

**Church of the Nazarene
Global Theology Conference
Africa Nazarene University
Nairobi, Kenya
26—29 March 2012**

Critical Issues in Ecclesiology

Call for Papers

A strong sense is emerging in the Church of the Nazarene that the time is right for a renewal of our understanding of the denomination's place within the holy people of God. This is driven not only by its changing context, but renewed theological and biblical reflection on our place within the body of Christ and our part in the mission of the triune God. The denomination desires to use structures and practices that flow from this identity and are faithful to it. This conference will (by invitation) gather together reflective practitioners including biblical scholars, theologians, church historians, postgraduate students, denominational leaders, district superintendents and pastors, to wrestle with the questions that surround this goal.

The conference has a series of desired outcomes including:

- An increased clarity of the nature and mission of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- A renewed understanding of the place of the Church of the Nazarene within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church
- A shared vision of the biblical/theological nature and mission of the Church
- A renewal of a biblical perspective on power and authority in the Church
- A challenge to any implicit ethno-centric shape of the Church
- An increased clarity regarding the nature, mission, authority and polity of the Church of the Nazarene in light of this shared vision.

Four questions will frame our discussion. Papers are invited to respond to each of these questions.

1 Where are we?

An informed awareness of our current diverse cultural, geographical, political and practical contexts will be important as the conference wrestles with the questions of unity and diversity in the Body of Christ. Papers in this area may address issues such as:

- Ecclesiology in light of the demographic shift in the Church of the Nazarene
- Ecclesiology in light of the rise of Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement and independent movements.
- Ecclesiology in the light of world religions and indigenous spirituality
- The legacy of the Enlightenment: cultural individualism
- Revivalism and ecclesiology
- The church and culture: consumerism, nationalism, neo-colonialism, syncretism
- Worship and sacraments
- Structure and mission
- Authority, discipline, membership and culture
- Influences on Nazarene organizational structures

2 How did we get to where we are?

An awareness of the historical influences that shape our current denominational beliefs and practices will provide the context for our discussion. Papers in this area may address issues such as:

- The Church before Constantine
- Christianity in India and Africa
- The Constantinian settlement and the rise of Christendom
- The Rise of Islam
- Schism: Orthodox and Western Ecclesiology
- Reformation, the Reformers and their twentieth century heirs
- Wesley and the Church of England
- The 19th Century missionary movement
- Revivalism and the nineteenth century holiness movement
- The formation and expansion of the Church of the Nazarene
- The development of *Manual*, Article XI

3 Who will guide us to where we need to go?

A renewed understanding of who we are as part of the people of God should emerge from the **intersection** of biblical models, theological reflection on the life of the people of God, and reflective Christian practice. Papers in this area may address:

- Biblical metaphors and models for ecclesiology
- Ecclesiological implications of the doctrines of Trinity, Incarnation and the eschatological kingdom of God
- Ecclesiology in light of the mission of the triune God
- Ecclesiology in Wesleyan theology
- Ecclesiology in the light of kingdom ethics
- Diversity, unity, prophetic witness and participation in the mission of God.
- Worship and sacraments in ecclesiological light
- Structures and practices in ecclesiological light
- The limitations and risks of corporate and other organizational models
- Leadership, authority and power in light of biblical ecclesiological models
- Church order, office and membership

4 How are we to get there?

The answer to this question will emerge in discussions from the conference. An endnotes session during the final session will attempt to draw our discussions together.

Interested participants are invited to submit proposals in the form of an ABSTRACT or PROPOSAL of between 175-250 words to the Regional Education Coordinator on your region.

Timeline:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 10 August 2010 | Abstract of 175-250 words for consideration by the Regional Program Committee |
| 15 September 2010 | Notification of accepted abstracts and request for papers of between 6000-8000 words |
| 15 April 2011 | Papers submitted to Conference Committee for selection of conference papers. [Since this is a global multi-lingual conference and adequate time for translation is essential.] |

Send ABSTRACTS to Regional Education Coordinators as below:

AFRICA REGION	africarec@gmail.com
ASIA PACIFIC	REC@apnaz.org
CANADA	terry@trinitycalgary.org
CARIBBEAN	Andres@caribnaz.org
EURASIA	JohnAHaines@aol.com
MAC/CARIBBEAN	ruben@fernandez.net
SOUTH AMERICA	jorge_julca@hotmail.com
USA	dgblevins@nts.edu