve and our service must result in changed lives."<sup>191</sup>

It would do us a lot of good if we would go back to our inner chambers as lay people, as preachers, as heads of departments and coordinators of all levels, and tarry there until He comes and rekindles our fire. He would sharpen the story that we have to tell to the lost. He would add the charm and the attractiveness that was there with the early church. And of course, He would add to the church daily those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). I want to believe that we Christians have a task of rehabilitating Christianity with holiness. The people we are serving are anxiously reading our lives. They want an excuse to escape their responsibility to God because of what they see in our life. If we clothe ourselves with holiness, we will not have the need or time of defending our reputation as the church because we will be charging forward with the message of the cross.

Many times, because of the need the church is tempted to send out people to the field of evangelism without having the highest qualification for its success. Whereas Christ said it in no uncertain terms that we need to tarry until we receive power from on high (Luke 24:49). Perhaps many of us are

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<sup>188</sup> *ibid*, p22

<sup>189</sup> *ibid*, p12

<sup>190</sup> *The Quotable Bresee*. p 47

<sup>191</sup> Bonner, Harold. *Proclaiming the Spirit*. Missouri: Beacon Hill Press. 1975. p48

not ready because we have not received the experiential knowledge of the glorious heritage of the entire sanctification, or because we are not willing to pay the price. The apostles waited patiently. It was not easy but it was necessary. Thereafter they had the constant zeal to go out and proclaim the news of the resurrected Christ. Sometimes we forget that people do not judge Christianity through its founder, Jesus. But they judge it through its professors as Bresee says, “The hindrance in the way of the triumph of holiness is in its professors.”<sup>192</sup> Dr Litswele said it well when he said, “We should play our holiness ball so well that people will want to come and see.” Somehow the world has ceased to be our parish. We always need someone to do the groundwork for us. Thereafter we come in, just to maintain the status quo.

The power in the early church was for everyone. It is for us today too. Peter says, “The promise is unto you and your children and to all that are afar off”(Acts 2:39). The acceptance of our heritage, the entire sanctification will bring honour to God and permanent results to our church. Anything less will mean that the flame of the second blessing holiness is dying out.<sup>193</sup> And that will leave us a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Making noise without power. Leaving us with nothing to hand over to the coming generation.

When I grew up, my grandmother would make fire in the centre of the hut we lived in. On cold days she would put logs on the fire to sustain it. After some time she would stir it, feed it with more logs, and remove the ashes. That was the most upsetting exercise to us who were enjoying the fire. During the rekindling, tears would roll down our checks. After that, her fire would keep burning and drive the cold away even on the coldest days. She knew the secret that fire has a way of dying out on you even when you are still busy enjoying it. Perhaps that’s what we need to do with the fire within us. If not, we lose the burden for the lost. May God give us the willingness to pay the price.

It is true that we are living in a changing world. The gospel is facing a lot of challenges. It is challenged by modernism, materialism, atheism, and communism. It is also true that we need to be strategic people. We need

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<sup>12</sup> *The Quotable Bresee*. p51

<sup>13</sup> *The Covenant Supreme*. Missouri: Beacon Hill. p13

some equipment and gifted individuals to reach the lost. However it is also true that it is only as He uses them that they are of any use. There is no hope for us as a church to comply with the command of the Great Commission until we take upon ourselves<sup>194</sup> the responsibility of submitting to the divine condition, tarrying in the city until we are clothed with power from on high.

Experience has proved that our witnessing is enhanced through the experience of being Spirit-filled. May He create in us the spirit of indebtedness that will force us to go out and win the lost at any cost!

In closure, I want to quote Dr Phineas Bresee when he said, “The work, this particular work which God has called us to do must be done. Not something else, not something similar, but the very thing He has called us to do”.<sup>195</sup> At the end of our journey, we will be able to pass to the coming generation the very heart of the existence of our church – Holiness, Multiplication of Holy People, the Great Commission.

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p42

<sup>15</sup> *The Quotable Bresee*. p50

## 32

### Great Commission – Church of the Nazarene - Africa

Rev Daniel Mokebe  
Field Director, Africa Central Field, Harare, Zimbabwe

“A good name is better than a fine perfume...”(Ecclesiastes 7: 1a). Understanding who we are, where we come from and where we are heading is very important in our lives. The name of our denomination is derived from our Lord Jesus Christ. He was born in Bethlehem but grew up in the little town of Nazareth and was called the Nazarene. Our Church founder Dr Phineas Breese prayed seeking the Lord’s guidance and wisdom and God led him to name his Church after His son, the Nazarene. In the early days, our Church was called the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. We know that due to the tongues-speaking issue ‘Pentecost’ was dropped. To differentiate us from the tongues-speaking Pentecostals our forefathers chose the name Church of the Nazarene. Looking into the historical background of the Church of the Nazarene, there have been several mergers with other holiness groups with the same spirit of responding to the Great Commission. When the mergers took place other missionaries from these holiness groups were already in other countries of the world fulfilling the Great Commission.

From the early beginning Dr Breese desired to reach the poor with the message of holiness in response to the Great Commission. The reason for our existence is to touch the lost with the message of God’s love, preaching and living the message of heart holiness.

#### **Our Belief**

We believe in the Triune God, the creator God, who reveals himself in three ways: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The Great Commission comes from the heart of God. It was not an afterthought that God selected Mary and Joseph so that Christ might come through them, but it was decided before the creation of the world. “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Ephesians 1:4); “He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake” (1 Peter 1:20, John 3:16); Jesus said, “...As

the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

What we believe to be the Great Commission is the mandate of Christ before he ascended into heaven: “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth is given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Rick Warren wrote a book titled *The Purpose Driven Church*. I see that our Church is a purpose-driven church and the purpose that drives us is the Great Commission. One may say that mandate was not for us but was for the apostles. God’s love is inclusive. Christ’s prayer is also inclusive: “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message” (John 17:20).

### **Our Mission Statement as a Denomination**

The General Church Mission Statement as well as our Regional Mission Statement keeps us focussed. We are convinced that God has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light that we may be his witnesses. Just as he said to Abram, “I will bless you and make you a great nation and the nations of the world will be blessed through you”, we are saved and sanctified that others may be saved and be sanctified through us. We are blessed to bless others. We have been found to go and find others. We are to emulate our Lord.

### **We Follow the Footsteps of Our Saviour**

Jesus said, “The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He said “For the Son of Man has not come to be served, but serve and give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). We are Nazarenes following the Nazarene – seeking the lost. Whenever there is preaching about missions anywhere around the world, the scriptures often quoted are Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. We have taken it upon ourselves that God has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. We take this great command of Christ very seriously and we are on target. We also sense a special call upon us not only to preach salvation through Christ the crucified but also to preach and live the message of heart holiness. Oftentimes the Scriptures marked on our Church buildings and pulpits are: “But just as he who called you is holy, be holy in all you do;

for it is written ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Peter1: 15-16) and “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter2: 9).

### **Our Church Structures Help Us To Be On Target**

The mainframe structure is threefold – Local Church, District Church, and General Church. Within these structures we have sub-structures which we call auxiliaries, i.e. *NMI*, *SSM* and *NYI*. Our practice of coming together annually as local Churches and District Assemblies helps us keep our core values. No one is left working alone like an island. We believe in accountability and responsibility. This is an indication that a great day is coming when everyone of us will give an account before Christ.

#### *Nazarene Missions International*

We agree that this department is the driving force for missions in the Church of the Nazarene in Africa and around the world. The late Dr Phillips made a statement in 1969 that has gripped me to this day. That year was his first visit in Africa. He said, “I have been in Africa four times: First, I came by my **imagination**: listening to missionary reports, reading about the work in Africa I came. Second, I came by **my prayers**: prayer knows no distance, and so I came. Third, I gave to missions, so I came **by giving** love offerings. Lastly, here I am **in person** standing on the soil of Africa.” This speech of Dr Phillips opened my mind to better understand our denomination. Our Church gives every member the opportunity to spread the gospel around the world to reach the nations. NMI involves everyone in missions. It is through this department that missionaries are sent around the world; we have a great army of missionary men and women called of God reaching the lost.

I believe we are on target with the new emphasis from our World Mission Director, Dr Louie Bustle, that each Region be a sending region, each District and local church be sending agents. The Church in Africa has not yet fully experienced itself as a sending church. We are in a crawling stage. As I write this paper I am the fruit of this emphasis, living in Harare from South Africa. I am not the only one but have colleagues also sent by our denomination from Africa to other countries of Africa e.g. Rev Jonas Mulate, Rev Wellington Obotte, and Rev Eugénio Duarte. A new day is dawning in Africa. To be a sending church means supporting those whom

we have sent, as a poster of 1999 pointed out. Yes, the church in Africa supports us in prayer but has not taken full responsibility. Truly we are on track.

### *Sunday School Ministry*

Sunday School is not only an arm of the church to reach out to the lost but it is where the Word of God is taught to all age groups. Someone made this observation: “Plant a thought reap an action, plant an action reap a habit, plant a habit reap a character”. Sunday School is another place where those won to Christ are disciplined and Christians are taught how to apply the Word of God in their daily living. The only weakness observed in the African Church is that many of the Sunday School teachers are not well trained and therefore this is one of the greatest needs and calls for our immediate attention. We have excellent teaching materials which are coveted by other denominations.

### *Nazarene Youth International*

Our church believes in the value of young people and they are an integral part of the local Church. The key verse of their motto is very powerful: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). In Africa the highest percentage of people living today is children and young people. Recently I read the quotation “Dig where there is gold...unless you just want to do some exercise” (Reader’s Digest 1988). In our Church there is an emphasis on children’s ministry for the next ten years, and recently a children’s ministry coordinator has been appointed under the Lay Mobilization Department for the Africa Region. This is a big step. We want to dig where there is gold.

### **Evangelism Strategy and Methods**

What are some of the methods which help us fulfil the Great Commission in Africa? A church planting a baby church, tent campaigns, and Compassionate Ministry (NCM) which has done a great work in the last two years. Southern Africa has been hit by famine, especially Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe.

Feeding programmes took place in these countries not only for the sake of humanitarian aid but also for touching people with the love of Christ. In one area a Church planted 9 new churches through this programme. Africa also has been hit hard by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Parents die and leave

orphans uncared for. NCM has helped through conducting training sessions for AIDS awareness, training local Churches not only in how to take care of orphans or AIDS affected patients but also how to avoid this deadly disease. In Zambia the Church has taken full responsibility and compassionate ministry has become a lifestyle of our local churches and Christians.

Other methods used to fulfil the Great Commission are JESUS Film Partnerships, personal evangelism, and the training of ministerial students in our institutions. We also try to enter new areas and new countries in every quadrennium (on the Regional level). A weakness observed is a lack of a system that helps us retain more converts in the discipleship class who have been led to Christ through the JESUS Film. I feel that we need a great help in this God called ministry. Nevertheless we are on target.

### **Needs in the African Church**

*There is a need for pastoral support.* Working in poor economic countries, I have seen that the system of a proper support for ministers is lacking. Local churches, which biblically should be taking responsibility for the support of their ministers, are very poor or are not doing anything at all.

*There is a need for called,* committed, and sanctified men and women of God, who solely depend on God and believe in his Word.

*There is lack of laity,* saved and sanctified, who understand the heartbeat of God and the mission of the Church.

What would the solutions of the above needs be? It will take a Holy Spirit revival in every local church and district and creative thinking and hard work.

### *Facts Can Tell It Better*

In Africa our membership on the Region from 1987 doubled in five years from 37,000 to over 100,000 members. To date we are over 250,000 members. We have a goal to reach 1 million new Nazarenes by 2010. We cling to his promise "...surely I will be with you until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Without him we can do nothing.

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## 33

**Strategic Multiplication of Churches and Discipleship Training  
in the Church of the Nazarene in Africa: Case Study, the South  
Kivu District in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

Rev Déo Munyololo Mwenelwata

Pastor, John Wesley Church of the Nazarene; Lecturer, Institut  
Biblique Des Pays Des Grands Lacs, Bukavu, Democratic Republic of  
Congo

The history of the Church of the Nazarene states that the church entered Africa in 1901 via Cape Verde. Eighty-three years later (1984), it was present in 11 African countries. From 1986 to 1999 the Church of the Nazarene in Africa opened work in 22 other countries<sup>196</sup>. The number of churches has passed from 1 in 1901 to 729 in 1985, to 1,689 in 2000 and to 1,800 in 2003; members grew from 1 in 1901 to 41,357 in 1985, to 216,967 in 2000 and to 251,153 in 2002. According to Dr Richard F Zanner, Africa was the test region.<sup>197</sup> Nevertheless, an important question is raised: how do we explain the Church of the Nazarene galloping from one African country to another while the local churches have difficulty in growing? Careful thought on this question will help African Nazarene theologians to connect better discipleship training with church growth.

We propose in this exposé to briefly present what we mean by *multiplication* and *discipleship training*, the obstacles and the advantages for discipleship training in Africa in general and in the South Kivu District in the Democratic Republic of Congo in particular.

In order to do the best possible work in this study, we adopted several methods and techniques: documentation, observation, participation as a pastor, interviews, questionnaires, and conferences.

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<sup>196</sup> “World Mission, 25<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene”, *Holiness Today* 3 June 2001: p 59,52.

<sup>197</sup> Zanner, Richard F. “Let’s talk about the Region”, *Trans African* XVI, 3. September 1994. p 2-3.

When it comes to the multiplication of churches and members, we need to respect a certain procedure, specifically that of Ralph Winter as cited by Dr Louie E Bustle and expressed as follows:

“Internal growth is the development of qualitative growth within the church, sometimes referred to as nurture ... Expansion growth is the numerical growth of the local church as new converts are won and incorporated into the church ... Extension growth refers to the planting of new churches in the same society as the original churches ... Bridging growth is characterized by the planting of churches across a cultural barrier...”<sup>198</sup>

Unfortunately, this procedure isn't followed very often, forgetting perhaps what Donald McGavran and George G Hunter III had written:

“We are more and more convinced that our objective is to motivate leaders to support and to get involved in all aspects of church growth and not just those which favour a numeric growth in their congregations”.<sup>199</sup>

These two authors have implicitly agreed with John Wesley who defined certain principles for a true multiplication, notably: trained small groups which contribute to the equipping of disciples and in which everyone exercises his gifts and experience.<sup>200</sup> It is my humble opinion that there are three fundamental reasons that from time to time cause us to abandon this plan: 1) social problems which make some people think that the church is a place of refuge, 2) a policy of occupation that consists of wanting to show our presence in relationship to other denominations, and 3) a certain self esteem demonstrated when leaders work for their own personal interests resulting in division, discontent, and desertion.

Another important aspect is that of the training of disciples. The Great Commission is clear: “Go therefore to people of every nation and make

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<sup>198</sup> Bustle, Louie E. *Keys For Church Growth*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1990 p 35-36.

<sup>199</sup> McGavran, Donald and George G Hunter III, *Church Growth: Strategies That Work* Nashville: Abington Press, 1986. p 42. (Note: Quotation is a translation from French to English, original English copy not available.)

<sup>200</sup> Howard, Snyder A. *The Radical Wesley and Patterns of Church Renewal*. West Broadway: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998. p 53-64.

disciples” (Matthew 28: 19 translated from French).

It is a difficult task to train disciples at a normal pace as long as our local church leaders haven’t had a thorough theological training themselves, for a disciple “ is above all a person who learns, a member, a follower. A disciple learns from or follows another person, the master.”<sup>201</sup>

In order to accomplish this, there are several strategies to follow and all of them underscore training. Thanks to training, according to Leroy Eims, a leader leads the new convert into becoming a disciple, then a “worker” and finally a leader.<sup>202</sup> Rev Russell Frazier has outlined this training as follows:

- Children: Catechism and Bible quizzing;
- Youth: 8 months of training before becoming full members of the church; 3 months of training after admission as a member;
- Clergy: Their own special training program;  
Continuing education for everyone.<sup>203</sup>

Drs Louie E Bustle and Bruno Radi have also contributed to this discussion with the following:<sup>204</sup>

- Each One Win One,
- Big Brother (Sister) Programme,
- Prayer Cells, potential organized churches,
- Evangelistic Campaigns, and
- Training.

Carl C Green proposes that the Church of the Nazarene organize a nine-session seminary with the following themes: Biblical theology, history of the Church of the Nazarene, the articles of faith, salvation and entire sanctification, entire sanctification and speaking in tongues, government of the church, general rules of faith, special rules of faith and Christian life,

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<sup>201</sup> Dervey, Joanna. *Disciple of the Way: Mark on Discipleship*. Cincinnati: Global Ministries, 1976. p 48.

<sup>202</sup> Eims, Leroy. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980. p 183.

<sup>203</sup> Frazier Russell, *Le chemin d’un disciple Nazaréen* Kigali, 2003.

<sup>204</sup> Bustle, Louie E and Bruno Radi. *New Solutions: A Model of Aggressive Evangelism* Quinto: n.p. 1993. p 46-47, 60, 65, 79-80, 87

and finally, the need to produce ministers.<sup>205</sup> From this programme, our attention is drawn to a fourth theme which Green explains as follows:

“Clarify the doctrine of salvation comprehensively and the doctrine of entire sanctification which not everyone has mastered.”<sup>206</sup>

This concern moves us directly into a brief analysis of certain obstacles and advantages that are encountered in Africa in the process of discipleship training.

- *Conflict among leaders*: because of management problems and the race for power, misunderstandings abound openly and publicly before the members of the church.
- *Recruitment of members*: referring to large numbers of people joining the church not as a result of evangelism, but as a circle of friends. In this case, the idea of a community of faith loses all sense of meaning.
- *Instability of members*: tied to the preceding problem, especially when the church does not respond to the social needs of the individuals.
- *Coexistence of African customs with Christianity*: like that which was discussed during the Regional Conference of 1992.<sup>207</sup>
- *False understanding and use of the **Manual***: certain local leaders do not understand that this very important document *accompanies* but does not *replace* the Bible and that its application, especially in the creation of certain local structures, must depend on the human and material resources available.
- *Weak financial commitment in the local churches*.
- *Selective theological training*: this must be extended in a permanent way outside the major cities and in every country.
- *Doctrinal conflict in the local churches*: in the sense that many leaders and members come from other denominations.
- *Insufficient financial assistance for pastors and for district*

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<sup>205</sup> Green, Carl C. “Prepared Members As Better Members”, *The Preacher’s Magazine* June-August, 1984. p 44-46.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid p 44. (Note: The quotation is a translation from French to English, original English copy not available.)

<sup>207</sup> Regional Conference, “Steps Toward Holy Living in Africa”, *Trans African* November-December 1992. p 1-7.

*superintendents*: given the poverty in Africa and the situation of churches spread out over large territories sometimes larger than some countries.

- *Ignorance of the process of organizing local churches*: this is the source of several “anaemic” churches.
- *Misleading statistical language*: In reality, most of our pastors do not have sufficient training to analyse statistical reports.
- *Difficulty of admission into the missionary circle*.<sup>208</sup>
- *Confusion between being enrolled in Sunday School and being an active member*: our experience demonstrates that, for local churches of Africa, this distinction just does not exist, both must participate in the worship service and in the programme of instruction.

In South Kivu, the same concerns appear. However, it is necessary to add certain comments. The district is situated in the east and southeast of the country, bordering Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Zambia. The Church of the Nazarene in Burundi depended until now on the South Kivu district. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the district covers 695,552 km<sup>2</sup>, from 1,460-1,850 m altitude, with 9,420,892 habitants before the wars (1996).<sup>209</sup> The climate is equatorial with its dense rain forest, mountains, plains, savannahs, rivers, lakes, and parks. The district has existed since 1994 but it has never had a permanent superintendent of its own, from which stem the chronic problems of leadership and endless conflicts. To this, one must add:

- The absence of official documents which authorize the Church of the Nazarene to function in the country. Local churches are regularly threatened of being closed and we appear to be a sect.
- The Church of the Nazarene does not build anything in South Kivu.
- As to pastoral training, we find it unusual for Nazarenes of South Kivu to have to go to Rwanda for their training, and we are therefore looking forward to the possibility of creating a network of

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<sup>208</sup> Selon *Missionnaires de la Région Afrique LIENS 2002-2004* du 24 juillet 2002, 5  
Missionnaires Africains sont retraités et 5 en activité.

<sup>209</sup> Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu, *Projet-Conversion de l'I.S.P./Bukavu en Université du Kivu* (Bukavu 1998), 18-19.  
Administration du Territoire, Province du Sud-Kivu, *Rapports 2000 et 2001*.

integrated theological training. Dr Robert Woodruff describes this network as: a Bible college as a hub, and ecclesiastical zones like a circle tied to the hub for the purpose of extension education.<sup>210</sup> Such a school would permit better discipleship training and the preparation of candidates for the upcoming Francophone Nazarene Faculté.

- Finally, the wars which began in 1996 are an obstacle which seriously inhibits church growth.

It would be unjust not to recognize the efforts of the Church of the Nazarene; certain internal and external factors can be cited and need to be underscored. Without hinting at any order of importance, and conscious that we are not making a full inventory of services provided by the Church of the Nazarene in Africa, we cite the following: an African solidarity, education, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, the JESUS Film Partnership, dedication on the part of pastors, aviation, Nazarenes In Volunteer Services, radio, literature, and a dynamic youth programme.

In conclusion, to make disciples is a divine order for every Christian. Jesus did not call everyone who followed him a disciple; that title was reserved for those who were well known and well trained by him. In the same way, we hope that by the closure of this conference we will institute a system that will permit the fields to establish statistical reports recording the number of disciples formed each year and to broaden our training to include the general populace of the church. The result can be, then, the multiplication of churches on the basis of the multiplication of disciples.

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<sup>210</sup> Woodruff, Robert L. *Education on Purpose: Models of Education in World Areas* QUT Publications 2001. p19.

## 34

### Great Commission

By Rev Simon V Radebe  
Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Hlatikulu, Swaziland

It is the love of Christ which constrains us and moves our hearts to those people in need of the gospel. As a young man at the age of twenty the Lord called me to preach. He called me to a full-time service. This was 1977 and I had my own plans about my future career.

When Jesus saw that the entire world was in darkness and confused, He spoke to his disciples: “And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).<sup>211</sup> Other versions say, “He was moved with compassion”, meaning that Jesus was greatly touched.

Jesus, as an example of the greatest leader, delegated the responsibility to His disciples. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

In order for the gospel to reach every human being the church (followers of Christ) must “go”. Before the end comes, Jesus said, “...this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end shall come” (Matthew 24:14).

Now, the Great Commission comes into place and it is about sending out disciples into the whole world. When Jesus first sent His disciples, He sent them exclusively to the house of Jacob or the nation of Israel.

“These twelve disciples, Jesus sent them out after instructing them saying, ‘Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of Israel’” (Matthew 10:5-6).

The Great Commission is therefore different from the previous

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<sup>211</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible

commission. It is a commission of an overwhelming magnitude. Now listen to Jesus as He pronounces it with a resounding majesty: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18b-20). The magnitude of this commission is that the nations of the whole world must be reached with the gospel, **THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST.**

The church, or the people who are called by his name (and God Himself is not ashamed to be called their God), must realize that in order for the nations of the world to be converted into Christianity, it must go to them.

The scripture says: “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDING OF GOOD THINGS’” (Romans 10:14-15).

As Jesus was sent by God, He also sent His disciples. So our denomination, the Church of the Nazarene, is a people sent by God and must continue to be a sending people since this is an on-going task. “As thou didst send me into the world I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). The Church of the Nazarene as a sending people continues the work of Christ.

To be a sending people is to be a people with the vision of Christ. This is to say the Church of the Nazarene is a Christ-centred church. A sending people are a praying people, a giving people, and a caring people.

Since we do not want to lose sight of the needs of the people, the World Mission Division has a department of **COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES** which reaches out to the needs of the people. To countries and regions where disaster has hit hard, where floods and drought leave the people in great need, the Church of the Nazarene comes with aid such as food and clothing through the Compassionate Ministries Department. This is how the church ministers to the various needs of the people.

Jesus ministered to all people meeting their needs. That is to say Jesus

ministered to the total person or the whole person. “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (Matthew 9:35).

Jesus preached, taught, and healed the sick. The Church of the Nazarene established churches, schools, and clinics in order to meet the needs of the total man. The Compassionate Ministries division caters for the physical needs of people.

The Bible says that as Jesus saw the multitudes, “they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). The New International Version says, “they were harassed.” The reason for the existence of the Church of the Nazarene is that we must, as a church, present Christ in our communities and make a difference. People must know and see that we are “... servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1).

The church must evangelize through both mass and personal evangelism. We must teach the new convert and make disciples who will also evangelize and win souls. One of the effective tools we have for evangelism is the JESUS FILM. The local church revivals, Bible-study and prayer cells are still essential for evangelism in our world.

Our response to the Great Commission must be, “YES LORD, send me”. We must respond to God’s call positively more than ever before. The Bible Colleges and Theological Universities of the Church of the Nazarene must be filled with men and women who are prepared to take the gospel to the whole world.

When God called Isaiah the prophet, it was clear that the work was enormous. Listen to Isaiah as he asked the Lord: “Then Isaiah said, ‘Lord how long’? And He answered, ‘UNTIL CITIES ARE DEVASTATED AND INHABITED HOUSES ARE WITHOUT PEOPLE AND THE LAND IS UTTERLY DESOLATE’” (Isaiah 6:11).

There are disturbing trends like wars, hunger, politics and AIDS (the dreaded disease). The church can use some of these trends as an opportunity to spread the Gospel to those who are bed-ridden because of AIDS; the church must be available to offer hope. There is hope of salvation and eternity with God in spite of the killer disease. The one who

has called us (the church) is faithful and will do it. The promises of God are ALL YES. “He who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one will open, says this, ‘BEHOLD I HAVE PUT BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR WHICH NO ONE SHALL SHUT’” (Revelation 3:7b-8).

The challenges we face now are becoming more complicated than before. Some countries because of political changes are rejecting the Bible. To teach the Bible or teach the Lord’s Prayer in public schools would be a crime in some countries. Other countries have legalized prostitution and homosexuality arguing that it is a human-right according to their constitution. But our God has promised us that even the gates of hell will not prevail against His church.

## 35

### **An Empowered Church**

Rev Kobie Vlok

Pastor, Primrose Church of the Nazarene, South Africa

The Africa Region Mission Statement pronounces: ‘The Church of the Nazarene on the Africa Region is a Christian holiness family made up of various language and cultural groups for the purpose of: Worshipping the Saviour; Fellowshiping and Serving with the Saints; Winning the Lost; Discipling the Won; and, Deploying the Disciplined.’ The only way that this mission is going to be realised is when every leader and every pastor in Africa is effectively empowered to fulfil his or her own mission.

Is the Church of the Nazarene in Africa effectively empowering her leaders? I would like to suggest that this question should be considered not out of a institutional point of view, but rather out of a ‘grass roots’ or personal point of view.

I joined the Church of the Nazarene in 1984 in order to follow the call of God to go into pastoral ministry. I remember that it was with a sense of great excitement that I entered the Nazarene Theological College in Florida, Johannesburg. As the four years sped by my sense of excitement grew as I looked forward to going out and pastoring. In 1989 I moved to the Regents Park Church to take up a position as Associate Pastor. In April 1992 I moved to the Three Rivers Church to take up a position as Senior Pastor that I fulfilled until the end of the year 2001.

My tenure first as Associate Pastor and then Senior Pastor included both good and not so good experiences. I spent three and a quarter years at the Regents Park Church. It was expected of me to run the Christian Education Department and Nursery School. This I had to do based on my learning and exposure that I received at the Nazarene Theological College. Most of the time it went well. Often however I did not know what to do. A nagging question entered my thoughts whether there would not have been a better way to do the job.

I spent almost ten years at the Three Rivers Church of the Nazarene. When

I got there I was informed by the church board that I was to ignore my predecessor's work and to start running the church as if it was a new church. I proceeded then to attempt to build the church with the knowledge I gained from my years as student at the Nazarene Theological College and as Associate Pastor at the Regents Park Church. Over the years my best experiences included building good relationships with the people in the church, as well as the community. I also had good experiences in seeing many people growing as Christians. However, in terms of seeing the leadership of the church growing in adopting new ways of ministry, I had little success. In terms of seeing new people settling down in the church, I also had little success. Seeing the lack of growth in the church only increased the nagging question in my mind whether there is not a better way to run the church.

Over the years I started to ask some very real questions about the following issues.

- 'What am I doing wrong and what am I doing right?' The problem with this question was that I had no way of really knowing whether what I was doing was right or wrong. The result was that I spent years trying new approaches to ministry without really knowing that it was the right approach for my church. Every time the District or General Church introduced a new approach to ministry, I would try it out, one way or another, seldom with lasting results.
- 'Am I not holy enough?' I often sought God's anointing on my ministry.
- 'Am I not praying enough?' I often prayed that God would send revival. I noticed many people in various churches prayed yet without significant results.
- 'Is there something wrong with the people, including local leaders, in the churches?' I quickly realised that the whole point of having churches is to lead and develop people into having a life fully devoted to God and to be empowered to live for Him. Therefore I could not look for the fault with the lay people; rather I had to look at the leaders of the church.
- 'Is there something wrong with the District or Regional Leadership?' Over the last eight years the district and region that I am part of had very good leaders. Their leadership per se was not the problem.

- ‘Was there something wrong with the theological training that I received?’ I noted that out of the 24 courses that I completed only 7 related to practically running a church. Subsequent to my theological training I was exposed to many other outstanding courses. My conclusion was that there was nothing wrong with the theological training that I received.

In my quest for better ministry, I started to speak to many of my colleagues within the Church of the Nazarene, and without. To my amazement I discovered that many of them struggled with the same nagging questions that I have been struggling with to a lesser or greater degree. Consequently, many pastors are experiencing a sense of insecurity, failure, and even confusion.

The conclusion that I came to was that the average pastor, including myself, has and is receiving excellent theological training as well as various other courses and programmes. However, in terms of turning theoretical training into practical hands-on ability there seems to be a problem. In considering this conclusion, I thought of the first years that I started my tenure as Senior Pastor at Three Rivers. I cannot help but think that I, and the church, would have done so much better if there were someone who could have walked the road with me as a mentor or a coach to reflect or interpret for me what I was doing right and what I was doing wrong.

Recently I was exposed to a video of the Equip Group of Dr. John Maxwell on the issue of empowerment<sup>1</sup>. I was sufficiently impressed that I concluded that our pastors, including myself, would have been a lot more effective if we had an adequate empowering system in place. The younger pastors, and their families, would be a lot less susceptible to hurt and disappointment if they were adequately empowered right from the beginning. Our pastors would be a lot more effective in steering their congregation in the midst of a fast-changing society if they were empowered on an ongoing basis.

The empowerment that I am talking about goes way beyond the classroom that imparts new knowledge. It includes helping the pastor not only to have the knowledge of what has to be done, but also creating enough practical wisdom, understanding and self-confidence to minister effectively. It is the kind of empowerment that takes place when a pastor

has a person or a group with whom he can share his specific situation and be guided by the combined wisdom of his colleague or colleagues to resolve that situation.

The Equip organisation suggests the following twelve steps to empowerment:

1. Know yourself
2. Know the people that you would like to empower
3. Clearly define the assignments
4. Teach the why behind the assignment
5. Discuss the growth process as they go, interpret what is happening to them as they grow in their ministry
6. Spend relational time with those that you are attempting to empower
7. Allow them to watch you work
8. Give them resources that they need
9. Hold them accountable for their assignment
10. Encourage them to journal through the process so that they may monitor their own progress
11. Give them freedom to fail
12. Evaluate and affirm them regularly

These twelve steps may look to some as straight forward; however, I would like to suggest my observation is that very little hands-on empowerment is done beyond the typical classroom situations. Much emphasis is laid on educating our pastors and leaders in the classroom; however, little emphasis is laid on how to make it work on the 'front-line'.

I would like to suggest that local leaders as well as district and regional leaders be empowered to empower other leaders. The consequence will be many fold, for example:

- Local churches and districts as well as our region will function a lot more effectively
- National leaders on all levels of the region will become ready for regional leadership much quicker
- New churches will be matured a lot faster
- Pastors and their families will be a lot less susceptible to unnecessary hurt and disappointment

In conclusion, it is the stated goal of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa to have one million members in the year 2010. Without adequate empowerment it will not happen. We may reach the numbers, but will we have a strong national church that is self-sustaining and self-propagating?

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-14).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Maxwell, Dr John C., *Equip: The Laws of Leadership*, Equip, Atlanta GA

<sup>2</sup>All Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version* (NIV).



## **Part 7: AFFIRMATIONS**

### **36**

#### **Affirmation on Holiness**

Rev Eugénio Duarte, Dr Enoch Litswele,  
Dr Odette Pinheiro, Rev Patrick Thomas,  
Affirmation Team, Africa Nazarene Theology Conference 2003

Initial reports have it that this has been an exciting conference. It has been good to be able to dialogue about important issues facing us as a Holiness Church in Africa. The question about what it means to be holy in the African context has many dimensions and it has been enlightening to explore some of them. What we have been able to do here, though, is by no means exhaustive. There are many issues we have only touched on and we suspect that the surface of the question has hardly been scratched. But it was good to talk and reach consensus about the fact that much more talking is needed. Hopefully this will not be the last discourse on Holiness in the African context.

As we have grappled with the question, three important elements have emerged. These are the issue of “tongues”, culture, and polygamy, and they were initiated by the papers and the responses, but no definite answers were given. As the Affirmation Team has worked with the issues and listened to what the small groups have had to say, we have attempted to offer some conclusions. Following are some affirmations that may be helpful in dealing with the issues.

#### **Tongues**

In the papers relating to the differences in the understanding of the evidence of the infilling with the Holy Spirit we are left with a clear understanding. However, as was pointed out by a number of small groups, many congregation members are still confused and look to Charismatic movements in search of answers. One contention is that the perceived dullness of worship services in the Church of the Nazarene as opposed to the “...sense of liberty and personal participation” (Balibanga: 3) of the charismatic is driving people to these churches. Another contention is that

the world is not seeing any difference in the lives of evangelicals and is therefore attracted to the alleged outward manifestations of the Spirit as reflected in the Charismatic services. What is the evidence of being filled with the Spirit? What are the immediate signs? The Charismatics claim that it is being slain in the spirit and speaking in tongues. Tongues, in their context, is an unknown, heavenly language understood only by God and the angels. It serves as evidence both to God and man that the work of baptism with the spirit is complete. They believe that the Spirit takes full control of the person's will and mind, causing him or her to do things that they would not normally do.

The Church of the Nazarene does not believe that the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is the ability or prompting to speak in an unknown language. We believe, rather, that the evidence is the "...purification of the heart that is made known by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25) in the life of the believer ..." (Balibanga: 2). This is not a meeting-to-meeting experience, as is often the case with Charismatics, but a consistent process of devotion, submission, and obedience to God on the part of the believer, that is made possible by the grace and empowerment of the Holy Spirit Himself. In other words, it is God working with and through the believer to bring about a continuous relationship in which the believer is the ultimate beneficiary. In the process the sanctified believer is empowered to be a witness to the world, in life and word, to the power of God to save from sin.

The question is, then: how do we as a holiness church help our people understand and practice the truth relating to this issue? First of all, the Bible (contrary to what may be espoused by some who have different agendas) gives clear instructions. The gift of tongues or languages is for the edification of the Church (1 Corinthians 14:26) only if there is translation, and as an instrument to be used under God's direction for the proclamation of the Gospel (Acts 2:4-11). It is thus of vital importance that we understand the full picture of the significance of the phenomenon which was remarkably absent from the ministry of Jesus and present on a limited basis in the Early Church (Pinheiro: 3-4) and teach it to our constituents. It is important to know what tongues are in the context of New Testament Scripture and also in the context of the Charismatic churches and then teach accordingly, emphasizing the Biblical standard. The Bible teaching on the issue is clear and the Church of the Nazarene

should not be cowering in the face of the confusion reigning in and taught by the Charismatic churches. A word of caution; we should not deny the reality of the phenomenon – even demons speak in tongues.

Should we then be overly concerned with those who continue to insist that holiness people and their services are “dead” because there is no visible manifestation of the presence of the Spirit where they meet? There appears to be consensus that worship services should cater for the movement and reflection of the Holy Spirit in His own way rather than the sensitivity of the individual. We must continually ask ourselves: Are we seeking experiences rather than the Holy Spirit?

### **Culture**

Since all of existence in the eyes of the African is related to religion, it is difficult to know where culture starts or ends or where religion starts or ends. Where is the line supposed to be drawn? Is Christ opposed to culture? Culture is powerful and has the ability to keep some Christians captive, forcing them to do things that God would not approve of. How do we respond to this? No culture in itself is either good or bad. There is not one single culture that is sanctioned in the Bible. However, God’s standards are Christlikeness and holiness within the framework of all cultures.

We must learn to understand the reasons behind certain cultural practices and distinguish between what is good, bad, or neutral as it relates to our cultural contexts. Some practices are based on good moral values and should be affirmed and encouraged. Some other practices, however, must be compared with the standards of the Bible.

Holiness will conflict with certain practices but Christ is the transformer of culture. Cultural expectations and rituals vary but God’s expectations do not. If we are going to confront culture and tell people not to participate in certain rituals, we must be clear in our own understanding that they are not in the will of God and provide wholesome alternatives. In this instance we must be proactive rather than reactive. The idea here is that we live with and know the rituals that are diametrically opposed to what the Bible teaches as normative for Christians. So we should teach about the Bible all of the time. In our endeavours to confront culture, we must conform to the image of Jesus who did not reject His own culture (neither was He a slave to it) but in that culture live a life pleasing to God.

## **Polygamy**

The practice of polygamy is real in Africa and the Church would do well not to ignore it. The question posed by the writers is aimed at opening the door to discussions on the issue. Is it right, is it holy, to exclude those who convert to Christianity while in polygamist marriages from membership in the Church? Since the Church of the Nazarene has no definite stand on the issue the current practice is that the converted husband should divorce the wives following the first one before he is allowed into membership. The question is: is this what God is really requiring from His Church? Do we have the right to decide to separate those who in good conscience have considered themselves married according to their cultural traditions? Do not the ones who divorce and remarry break God's standards for marriage?

Although we recognise that the initial standard at creation and in the New Testament was for one man to be married to one woman for life, we acknowledge that the hardness of mankind's heart has led many people into situations that fall short of God's ideal. Any solution is painful and the situation needs to be handled with extreme care. However, we cannot take a stand for legalism on the one hand while ignoring the sensitivity of the realities on the other. Also, we do not want to be lax in our standards.

The simple divorcing of second and third wives does not seem to answer all of the questions. Instead, it raises more. There appears to be consensus among the conference participants that the Church should study the practice and all its implications thoroughly. This will result in sensitivity towards those who are involved in it and shed light on ways to deal with those who accept the Lord while in these marriages. *The Affirmation Team suggests that the Regional Advisory Council appoint a Commission comprised of both men and women, as well as laypersons and clergy, to undertake this study and formulate an official stand. This commission should be representative of all the Fields on the Africa Region. For now the suggestion offered by the majority is that those who want to become members of the Church of the Nazarene after they had married more than one wife should be accepted only as associate members and be served the sacrament of Holy Communion.* However, the person must abstain from taking any more wives. We should also have a clear definition of marriage. When is a person married in the eyes of God? Is it when the husband-to-be has paid the bride price and is deemed by the community to be "married", after they have been married in a court of law, or are they married only

after they have gone through a Christian ceremony?

We thank the Lord for this opportunity to reason together and pray that we will leave here fully convinced that only Africans, with God's help, can solve the problems of Africa.

Nkosi Sikelele iAfrika.

## 37

### **Affirmation on Hope**

Rev Samuel Daka, Dr Leah Marangu,  
Rev Walter Motaung, Rev Hendrik Vorster,  
Affirmation Team, Africa Nazarene Theology Conference 2003

The problems of Africa are many. They include civil war, strife, drought, floods, the AIDS pandemic, poverty, and death. This has brought about untold misery and suffering for the people of Africa. Where is hope for Africa in the midst of all this if we are to ask? The Church in Africa is not isolated from the rest of society and is equally affected by these challenges. Many people look to the Church for answers to their problems so this is a big challenge which the Church must face and deal with. The Church must be the agent through which hope reaches to the people.

Let us look at the issue of poverty, for example. Poverty is real and is a major problem causing suffering among our people. There are several crutches that have been used to justify its presence among the people. Blame has been put on colonialism, bad governance, superstition, witchcraft, and corruption. There may be some truth in some of these crutches but it is not the whole truth. Poverty is a complex problem which requires us to look at different factors which propagate it. Each community needs to take time to analyse the root cause of poverty among them. As a way forward, it would be better to put behind whatever reason is given for the root cause and presence of poverty and suffering. Instead concentrate on strategic planning that is geared toward the eradication of poverty. The question to ask is: What can the Church do to bring hope to the people who are suffering from poverty?

We propose a solution that demands a holistic approach that views man as a unified whole. First, there is need for the Church to empower our local people with knowledge, competencies, and technical skills that help them to find ways of helping themselves. Education is the key to accomplishing this task. Empowerment must cover all levels of the church structure that is from the General Church down to the local church. We do appreciate the fact that the Church of the Nazarene has invested quite a lot of resources in

ministerial education. But there is a general feeling from this conference that education in the church should be expanded to include the provision of skills and competencies both in the formal and informal sectors. There needs to be a balance so that both needs are addressed and given equal attention. Empowerment of our people with skills and knowledge will help develop self-confidence on how best they can improve themselves without necessarily depending on others.

Areas of skills training would encompass but not be restricted to the following; child care, income generating programmes and activities, sewing, tailoring, health and hygiene, food and nutrition, better farming, livestock development, water catchments, community development projects, and social entrepreneurship that are relevant to each community. This would also help create employment for the people. For a long time the church has emphasised the spiritual aspect of people while neglecting the physical and social aspects.

Second, the church needs to instil a sense of ownership and responsibility in the minds and hearts of our people. Our people need to change their perception of the church from “theirs” to “ours”. They need to know that it is their church and they are responsible to take care of it. Our perception of the church should start with the local church. The word ‘church’ should not be synonymous with the word ‘Kansas City’ as has been the case. To achieve this change of attitude, there is need to intensify teaching on stewardship. People need to be taught the value of giving and sharing. The criterion that has been used to describe poverty in relation to giving is not correct. This is to say that people are poor so they cannot give. Poverty to some extent is a paradigm problem. Our people must change in their mind and thinking. Even in poverty people have something to meet their needs and therefore, they can give something. Our teaching on stewardship should include how they can use and manage resources. Money is not there just to be spent but to be wisely used and managed for the glory of God and for the benefit of others in society and the church. Even if our people need outside help they should see it not as a perpetual thing but as a short term help as they look for means to help themselves.

The International Church has done a remarkable job in providing financial assistance but this has tended to create a spirit of dependence among our people. Such assistance is good and needed where necessary but our

people should always be asking themselves what they can do and give to help themselves. Again, if the International Church would like to assist, they need to ask people at the grass roots level for their input and decisions on what needs to be done. It was felt that the International Church took long before they started giving decision-making power to national leaders, a fact which has contributed to the dependence syndrome among our people.

Third, there is a need for the church to partner and network with other reputable NGOs that share our values and ideals in seeking ways on how best to empower our people.

In all these endeavours, we affirm that God has ordained the Church to be the instrument for bringing hope to the people. The local church must be the hope to the community. It is the task of the church to show people in the community that it is in Jesus Christ alone in whom they need to hope. Jesus Christ, the hope of glory should be the message of the Church to the people. It is the message of holiness that changes people's attitudes, their thoughts, and actions. The mission and message of the church is the source of this glorious hope, hope that will enable our people to face the challenges and difficulties of our society. "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills removed yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed says the Lord, who has compassion on you" (Isaiah 54:10).

## 38

### **Affirmation on the Great Commission**

Rev Chanshi Chanda, Dr Wally Marais, Rev Cariot Shongwe,  
Rev Paulo Sueia, Rev Collen Magagula,  
Affirmation Team, Africa Nazarene Theology Conference 2003

We the participants of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa to the Theology Conference met at the Good News Convention Centre in Gauteng Province and discussed theological issues pertaining to the Great Commission and do hereby affirm the following:

1. We must use the local Church for personal evangelism beginning with families, relatives, and friends. We must use all available resources for evangelism to win the lost. Follow-up should be organized by the pastor of the local Church. And we must work with evangelists to win the lost.
2. The local Church should train evangelists with effective skills for evangelism.
3. The local Church is to teach Church members to be witnesses in personal evangelism using methods used in both Ethiopia and Mozambique.
4. Churches should be made aware of their social responsibilities and be trained on how to express themselves motivated by the love of Christ.
5. The JESUS Film must work hand in hand with the local Church.
6. Compassionate Ministries should work with local Churches and must be under the Church of the Nazarene in Africa.
7. There should be strong emphasis on “holiness evangelism” for this is Jesus’ ministry.
8. Gifts should be practiced through and confirmed by the local Church.
9. There should be a new emphasis on teaching and practicing baptism.

10. Christians must be motivated by their love for Christ and seek to win Muslims. We need Muslims specialists in this area.
11. The Church is not a political movement but Christians ought to address social injustices motivated by the love of God, always striving for reconciliation.
12. We plead for a strong follow-up method using materials like “Following Jesus”.
13. There should be strong emphasis on teaching the two “Works of Grace”.
14. There must be an ongoing teaching on discipleship and growing in Christlikeness.
15. We need a new focus on the office of the evangelist and prophet.
16. We need to network with other Christian bodies in letting our voices be heard on social-political matters.
17. Africa will be won by Africans and must be great commission driven, not by Africanism.
18. The JESUS Film is reaching rural areas, but we must find ways to reach cities.
19. There is need for African Theologies written by Africans more especially on eschatology, atonement, and deliverance.
20. We must keep the focus on new church plants.
21. We need to remind ourselves that the Church/body of Christ is commissioned to evangelize and disciple within the people’s, cultures, and context.

## **Part 8: CLOSING COMMENTS**

### **39**

#### **Closing Comments to the Africa Nazarene Theology Conference**

Dr Jerry Lambert

Commissioner of Education, International Board of Education (IBOE),  
Church of the Nazarene

Africa's Church of the Nazarene is a dynamic integral part of the Body of Christ. For 100 years, Africa Nazarenes have helped to nurture, grow, and develop the church in 33 countries on the continent and helped them connect with the Global Body of the Church of the Nazarene in over 150 nations of the world.

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century finds the church reflecting, rediscovering, and recovering Wesleyan Arminian holiness theology and core values of the Church of the Nazarene. Beginning with the Global Theology Conference in Guatemala in 2001, an outstanding delegation from Africa helped to 'set the tone' and shape the spirit. Holiness, Memory, Hope and the Great Commission – the four part theme of the gathering – caught fire in the hearts of the nearly 300 pastors, professors, and church leaders from all the regions of our Nazarene world.

The "global concept" began in a planning meeting of professors for a US/Canada conference, who in an epiphanal moment concluded that the days are over for "trickle down" theology. They believed it was time to gather the church from the world for theological reflection and affirmation of the beliefs of the church. God blessed this global dream by providing a foundation to fund the travel and conference costs of the event for the church. No one dreamed the outcome – the spirited dynamic of the gathering, or the fruit of the conference that followed – not even the planning committee. Without being programmed, the regions of the church called for and planned regional events to take place before the next global event in 2006.

The Asia- Pacific Regional Theology Conference was held in October in Seoul, Korea at the Korea Nazarene University campus. The Africa

Theology Conference this week is the second. The Caribbean, Mexico and Central America, and South America Regions just met last week to plan a three regional all Spanish Theology Conference, October 2004, in San Jose, Costa Rico. The US/Canada Theology Conference, centred on the 16 Articles of Faith, is planned for December 2004 at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

The Africa Nazarene Theology Conference begins a new epic in your 100-year history. It is a truly watershed moment, an opportunity for doctrinal and practical coherency. In reflection on the activities of this week, it has truly been significant in that its participation has been by pastors, district leaders, missionaries, and professor scholars. You have interacted with the young and old, male and female, the experienced theologians and novices just beginning. You have read quality papers engaging tough issues, beginning a conversation that the Holy Spirit will guide in the future!

You have heard affirmations that build unity in diversity, which bridge the generations of the future enabling the church to pass on the love for Christ, His message and truth, and passion for the lost people of Africa and around the world.

In Guatemala, Korea, and now Africa, I have heard people talking! What has been accomplished by these conferences? What is the outcome of this Theology Conference?

1. A new freedom – permission – opportunity for “doing” theology at every level of the church.
2. A newly developed partnership for Biblical, Theological understanding and coherency.

Partnerships between colleges, seminaries, extension centres for conducting field and district courses and classes, and local churches.

- The goal – every pastor a student (life-long learning), every pastor a teacher
- The goal – development of a strong Biblical base
  - The local church teaching – for theologically sound doctrine. There is a crisis of doctrine and practice – media infiltration into homes by TV, books, events which change and dilute the holiness message of Wesleyan/Arminian believer.
  - District classes – at district conferences and assemblies. This is an opportunity, especially for lay pastor training in doctrine.

- Field conferences – bi-yearly – using professors, scholars and teachers.
- Regional conference – every four years.
- Global conference – every four years.

Will you permit me to share some of my thoughts, personal observations, perceptions, and reflections? After 10 years of visiting Africa as the Commissioner of Education, I have concluded:

- The only thing bigger than the Continent of Africa is the Heart of Her People.
- The people I know have hearts of love:
  - Love for God and His people,
  - For the Church and her leaders,
  - For Christian Traditions and the aging Sainly Leaders,
  - For Holy Scripture, Theology and the Truth,
  - For Right practices and living out the Christian Faith.
- People who Love and hunger for Righteousness:
  - Have courage to face great difficulties,
  - Are vulnerable and sensitive with the ability to be deeply hurt by injustices and unkindness, are compassionate towards the lost and needy.
- People who are justly proud to be Africans, Proud of your Land and the Beauty of its people.

I have also observed a people with the ability to:

- Think critically,
- Struggle for truth,
- Articulate and express abstract ideas as well as paint pictures with words and eloquently preach the Gospel.

As I reflect on experiences in Africa, I am convinced you have a great God-given capacity to worship and experience God.

- No one sings like an African,
- Prays with such fervency and power,
- Has the child-like faith to take God at His Word and Obey Him.

Thank you for being a part of the new generation of significance for the quantitative and qualitative development of the Church.

Thank you, Planning Committee, and presenters. You have challenged our hearts and minds for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And now, as we come to the close of this great conference, let us come to the Table of the Lord together.

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