

## **FIRST IBERO-AMERICAN NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE**

### **LETTER OF AFFIRMATION**

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of October, 2004, on the campus of the Nazarene Seminary of the Americas in San José, Costa Rica, approximately 150 Nazarenes representing 21 Spanish-speaking countries from the Mexico-Central America (MAC), United States-Canada (USA-CAN) and South America (SAM) Regions met during the First Ibero-American Nazarene Theological Conference to reflect upon the theme “**The Church of the Nazarene en Latin America: Past, Present and Future**”.

We consider that this is a privileged opportunity that the Lord has given us to reflect about the future of the church that we are a part of. We are aware that theological reflection is a vital ingredient for the health of the church, because it allows us to analyze our task at hand and elaborate pertinent answers to the challenges that we confront in the various contexts where we minister.

This affirmation is an expression of the theological work that we carried out during these days of opening up to the action of the Holy Spirit and starting from a commitment with the mission of God and the Church of the Nazarene. In light of these ideas shared in this encounter, we wish to **affirm** the following:

1. That the historical value of this forum has allowed us to assume in a protagonistic way a critical evaluation of our church in Latin America. At the same time, the representativeness has given us the privilege to have among ourselves a spread of leaders from different levels of the denomination.
2. That the contributions of the past allow us to understand the present and give us clues to confront the challenges of the future.
3. That we are the fruit of the missionary effort and the first generations of pastors and national laypersons that came to us with their passion, example and commitment to the Lord and His church. Because of this, looking at our past we have to recognize our tribute and gratitude.
4. That the transmission of our inheritance of our doctrinal identity that we received includes the distinctive doctrine of sanctification as a second work of grace, that is a treasure that the denomination has in its possession and that we must preserve.
5. That God has raised up new generations of indigenous leaders that have assumed with responsibility the challenge to go ahead with the ministry of the church, preserving our theological legacy, strengthening our foundations and giving continuity to our history.
6. That we must fortify mutual respect, recognizing each other as members of an international church that is nurtured by its cultural diversity, which implies that we value each other and cooperate one with another to grow together.
7. That we fulfill the mission of God in a context with specific demographic, socioeconomic, political and religious characteristics. Because of this, we are called to discern the signs of our surroundings and our time to elaborate more creative and pertinent answers.

8. That we must perform a permanent situational diagnosis, balanced and with integrity, which will allow us to objectively analyze the historical moment that we live in as the Church of the Nazarene.
9. That in the midst of this moment in our history we need to reaffirm and exercise the essential values as a Christian, missional and holiness church, that gives us identity as a denomination.

**We commit ourselves to:**

1. To remember that we are debtors to the pioneer strength of the missionaries and to the first generations of pastors and laypersons that gave us their model of life, dedication and sacrifice.
2. To continue to preach biblical holiness passionately as the distinctive doctrine of our identity as the Church of the Nazarene.
3. To model a life of holiness Jesus style that demands of us maturity and coherence between what we believe, what we are and how we behave.
4. To reaffirm our special emphasis on residential and decentralized theological education to form men and women with the purpose that they will faithfully fulfill the ministry that God has called them to.
5. To focus on discipleship that is not solely limited to training new believers but that projects itself in a more integral manner in all the dimensions of the person, using the transfer of life method.
6. To fulfill in obedience to Jesus Christ the Great Commission and the Great Commandment as fundamental aspects of an integral mission that takes into account all the dimensions of a human being.
7. To develop pertinent strategies to reach with the message of salvation and holiness other mission areas such as urban areas and other social strata.
8. To encourage a spirit of openness that acknowledges and respects the universality of the Church of Jesus Christ and this is represented by different groups of evangelical Christians.
9. To take advantage of the resource of theological reflection, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to enrich our history and doctrine in the context of the mission of the church.
10. To be obedient to God in being faithful witnesses in the time that we have been given to live in and leaving a legacy of integrity and commitment to future generations of Ibero-American Nazarenes.

Finally, we express our feelings of enrichment to have been able to dialog about our church with transparency and openness because we are sure that this is the only way that permits us to be more involved in the design of our ministries in face of the future. We praise the Lord for His grace and the development of our church on Latin America and we reaffirm the commitment to build the Kingdom of God in his name.

The participants of the **First Ibero-American Nazarene Theological Conference** accept this letter of affirmation and we commit ourselves to live and spread the contents of it in the different levels of the church where the Lord has called us to minister.