

Response

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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.