

Africa Speaks

*An Anthology
of the
Africa Nazarene
Theology Conference
2003*

Compiled and Edited by Linda Braaten

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CONTENTS

Forward.....	vii
Introduction.....	ix
Preface.....	xi
Editor’s Note.....	xv

Part 1: OPENING ADDRESS

1 <i>Sound the Trumpet</i> Dr Jim Bond, General Superintendent.....	1
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Part 2: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

2 <i>Sanctification and the Christus Victor Motif in Wesleyan Theology</i> Dr William M Greathouse, GS Emeritus.....	11
3 <i>Jesus’ Prayer for the Church</i> Dr William M Greathouse.....	24

Part 3: HOLINESS

4 <i>The Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit Among Nazarenes: The Controversy with the Pentecostal Doctrine</i> Rev Katambu Balibanga..... <i>Response</i> Dr Odette Pinheiro.....	29 38
5 <i>Gifts of Holiness: An Attempt to Explain the Difficulties of Proclaiming the Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in Black Africa, Côte d’Ivoire as a Case Study</i> Rev Yao Clement Djedje..... <i>Response</i> Pastor Samuel Nkati..... <i>Response</i> Rev Eugénio Duarte.....	43 49 52
6 <i>Conflicts Between Holiness and Culture</i> Rev Margarida Langa..... <i>Response</i> Rev Tom Nothstine..... <i>Response</i> Rev Cariot M Shongwe.....	55 59 64
7 <i>Is Polygamy Sin?</i> Rev Caleb Mathebula..... <i>Response</i> Rev Mashangu H Maluleka.....	66 71

Contents

8	<i>Holiness as Transformation for Action!</i> Rev Hendrik Vorster.....	76
	<i>Response</i> Rev Resemate Klaas Tau.....	81
9	<i>Holiness: A Call To Be Christ-like</i> Pastor Million Waldo Bekresion.....	89
10	<i>Corporate Holiness in the Trinity and Creation.</i> Rev Rob A Fringer.....	94
11	<i>Holiness</i> Rev Gene Pretorius.....	98
12	<i>The Relevance of Holiness Today</i> Rev Ronald L Roux.....	102
13	<i>Towards An African Theology of Christian Holiness: 'A Journey From Israel To Africa'</i> Rev Philip H Troutman.....	107
14	<i>Why is the Doctrine and Experience of Holiness Important?</i> Rev Jabulani Sibanda.....	112

Part 4: MEMORY

15	<i>A Memory of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa</i> Dr Enoch Litswele.....	117
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Part 5: HOPE

16	<i>How Can We Order Economic Practices in the Church in Such a Way That We Give Testimony with Power to the Holiness Message?</i> Rev Filimao Chambo.....	131
	<i>Response</i> Rev Fred D Otto.....	137
	<i>Response</i> Mr Lodrick Dickson Gama.....	142
17	<i>Is There Hope in the Midst of Death? A Paper Towards an African Theology of Hope</i> Rev Samuel Daka.....	147
	<i>Response</i> Rev Chanshi Chanda.....	152
18	<i>Philosophy of Poverty</i> Rev Simeao I Mandlate.....	156
	<i>Response</i> Rev Friday Ganda.....	161
	<i>Response</i> Rev Joseph Kisoi Masika.....	163

19	<i>Lessons From the History of Higher Education in the Church of the Nazarene</i>	
	Dr Rodney Reed.....	168
	Response Rev Collen S Magagula.....	175
20	<i>When the Bull Stops Bellowing: Hope for African Theologians and Educators of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa</i>	
	Rev Patrick Thomas.....	177
	Response Dr Leah Marangu.....	181
	Response Rev Errol E Temanie.....	184
21	<i>Hope: Focusing on the Fundamentals When the Foundations are Falling</i>	
	Rev Gabriel Benjamin.....	189
22	<i>Under the Curse or the Curse? Hope for the Church of the Nazarene in Africa</i>	
	Rev Rob A Fringer.....	195
23	<i>The Future Reach of Africa's Missionary Pastors</i>	
	Dr J Matthew Price.....	199
24	<i>The Hope of Holiness Education</i>	
	Dr Daryll G Stanton.....	203
<u>Part 6: GREAT COMMISSION</u>		
25	<i>The Fulfilment of the Great Commission: A Mozambican Perspective</i>	
	Mrs Violeta Mandlate.....	209
	Response Rev Goodwin Chirwa.....	212
	Response Rev Friday Udofia.....	215
26	<i>The Excitement of Holiness Evangelism</i>	
	Dr Wally Marais.....	220
	Response Rev Paulo Moises Sueia.....	225
27	<i>The Great Commission: A Socio-Ethical Comment</i>	
	Rev Walter Motaung.....	228
	Response Rev Hlabane Frank Mahlaba.....	233
28	<i>Trying to Fulfil the Great Commission in Madagascar</i>	
	Rev Richard Ravelomanantsoa.....	236
	Response Rev Don Gardner.....	239
	Response Rev Ronnie Roux.....	242

Contents

29	<i>Pulling Back From the Brink: A Wesleyan Perspective on the Contemporary Evangelical-Islamic Confrontation</i>	
	Ubaid Al-Massiah.....	246
	Response Rev Phillip H Troutman.....	256
30	<i>Great Commission: Evangelism in Africa From the Perspective of the African Renaissance</i>	
	Rev Meshack Mashinini.....	261
31	<i>The Great Commission</i>	
	Mrs Thembi Mogorosi.....	264
32	<i>Great Commission – Church of the Nazarene – Africa</i>	
	Rev Daniel Mokebe.....	269
33	<i>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</i>	
	Rev Déo M Mwenelwata.....	275
34	<i>Great Commission</i>	
	Rev Simon V Radebe.....	281
35	<i>An Empowered Church</i>	
	Rev Kobie Vlok.....	285
<u>Part 7: AFFIRMATIONS</u>		
36	<i>Affirmation on Holiness.....</i>	291
37	<i>Affirmation on Hope.....</i>	296
38	<i>Affirmation on Great Commission.....</i>	299
<u>Part 8: CLOSING COMMENTS</u>		
39	<i>Closing Comments to the Africa Theology Conference</i>	
	Dr Jerry Lambert, Education Commissioner	301
<u>INDEX OF WRITERS</u>		
	Alphabetical Index.....	305

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