



“GOOD MORNING”

Quadrennial Address

Carla D. Sunberg, Chair

On behalf of the
Board of General Superintendents

30th General Assembly
Church of the Nazarene

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

12 June 2023

Good Morning

The King is in the room – and we are here to celebrate that the king who reigns is Jesus. Jesus is Lord! It is our Jesus who is the light of the world, and he is pushing back the darkness.

Good morning!

As we gather at this 30th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, we take time, in the midst of our organizational business, to consider what God has done in and through our church in the last six years. The fact that it's been six years since the last general assembly is, in and of itself, unusual. When we gathered in this space in 2017, we had no idea that we would be faced with a global pandemic, financial instability, and social unrest that would rattle our world and the church. While there were those predicting change within Christianity, we did not anticipate the acceleration of those changes brought on by factors far beyond our control. And yet, here we are, a group of people called Nazarene, uniting to celebrate that, in the midst of it all, "Jesus is Lord."

The founding of the Church of the Nazarene occurred between the bookends of the first and second general assemblies, the first held in Chicago, Illinois, USA, 10-17 October 1907, and the second in Pilot Point, Texas, USA, 8-14 October 1908. We cannot overstate the social climate in which the denomination was birthed: a country still divided between north and south, bearing the ugly scars of a civil war. "At Pilot Point in 1908, the resolution to merge a group from the American South with groups that previously united from the American East and American West was adopted. The merger was a landmark event in American church history, since most major denominations were still divided by the American Civil War. Phineas F. Bresee, the first General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, called the Nazarene merger an 'answering of the Lord's prayer that they may be one.'"¹ Now, 115 years later, the Church of the Nazarene ministers in 164 world areas and has sent 1008 delegates from 100 countries to this General Assembly. We come together in this season and time, united around the theme for this General Assembly, and we declare, "Jesus is Lord."

Welcome and Appreciation

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board of General Superintendents (BGS), I greet you in the name of our risen Lord, who brings light into our darkened world. We welcome to this 30th General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene our delegates, distinguished guests, and Nazarenes from around the world who are watching online. "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26, NIV).

1. <https://ga2023.nazarene.org/history>

We want to express our appreciation to the people of Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, for the gracious hospitality shown to us; we especially want to thank those from the Indianapolis District for hosting our General Assembly for a seventh time! Our board also wants to thank our general secretary, Gary Hartke, and his outstanding team for their extensive preparation for an event of this magnitude. We are very grateful.

Many of you have made great sacrifices to be here today. You represent a group many times larger than yourselves. We think of the multiplied thousands around the world who would be here if they could. The recent global pandemic has created challenges that many of us would have never imagined. To this day, embassies are backlogged, visas are difficult to obtain, and international travel is not what it used to be. We are grateful for those who have come to Indianapolis, but we also recognize the great number who are joining us through electronic means.

Knowing that there would be challenges with travel, the Board of General Superintendents devised an early caucus strategy for those delegates residing outside of the United States and Canada. Beginning in February of this year, these regional caucuses met via video conference, nominating General Board members and providing the opportunity for every delegate to review General Assembly legislation. With the use of this technology, more delegates than ever have been able to bring their voice to the General Assembly. The Board of General Superintendents is extremely grateful to the General Secretary's Office as well as each regional office that worked tirelessly to make these meetings possible.

The 1908 Pilot Point General Assembly marked the dawn of the Church of the Nazarene. In like manner, we believe that this post-pandemic General Assembly marks a new era for the Church of the Nazarene, and while it is a new era, the DNA of Pilot Point is present here. We can only imagine that at Pilot Point, Dr. Bresee stood and addressed the crowd with his usual, "Good morning!" It didn't matter the time of day, Dr. Bresee would proclaim, "Good morning," for as he went on to explain, "the sun never goes down in the morning, thus the sun of the ...Church of the Nazarene is just above the horizon."² Bresee saw the holiness message as being filled with such hope of transformation that it was as if the dawn was always on the horizon, breaking into the dark places of our world. Therefore, he greeted people, both in the morning, and at night with the phrase, "good morning."

Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would come with great light.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2, NRSV)

2. *Proceedings of the Second Annual Assembly Nebraska District Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene*, September 9-13, (Kansas City: Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene Publishing House, 1914), P. F. Bresee, Presiding.

Later, when John the Baptist was born, his father, Zechariah, proclaimed:

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:78-79, NRSV)

Bresee knew that it was always the hope of the morning, of the dawn of the light of the Messiah breaking into our dark world, that would bring transformation. And this is our heritage, it is our DNA – it is the hope that the church had at Pilot Point that they could unite around this transformational message even when the world was divided.

That assembly in Pilot Point reflected what they valued, including the location in a small town in Texas and the ministries there. The property housed a publishing operation using the most modern technology of the day to spread the news of holiness. They had a college, so they could train new pastors and leaders in the holiness movement. There was a church that ministered in the neighborhood, right alongside a rest cottage to support young women who found themselves pregnant out of wedlock. The church had a holistic ministry because those early Nazarenes believed they were to love God and love neighbor, and if they did so, the light of Christ would dawn.

Good morning!

The church in Pilot Point worked closely with the local Church of God in Christ, an African-American congregation. A year prior to joining the Church of the Nazarene, the Texas Holiness Association issued the following statement:

“With humiliation we confess that we and our fathers, of the white race, of this country, have not done near as much as we might have done toward the well-being and advancement of the colored race and are willing to take our part of the blame for the unneighborly and unbrotherly feeling which has sprung up and seems to be growing every day.” They went on to say that they must take the initiative in “correcting the wrong and effecting a reconciliation, and if we have the spirit of Christ, to accomplish this, we will be willing even to yield up some of our rights and preferences, to suffer wrong rather than do wrong.”³

3. *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book*, 1906-07 (N.p., n.d.), in the “Merging Religious Bodies” microfilm. This evidence seems contrary to the idea that Southern Holiness groups stressed purity and individual rather than social ethics. See also statement from A. M. Hills, who had left Peniel for England but who considered racism “one of the saddest evidences of the depravity of the race,” in A. M. Hills, *The Cleansing Baptism* (Manchester: Star Hall, [1908]), 9-10. Contrast Leonard Sweet, “A Nation Born Again: The Union Prayer Meeting Revival and Cultural Relativism,” in *The Great Tradition: Essays on Pluralism, Voluntarism, and Revivalism*, eds. Joseph D. Bon and Paul R. Decker (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1982), 207-8.

It was a few years after the assembly at Pilot Point when the Church of God building burned down that one of the original buildings from Pilot Point was physically moved and given to the Church of God in Christ as a house of worship. Recently, that congregation moved out of the old building and into a new church facility. The wood from that building – the one that housed the holistic ministry of the Church of the Nazarene and represents the desire of the church to work together for racial unity and reconciliation — has been reclaimed. The pulpit behind which I stand this morning was made from that reclaimed wood. This is our DNA and represents who we are as a people. We are a holiness people who love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and reach out in holy love to our brothers and sisters, ministering by preaching, teaching, and healing.

It is the DNA of Pilot Point that compels us to continue searching the horizon, seeking the light of dawn, for it is always morning in the Church of the Nazarene.

Good morning!

We come together at a unique time and place in history where, over the past six years, we have experienced much change. The global pandemic delayed this gathering and so many others. The joy at being reunited is palpable, and we give God the praise for all that has been accomplished during this difficult season.

Statistics and Ministry Reports

Often, we take time to celebrate what God has done by looking at our statistics. As we all know, that has been a bit of a challenge in the last few years. And yet, there are numbers that speak to the power of God to shine his light into the darkness of this world.

Over the last six years, 635,310 people have given their lives to Christ through the work of the Church of the Nazarene. More than half a million have been baptized.

During the pandemic, the 14 districts in Papua New Guinea reported a net increase of 5,743 (166%) new Nazarenes. The districts in Papua New Guinea with the largest gains included Papua New Guinea Jiwaka South (1,918 new Nazarenes reported; representing a 237.7% increase over the previous year), Papua New Guinea Simbu (1,179; 140.0%), Papua New Guinea North Coast (898; 255.1%), Papua New Guinea Hagen (704, 482.2%), Papua New Guinea South Coastal (549; 1,830.0%), and Papua New Guinea Bromley Memorial (532; 295.6%). Our members in Papua New Guinea are convinced that if they make Christlike disciples, God will grow the church.

Good morning!

The total number of organized churches across the denomination has grown from 22,928 in 2017 to 23,670 in the last fiscal year. We understand that we are in a season of some churches

closing and others opening. Even with the pandemic, 3,493 new churches were organized over the last six years with over 5,500 new church plants.

Total membership in the Church of the Nazarene grew in the last six years by more than 100,000. We have lost some members, but we have gained many with nearly 800,000 new Nazarenes.

Giving to the World Evangelism Fund (WEF) has remained consistently strong throughout the last six years, ranging from \$37.2 to \$38.2 million dollars a year. This WEF giving, combined with Approved Specials Giving, has brought us to a range of \$60.5 to \$67.5 million dollars a year.

Last year, total giving for all purposes in the Church of the Nazarene remained nearly the same as it was in 2017. While we rejoice in this, we also recognize that there are changes in giving practices that may impact the church in the years ahead. We have an aging church population in the United States and Canada, which has typically supported World Evangelism by giving by more than 90% of total WEF funds. When we calculate the impact of inflation, we have fewer dollars to invest in the mission of the church. Many of our global economies are struggling, and their currencies have lost value. The church will need to address questions raised by our funding model in this next quadrennium.

During the pandemic, the number of JESUS Film teams did not shrink but grew. Last year, for the first time, we had more than 1,000 JESUS Film teams out sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

In the midst of the pandemic, we entered Luxembourg, our 164th world area. This was not planned but was the work of the Lord.

Our churches learned how to use electronic media in a variety of forms to reach more people for Jesus Christ than we had ever imagined. One of our pastors in the Middle East had a service that reached over 100,000 people.

Good morning!

All of the ministries that follow are supported by, and benefit greatly from, your prayers and World Evangelism Fund giving.

Local Church Ministries

This past quadrennium, Nazarene Missions International, Nazarene Youth International, and Nazarene Discipleship International were organized into a General Board Committee called "Local Church Ministries." Combined, these three ministries serve to resource the local church for greater effectiveness in ministry.

Nazarene Missions International (NMI)

The DNA of the church that was present at Pilot Point included a passion for missions. To this day, NMI, under the leadership of Lola Brickey, keeps us focused on our core value of being a *missional people*. Throughout this quadrennium, NMI has been the global missions advocate with a goal of reaching every local church, in every region. Through the Global Week of Prayer, NMI has brought together the entire church to focus on missions.

With the release of the Nazarene Missions project, NMI is working to nurture the spirit of missions and actively engage individuals to mobilize. New materials have been created, and a clear pathway for new missionaries, both sponsored and global, has been defined. As a result, NMI is impacting people around the world.

Nazarene Youth International (NYI)

NYI leads the way in the nurturing of our young people and leading them into a relationship with Jesus, as well as establishing them as His disciples who are fully involved in His mission.

This quadrennium brought a transition in leadership. Gary Hartke had led NYI for 20 years, and we are grateful for his leadership. David Gonzalez was elected to fill the position when Gary Hartke became our general secretary. Throughout the quadrennium, NYI has been engaged in numerous ministries, calling our young people to a dynamic life in Christ. Youth conferences have been held in both the USA/Canada and South America regions. The Third Wave leadership conference was held in January of 2019 in Hyderabad, India, with 249 participants from all six regions. Following that conference, approximately 50 field, regional, and global NYI leaders participated in a two-day leadership conference known as the Field Youth Coordinators Conference. A total of 132 Timothy Awards were presented throughout the quadrennium to outstanding youth leaders who have invested their lives in our young people.

Many youth discipleship resources have been developed over the last six years. *The Journey* event was an online gathering streamed on YouTube with over 60,000 participants. *The Journey* resources were produced in 12 languages and included:

- A special edition of the book *Way, Truth, Life* by David Busic.
- A Youth and Young Adult Ministry Leader's Guide — Content for six weekly sessions.
- *The Journey* Travel Log — A six-week devotional. Audio versions in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.
- *The Journey* Weekly Videos.

Our NYI membership globally stands at 400,294 young people who need the prayers and support of the global Nazarene family. Let us commit to lifting them up in prayer.

Good Morning!

Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI)

Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries (SDMI) underwent a number of changes throughout the quadrennium. We thank Woody Stevens for serving SDMI for more than 11 years. After his retirement, Scott Rainey was elected as the new leader. After two years of praying, listening, and planning, the Board of General Superintendents launched a global discipleship framework called “A Journey of Grace” in February 2021. This new paradigm will likely guide our denomination’s discipleship efforts for a generation.

Following the release of the Nazarene discipleship framework, SDMI leaders around the world developed five core principles that drive discipleship in the local church. Using the core principles as a guide, an SDMI team from five countries crafted a new set of bylaws to guide the polity and actions of local churches with regard to discipleship. These bylaws were presented to and approved by the General Board in February 2022. The new bylaws included a new name, Nazarene Discipleship International (NDI). This new name defines our disciple-makers (Nazarenes), our primary goal (Discipleship), and our boundaries (International).

Global Education and Clergy Development (GECD)

Global Education and Clergy Development also underwent transition in the quadrennium. Dan Copp retired and Klaus Arnold was elected director in 2020. Nazarene schools play significant roles in forming Christlike disciples. The church has invested in basic education and literacy since the early years of Hope School for Girls in Calcutta, founded in 1905. Nazarene schools prepare people around the world for fuller participation in social, economic, and religious life.

The pandemic has created a challenge for our educational institutions. Some of our schools were closed for up to two years and, therefore, we see some changes in the statistics. The total numbers of students dropped by 11.2% globally, and church support dropped by almost 3%. Despite the decrease, in 2022 we still had 51 institutions around the globe with 45,124 total students. The focus in this next quadrennium will be on a borderless approach to education, relying on regional collaboration and the strengthening of relationships between our educational institutions, districts, and local churches.

In the area of clergy development, all the numbers have risen, with total credentialed and licensed ministers growing by 14.4%. While we rejoice in this news, the need for clergy is still very high on the growing regions, especially in Africa.

Good morning!

Global Missions

Verne Ward has been serving as the director of Global Missions since 2013, providing oversight to the six regions of the world. Three new regional directors were elected: Daniel Gomis in Africa, Stan Reeder in USA/Canada and Jim Ritchie in Eurasia.

The missional enterprise of the church continues to grow and expand. Using our new framework for missions mobilization, we are pleased that today we have 325 global and 164 sponsored missionaries.

At this General Assembly, we are also launching Nazarene Missions Teams, which is a new name for what we have called Work & Witness for so many years. The new Teams approach pulls the various types of mission activities together under one umbrella, providing a greater range of opportunities for people to participate in short-term missions, including sports, evangelism, compassion, JESUS Film, medical missions, technology, emergency response, and education, as well as construction.

JESUS Film

JESUS Film Harvest Partners, led by Brian Helstrom, currently empowers 1,109 teams of local people doing evangelism, discipleship, and church planting in some of the most difficult places on the planet. Every 22 minutes, there is another showing of the *JESUS* film. Every 43 seconds, one more person makes a decision for Christ. In the last six years, 3,530,637 people made decisions for Christ and 55,548 preaching points were planted to disciple these new believers. We are grateful for the 25 years of impact this ministry has invested to the growth of the global Church of the Nazarene.

Good morning!

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, under the leadership of Nell Sweeden, has helped us respond to those suffering in the midst of crises.

During the COVID pandemic, the church mobilized to respond to urgent needs by:

- Serving 426,992 people through 192 Nazarene projects
- Responding with specific programs in 88 countries through 393 districts
- 5,705 churches jumping into action to serve their communities
- Releasing nearly \$1.7 million dollars through NCM

An estimated 100 million people are living displaced from their homes by war, famine, climate, and persecution. The various responses around the world include:

- 500+ volunteers mobilized to support refugees and immigrants in Honduras, Mexico, and Ukraine. From the day the war in Ukraine started in February 2022, local Nazarene churches have been responding. The Nazarene network made it possible to mobilize volunteers and staff to begin welcoming refugees in Hungary, Moldova, Poland, and Romania. In Ukraine itself, pastors and laypeople have not stopped providing food and comfort to those who have stayed in the face of great danger. In Poland, a constant

stream of volunteers has welcomed those crossing the border between the two countries, helping direct people to resources that will help them find food, shelter, and support for the next steps. The Sweet Surrender coffee shop in Poznan has provided a place of consistency, hope, and love to those who were forced to flee. There, children can participate in educational and supportive activities, volunteers can rest, and the peace of Christ abounds.

- 2,000 migrants from Haiti, Cuba, and Venezuela received food, biosafety kits, diapers and clothes for children, and supplies from a ministry in Honduras.
- 30,000+ migrants in Mexico received food, shelter, hygiene kits, and more from ministries across Mexico.

Responding to the needs of children, we currently have:

- 236 child development centers in 36 countries actively providing spiritual, nutritional, educational, and emotional support to children around the world.
- 11,000+ children living in vulnerable environments, including more than 3,000 pastors' children, who have been sponsored or supported through NCM, giving them a chance to grow into the people God created them to be.

Good morning!

Transitions

We note with sadness the passing of four former general superintendents.

Stan Toler went to be with the Lord in 2017, having served as general superintendent from 2009 to 2013. He was a pastor for many years in addition to being a beloved speaker and writer who poured himself into the training of future leaders in the church. He was 67.

Gene Stowe died in 2020, having given 25 years to the general superintendency from 1968 to 1993. He was known for his great love for people, his investment in our youth, and his compelling preaching. Dr. Stowe died at the age of 98; his beloved wife, Faye, died in 2017 at age 99.

Jerald Johnson, a leader in the movement to truly internationalize the church and raise up national and regional leaders, served the denomination as a general superintendent from 1980 to 1997. Dr. Johnson died in 2020, aged 92; his darling Alice died in 2019 at age 95.

Paul Cunningham was widely known for his radical optimism, based on his understanding of our God as one capable of "immeasurably more" than we could ask or imagine. He was a general superintendent from 1993 to 2009 and was welcomed into heaven in 2020 at age 82.

Mrs. Adeline Owens went to meet the Lord on September 26, 2019, at the age of 89. She and Dr. Donald Owens were married for 68 years. He was general superintendent from 1989 to 1997.

Mrs. Dorothy Diehl was welcomed into Heaven on August 30, 2021. She was 85. The Diehls were married for 65 years. Dr. Diehl was general superintendent from 1993 to 2009.

Genell Johnson, faithful and supportive wife to Talmadge Johnson, died in 2021. She was 85. Her husband was a general superintendent from 2001 to 2005.

Judy Greathouse, the wife of William Greathouse, died in 2022 at age 84. William was a general from 1976 to 1989 before he married Judy in his retirement.

The pandemic had a significant impact on some of our districts, which suffered great loss. In Peru alone, over 400 people passed away from COVID. We lost church leaders in Mexico and Guatemala, as well as among the Native Americans in the United States. A tragic plane crash took the lives of a number of our pastors and leaders in Cuba.

We also lost Dr. Dan Copp, director of Global Education and Clergy Development, who served the global church for 15 years, succumbed to cancer. Let us take a moment to pause and remember those whom we have lost and pray for their families in their time of grief.

Quadrennial Emphases

In order to keep the denomination focused on our mission to “make Christlike disciples in the nations,” throughout this past quadrennium, the BGS unpacked the mission statement through several key emphasis.

Our first emphasis was on the missional enterprise of the church – going into all the Nations!

We had a need to re-evaluate our missions program and the ways in which we called, deployed, and supported our missionaries.

The new **Nazarene Missions** Project answered the most essential questions raised by the various constituencies. There is now a clear definition of a Nazarene missionary and just two missionary categories: global and sponsored.

Global missionaries are career missionaries who are funded by WEF and are using previous ministry or specialty service experience wherever the church needs them. Sponsored missionaries are short-term missionaries serving no more than four years, funded by their local communities, serving localized needs on the field, and needing no previous ministry experience.

This year, we commissioned 11 new global missionaries from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Portugal, Venezuela, Brazil, Fiji, Jordan, and Switzerland. Over the quadrennium, we commissioned a total of 98 new missionaries.

Nazarene missions is a movement of God through the people of God!

Good morning!

The second emphasis of the quadrennium has already been mentioned. Since we are called to make Christlike disciples, it was time to re-evaluate what we have been doing and how we might reshape discipleship for this new century of the church. This became the **Nazarene Discipleship** project. God gave us the “Journey of Grace” as a framework for this discipleship. The framework can be used across the generations to help people respond to prevenient grace, enter into saving grace, and experience sanctifying grace. We are leaning into our calling to make Christlike disciples, and this includes all generations.

It is not our intention to say that we are finished with one project and now there is another or new emphasis. Instead, we believe that we are building these emphases so that they will be continuous and ongoing in the life of the church.

We are now beginning a process of examining our Nazarene identity. We engage in missions and discipleship because Christ compels us, and this is our Nazarene identity. In a world filled with generic Christianity, we believe that it is important to know who we are and why we exist. You will be hearing more about this in the coming quadrennium.

In response to referrals, and as we look toward the future, the Board of General Superintendents is making several recommendations to this General Assembly.

Recommendation: Articles of Faith

The 2017 General Assembly voted that the BGS appoint a group to study several sections of the Articles of Faith over the quadrennium. Composed of some of our finest theologians and pastors, the study group met on several occasions to review the articles thoroughly and recommend revisions. We have received their work, and after careful examination, we believe that the revisions strengthen the articles and we are recommending them to the General Assembly for adoption.

Recommendation: Covenant of Christian Conduct

Portions of the Covenant of Christian conduct were referred to the Board of General Superintendents for review following the 2017 General Assembly. As a result, the BGS appointed a global group of Nazarene theologians, ethicists, pastors, psychologists, and others to study our *Manual* statements regarding paragraph 28, the Christian Life, as well as other topics related to the sanctity of human life and gender identity. This group was able to meet

face-to-face on a couple of occasions before the pandemic and then continued their work by video conference and email. This group has embraced a holistic view of the Christian life that helps guide us on the journey of grace. After prayerful and careful examination, we are also recommending their resolutions for adoption.

What We've Learned

Throughout these last six years, we have learned that the Church is resilient. Theodore Beza once said, "It belongs to the church of God to receive blows rather than to inflict them—but, she is an anvil that has worn out many hammers."⁴ God has remained faithful to the Church through the work of Jesus Christ, and it is in this centering core, the lordship of Jesus Christ, that we find our strength. It's always morning in the Church of the Nazarene.

Good morning!

Let us return to that DNA of Pilot Point when we jointly recognized the sovereignty of Christ and merged to become the Church of the Nazarene, a holiness church. The lordship of Jesus Christ remains the foundation of our understanding of holiness.

We are all on a journey of grace—from prevenient to saving to sanctifying grace. The trajectory leads us to the holiness of Christ reflected in and through our lives. Along the way, we make diligent inquiry. We need to make space for the questions that people are asking, but I would venture that, as we ask questions, we will find ourselves on well-worn paths. Dr. Bresee famously preached, "Anything new in religion is false, and yet everything in salvation is marvelously new to him who finds it."⁵ The reformers of the church did not lead people onto a new path but back to old truths. It is in the space of old truth that we find the first century church refusing to capitulate to the power of culture and firmly declaring, "Jesus is Lord."

To become a Christian meant radical conversion to a new way of life, turning from the direction of the Empire, where Caesar was lord. This new way of life was seen as being out of sync with society and included a dedication to being formed spiritually and shaped by a robust prayer life, the study of scripture, and personal practices of self-denial. We Nazarenes call this discipleship, but not just a once or twice-a-month attend-a-worship-service kind of discipleship but rather a wake-up call to a lifestyle of Christ-centered discipleship that does not mirror this world. Not surprisingly, this way of life is evangelistic, as believers become a living testament to the transformational work of Christ.

Good morning!

A life of Christian discipleship is one committed to the holy life. Phineas Bresee famously proclaimed that the message of holiness was to "Christianize Christianity." It seems that the

4. Theodore of Beza 1561 to King Charles IX of France

5. Donald P. Brickley, *Man of the Morning: The Life and Work of Phineas F. Bresee* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1960), Kindle edition.

more familiar we become with our religion, the greater the temptation to lose the connection to Christ himself. Early Christianity saw no distinction between being a Christian and being a holy Christian. It was understood that Christ had come to transform humanity into his image, which is holy. The holiness movement, led by Wesley, did well to reclaim this early emphasis on holiness, but we may be on the verge of losing our grasp of it once again.

In April 1995, Keith Drury, from the Wesleyan Church, presented a paper at a breakfast meeting of the Christian Holiness Partnership entitled, “The Holiness Movement is Dead.”⁶ In his paper, he argued eight reasons for the demise of the movement:

1. We wanted to be respectable.
2. We have plunged into the evangelical mainstream.
3. We failed to convince the younger generation.
4. We quit making holiness the main issue.
5. We lost the lay people.
6. We over-reacted against the abuses of the past.
7. We adopted church-growth thinking without theological thinking.
8. We didn’t notice the battle-line moved.⁷

Drury explained his final point, “Many of our people do not need to be sanctified—they need to be saved! The doctrine at risk in many holiness churches is not entire sanctification but ‘transformational conversion.’” Only transformational conversion leads us to entire sanctification, and Christlikeness. Our mission statement, “to make *Christlike* disciples in the nations,” means that holiness remains at the core of our denominational identity.

Good morning!

Discipleship has always placed an emphasis upon continuous and ongoing growth within the life of the believer. We remain on this journey of grace throughout our entire lives. Without recognizing this vital need, our entire movement becomes stagnant, and everything grinds to a halt, including the invitation to join the journey (evangelism). We have been taught by the faithful who have gone before that by reflecting the life of Christ, the church, even when battered, can reflect the holy love found in the triune God. The result is transformation into the likeness of Christ.

Good morning!

If Jesus is Lord, and if Jesus is holy, then the call to God’s people is to be holy.

Holiness must remain our main issue. When Christ dawns into our darkened world, we experience transformational power. This is the beauty of what we find in the Church of the

6. Keith Drury, *The Holiness Movement is Dead*, Paper delivered at the Christian Holiness Partnership, April 1995. Cited 25 April, 2022, online: <http://www.drurywriting.com/keith/dead.footnoted.htm>.

7. Ibid.

Nazarene, but this transformation is not just for the individual. Holy Spirit power transforms us and unites us as a people. Our core values express this unity:

1. We are a Christian *people*.

As members of the Church Universal, we join with all true believers in proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ and in affirming the historic trinitarian creeds and beliefs of the Christian faith.

2. We are a holiness *people*.

God, who is holy, calls us to a life of holiness. We believe that the Holy Spirit seeks to do in us a second work of grace, called by various terms including "entire sanctification" and "baptism with the Holy Spirit," cleansing us from all sin, renewing us in the image of God, empowering us to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbors as ourselves, and producing in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.

3. We are a missional *people*.

We are a sent people, responding to the call of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into all the world, witnessing to the lordship of Christ and participating with God in the building of the Church and the extension of His kingdom.

The point is, we are a people and holiness is not holiness if it is not lived out within the community, both in the church and in society at large. Since Christ is our example, we are called to embrace His preaching, teaching, and healing ministries as our model. This is the DNA that we have received from Pilot Point.

Good morning!

Many of the social issues we face should be addressed and become a part of our local church ministries because we believe it is always morning in the Church of the Nazarene. We should not run from the challenges of culture but remain engaged and become the healing balm of Jesus' holy love. In his day, Bresee encouraged the church to provide city missions, evangelistic services, house-to-house visitation, care for the poor, and comfort for the dying. There will always be opportunities to shine the transformational light of Jesus Christ into the critical issues of our day. "To this end," Bresee said, "we strive personally to walk with God and to incite others so to do."⁸

If we believe that the light of Jesus is continually breaking into our world, then we will move forward in faith. Jesus, preaching his Sermon on the Mount, reminded his disciples that they were now to be the bearers of his light. Because we recognize the encroaching darkness of our world, we will continue to press on, taking his light into the places the church has not yet reached. Our cities around the world are growing and taking on a multicultural reality that

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needs the light of Christ. We must intentionally plant churches and ministries in the cities that reflect the multicultural flavor of those communities.

Good morning!

Our founding mothers and fathers were also of sound doctrine, able to articulate faith and theology well. Whether formally educated or self-taught, they took the time to know what it was that they believed. Many of the early Nazarene laity had libraries filled with holiness literature, including the church's periodicals. Those who chose to participate in the theological debates of the early church spent much time in personal study and spiritual formation. These were not simply intellectual (academic) theologians but individuals who endeavored to provide a Christ-centered explanation for what they, and the Christian community, had experienced. This exercise of articulation became a form of apologetics and a way of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

We have an ever-increasing need for an educated and Spirit-filled clergy, women and men at all levels of leadership, with a passion for leading the world to Christ. The church needs to provide a pathway for women and men, young and old, from every nation and ethnicity to find their voices in preaching the gospel and a place at the table of decision-making and leadership.

Good morning!

In some ways, we find ourselves in uncharted territory and yet, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses – the faithful who have gone before who have left us a roadmap from the past into the future.

The light is dawning on a new day for the Church of the Nazarene. Arising from this pandemic, we have an opportunity to reflect the lordship of Jesus Christ by making Christlike disciples in the nations. If we focus on bringing people to Christ – to a place of radical conversion – on vibrant discipleship into a new lifestyle, on holiness and the training up of new, spirit-filled leaders, then it will always be morning in the Church of the Nazarene.

Good morning!

Nathanael famously asked, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see” (John 1:46).

Our world may be asking, “Can anything good come from the Nazarenes?” and I would suggest – come and see.

Good morning!

It's always morning in the Church of the Nazarene.

The King is in the room, and Jesus is Lord!

Prayerfully and respectfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents
Church of the Nazarene

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