

Core Values Panel

Ron Benefiel

Monday, July 17

Ron Benefiel: A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity of working with a small group that was assisting the General Superintendents in coming up with a working copy of a core value statement. This core values booklet is the result. The General Superintendents released it at the Millennial Conference. I understand it is being translated into most of the major languages in which we have churches in the Church of the Nazarene. It is also being used some for new Christian classes and membership classes. It's really gratifying to see this take hold.

It comes out of really a long history. Some of us in the Nazarene Sociologist group, called ANSR have been working for a long time on the missional and theological identity of the church as the church goes through various socioeconomic changes, what sociologically might be called secularization. That could be misunderstood but that's more of a sociological term and has to do with issues of what holds the Church of the Nazarene together as it goes through different shifts. Those shifts are taking place in different ways throughout the denomination.

We came to the conclusion in some of those discussions that one of the things that was really important was a statement that would clarify core values of the church, especially as the church is internationalizing and a lot of the growth is occurring outside the United States. The question is, what holds the Church of the Nazarene together, and that as the church grows and organizational structure will probably be inadequate and a familial network of relationships will be inadequate as the church grows geometrically. What is at the core? What holds the church together? We came to believe that a statement, a clarification of core values, would be helpful.

The General Superintendents agreed. They said, “Why don’t you come up with a working copy and we’ll take it from there.” So I had the opportunity to work on the development of a core values booklet that then was handed to the General Superintendents. One of the General Superintendents in particular had primary responsibility for editing and rewriting. All of the General Superintendents added their comments, their editing, and in some cases, their rewriting. That is some of the history of the core values booklet.

One of the advantages I have, I suppose, being one of those who worked on the original document, is that I know some of the thinking that went behind this booklet, some of the things that are in here and some of the things that are left out. For instance, our first run-through on core values was not “we were a Christian people”, but it started with “we were a redeemed people” and went to a “holiness people” and “we were a missional people.” But the more we thought about that, we wanted the beginning place of our theological and missional identity to be as part of the universal church.

You see on the first page here a brief statement of the core values. What the team is going to do this morning is work through the extended statements that appear at the beginning of each of the supporting essays. We’re going to invite you to sit in on our discussion that we’ve been having all week long. I’ve found it really a very interesting and important discussion because after all, this core values booklet was written by some of us in the United States. It is the core values statement by the Board of General Superintendents, who are, after all, American. This is the first time, really, that there’s been an opportunity for the international or global church to engage the core values. That’s what we’ve been doing this week. We’re going to continue that discussion with you this morning. We also understand that earlier in the week we had some seminars that encouraged us to ask the tough questions. We are interested in asking some of the tough

questions of these core values and then we have a secondary exercise after we discuss the core values.

You will want to join in on this discussion. After we've gone through the elongated core value statements, we would like to offer an open mike for your comments, questions and interaction with the panel. Then we're going to go into some questions that we have that are related to core values.

If you'll look on page 3, you'll see that this, of course, is the longer statement of the first core value. *"We are united with all believers in proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that in divine love God offers to all people forgiveness of sins and restored relationship. And being reconciled to God, we believe that we are also to be reconciled to one another, loving each other as we have been loved by God, forgiving each other as we have been forgiven by God. We believe that our life together is to exemplify the character of Christ. We stand with Christians everywhere in affirming the historic Trinitarian creeds and beliefs of the Christian faith and deeply value our heritage in the Wesleyan holiness tradition. We look to Scripture as the primary source of spiritual truth, confirmed by reason, tradition and experience."*

I think you can see in this that part of what the intention is . . . where do you begin when you talk about the theological and missional identity of the Church of the Nazarene? The beginning place is that we are Christian. Perhaps some of the significance of this is to identify ourselves as part of the larger people of faith, the larger church of Jesus Christ. So let me open this. We've got some discussions here that we've already been working on with the panel so feel free to jump in.

Dumerzier Charles: In some countries, the term Christian must be qualified for many people. Now I'm not talking about intellectuals, theologians or pastors. Historically, the statement is

right but I'm wondering if, as pastors or as educators trying to help people in their ministry in specific cultures, we need to explain to our people what we mean by Christian? For example, I know, in my hometown in Haiti, if you tell my mom a Catholic person is a Christian, she will be upset. She doesn't believe the Catholic church is a part of the Christian community. This statement would make sense to my mom if we said we are an evangelical Christian because they have this qualifier in defining a Christian. The statement is right but I think we need to take time to work with our people to understand what is Christian. We do have people in the Catholic church indeed who are Christian, but culturally speaking, because the Catholic church has been so strong in Haiti, even in Rwanda where I'm working, it will take us a while to teach the people in our churches and to help them to know that, indeed, we do have people from different traditions who are Christian, not just us. But it will require some work with the pastors.

Ron Benefiel: So part of the issue then is who's going to decide, if we're standing with the church of Jesus Christ everywhere, where the line is drawn. What's Christian and what's not?

Dumerzier Charles: It's the challenge we have.

Male: And it may vary from culture to culture in some cases.

Leah Marangu: Indeed that is true advice from culture to culture and in times, your exposure to Christianity and to the regions. I grew up in a community where my father was the only first generation Christian. In fact, he was a convert. I knew that I am a Christian. My cousin, my uncles and my grandmother are not. I must respect them. They also respected me. Also, as a country, you will find that when you come to Kenya, it's only now that with a lot of mobility, things are beginning to mingle that you can see two or three regions together. But you come to the south, it is all Presbyterian. In the central, it is Catholic and in the north, it is Methodist.

They respected one another. They knew they were different. They used to have a meeting where all of them would meet together and strengthen one another and then each one of them would go their way. We did not associate with the Catholics that much because they went overboard in drinking and smoking and doing all those things.

Now, we have a very strong council of churches in Kenya. They have been a very big anchor for social voice in our country. That's the only voice that has been able to stand and tell our president when he is wrong. No other body has been able to do that. It has been the moral conscience of the country, but one church alone cannot stand and do that. I think, as Christians, we have a role to also come as brothers and help each other. How do we help our brothers and now say, "You have lost sight of Wesley" if we bunch in our corner without helping them to see where they have gone astray. I think that is my concern. We can be isolated and feel that we don't want to be contaminated and therefore we lose sight of the Great Commission.

Ron Benefiel: Is this the right starting place for the core values? Is this the right place, Raja?

Raja Nweiser: Yes, I think upon this statement as an expression of our difference with other religions. We are not Muslims. We are not Buddhists. We are just part of the larger church that believes in the lordship of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, we also are not just Christian because of the larger church. We are Christians on the basis of the historic faith that has been expressly stated in the Apostles Creed.

Ron Benefiel: If we start with this as a beginning statement, is there any possible danger of losing our own identity in reaching out and trying to be ecumenical?

Raja Nweiser: I think the statement is very well stated and I think it has captured the two dimensions. The first one is of our church being part of the larger Christian community. The other dimension of our church as being distinct from other Christian denominations, and that's where we stress our Wesleyan holiness tradition. However, I think the tendency has been through the last decades to try to defend and protect our distinctiveness on the account of our relation to other Christian denominations. It says "we join with all true believers in proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ." I felt that sometimes, because we are a small denomination and we were afraid of losing our identity, we were a little bit defensive and protective. We didn't want to work even with other denominations who have the same message and mission that we have. For me, this looks a little bit very North American white. The Church of the Nazarene there can find enough support and there are so many means and ways where they can really help assist and strengthen each other. There are some other countries in the world, like Lebanon, where there is only one Nazarene pastor and only one Nazarene church. That's all that we have. There are some other denominations whom we know are presenting the gospel with some other areas of understanding but they are still proclaiming Jesus as Lord, as Savior, and as Redeemer. But how much does our identity as a Church of the Nazarene in Lebanon, or maybe that's the case with many other churches, allow us to cooperate to receive help and assistance and provide help and assistance to other denominations whom we are sure are proclaiming Jesus.

The other thing you mentioned is the Catholic church. Very often the catholic (universal) church cuts us off from building bridges and reaching to the people. One of the statements of Phineas Bresee was, "We want to Christianize Christianity." I don't know if this is possible while we are just building big walls and saying, "Yes, we are Christians but we're not like you. You're not real. We are real. You don't have the true message. We do have it." My concern is we need to keep our identity as a holiness church and we need to do that strongly and emphasize it. But we also have to look for means of continuing to work with other denominations.

Male: I think the statement is well taken. Far from losing our identity, we recover our identity. In many parts, the pride of being Nazarene does not help us understand that we're part of the whole of historic Christianity. Since we are still a small denomination in comparison to other groups, we are sometimes seen as a sect, or we're seen as a little group that they don't know where to place. We're not Pentecostals. We're not Baptist. We're not this or that. I think that's a good starting point. We need to recover that we are part of the larger historical Christian movement. In Latin America, for instance, we do make distinctions between Christians. We talk about the Catholics. We know they are in the Christian tradition but we don't think they're truly Christian because of their beliefs, their practices, and their mixing of many other traditions, or their emphasis on tradition and culture to an extreme. But we also do not think that we're Protestants in the reformed tradition. We call ourselves evangelicals to show the distinction that we believe in the new birth, we believe in the gift of the Holy Spirit and we believe in the more dynamic and biblical Christianity. So I think this statement is very helpful and is stated in a way, also, that is clarifying about what type of Christians we are.

Ron Benefiel: Moving to the second core value on page 6, "*We are a holiness people.*" In the construction of this core values booklet, there was more attention given by the General Superintendents to this core value than all of the rest combined, as you might imagine. It was of great concern as to just what was included and even in the supporting essay that followed. I had one of my friends who was a theologian write it and he has refused to even go back and look at it since it's been edited and rewritten by a number of different people. But the skeletal structure of what he wrote is still in place there.

This is the elongated statement as it now appears: "*We are called by scripture and drawn by grace to worship God and to love Him with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength and our*

neighbors as ourselves.” Basic scriptural underpinning perhaps, Wesley certainly would have said for the doctrine of entire sanctification and holiness. *“To this end we commit ourselves fully and completely to God,”* a statement of dedication, *“believing that we can be sanctified wholly, as a second crisis experience,”* the experiential dimension. *“We believe that the Holy Spirit,”* the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, *“convicts, cleanses, fills and empowers us”* the optimism of grace, how grace is . . . it’s not just imputed grace but imparted grace . . . *“ as the grace of God transforms us day by day,”* so there’s the gradual dimension, *“into a people of love and spiritual discipline, ethical and moral purity and compassion and justice . . .”*

Part of the idea here is that holiness is the word more than any other that describes the character of God, the whole of the character of God, not only in His purity, as we’ve often emphasized, but also in His love, in His mercy and in His justice. To be a holiness people is to be a people that take on the character of God, in love, in purity, in compassion and in justice. Part of the idea of bringing justice into the statement here is that as God stands for justice, we as a holiness people, in the image of God and transformed in the image of God, are to be a people of justice as well.

“It is the work of the Holy Spirit that restores us in the image of God and produces in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.” This language of Christlikeness is being especially used in this booklet and it is the ethical dimension of holiness. It’s good biblical language—the language of Christian perfection—that the language of Christlikeness is more understandable. If we only use the language of Christlikeness, it may lose some of the secondness character in the experiential dimension of holiness and so that’s also of course in the statement. So you can see there are a lot of different pieces that are interwoven together in this statement. So that’s the statement. How does this statement then play out when the international church engages this? Is this a good statement?

Dumerzier Charles: It is a good statement except I'm not sure how it extends to justice. Are we talking about social justice or are we talking about personal justice, that is, as a person of the Nazarene, I'm committed to live in justice, or as a Nazarene, I'm committed to social justice? Which are we talking about?

Ron Benefiel: I think the intent here, as we'll of course see as we pick up in the next sections, is in the use of the biblical language of justice, which would be biblical and social justice, as opposed to a legal justice, especially as God cares for the poor, stands with the oppressed. When we see the Old Testament prophets and also in the life and teaching of Jesus that God is a god of justice, standing against oppression in the world, so that social and biblical dimension of justice.

Leah Marangu: I think an example of that is what the National Churches of Kenya are doing today in standing out for the justice that people are missing through our government. They are really the voice that is speaking for justice for people.

Ron Benefiel: We'll pick that up again more as we get into another core value, Is this statement on holiness a universal statement that can stand for the Church of the Nazarene? Is there a timeless character to it, a universal character to it or is this pretty time-defined?

Male: Well, the second core value gives a very definite statement on what kind of Christians we are. We are not just Christian by name. We are not just Christian in the sense of a universal church. We are a holiness people who believe in the definite second work of grace, the crisis experience as opposed to some who just believe in holiness by practice. But we believe it as a doctrine and a duty, something that we cannot separate. I think that's what my core value is as I see it in the second value expressed here.

Male: Something that worries me about this statement and which Dr. Greathouse stressed in his opening speech, is the communal understanding of holiness. There is a lot of individualistic language and individualistic commitment, with no reference to experiencing and nurturing holiness in a communal sense and living holiness all together as a community, rather than only as individuals. I feel this is a missing piece.

Ron Benefiel: I think that's a good point. We did try to put it in language that was communal even if we didn't specifically state a communal dimension to holiness. We said we are a holiness people as opposed to we are holiness individuals or we are holiness people. We are a holiness people, kind of thinking of us as the whole and then the language of "we" that is through this whole statement. But you're right. There isn't any specific statement that talks about what it means to be a holy people together.

Male: That is also reflected in the fact that we're talking here that holiness is the byproduct of worship. We are holy after we come in contact with the holy God together, as a community, and we worship together. Then we can become and carry out our holy mission and be holy as a people. So the way it is phrased here is most helpful because it does speak about a community in that sense.

Kim, Sung-Won: If I bring this statement into Korean context, there would be some important question would come. There are two big holiness churches in Korea, besides the Church of the Nazarene. If we claim that we are a holiness people, then they would ask, what would make Church of the Nazarene beside the holiness people because their theology and doctrine is pretty much the same as us because they do not have any, like a background in the United States or other western groups of theology. They use Nazarene textbooks for some purposes and so if

they say why this is not a holiness church instead of how does your group can be a Church of the Nazarene other than holiness church. That would be a big question for us and so somehow Nazarene implication needs to be articulated or needs to be stated in here, it would be nice.

Ron Benefiel: Is the holiness church in Korea also Wesleyan? Is it a difference of denominations or is it a theological distinction?

Male: They are a Wesleyan and holiness group. It's just a different denomination. They are one of the major denominations in Korea, the holiness evangelical church, but there are two big groups, which are a lot larger than the Church of the Nazarene. So if they raise a question and my answer were to be kind . . . may not be clear for them to make the identity of the Church of the Nazarene.

Ron Benefiel. Good point.

Scofield Eversley: If the foundation for this holiness group in Korea, or wherever it is this holiness group would be located, is grounded on God, we would not want to say or do anything to set ourselves apart from those people. God said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Holiness is not only for Nazarenes. God's desire is that all of His people be holy. So therefore we would not have to do or say anything to become more distinct from the group.

Rene Guzman: Because of the tradition the Church of the Nazarene has, especially in my region, my part of the world . . .with teachings directly from the Nazarene missionaries, . . . the Church of the Nazarene has been able to define holiness in a more wide way. In our environment, we are affected by . . . new interpretations or new streams of interpretation of the life of holiness. Some associate holiness with emotionalism or emotional aspects, related to worship—tongues, the

spirit catching you and throwing you, laughter and other such manifestations. In a sense, they might be enemies of the traditional concept of holiness that we have received. For the region to maintain the declaration of holiness the way it is expressed here. It is not difficult to understand but we need to sustain it, we need to affirm it.

Ron Benefiel: It could be, again, that the language of Christlikeness is especially helpful here. It perhaps very simply explains to people what we believe about holiness; it is the grace of God that changes us into the character of Christ so that we intend, by the grace of God, to be Christlike. That's different than some of the other things that are being described.

Male: My concern is that many of our people today would just consider themselves members of the holiness movement without experiencing personal holiness. We are not a holy people because we believe in Christlikeness. We are first of all Christian and secondly, personally experience the crisis experience of holiness.

Male: In listening to what Rene has said, if there are those persons, which we believe there are, who are masquerading themselves in a holiness robe, I wonder if there should not be a shift as far as terminology is concerned, as was alluded to a little while ago. We employ the term Christlikeness more so than the term holiness. Just a question, a thought.

Ron Benefiel: Ahhh, these are good questions. Moving on to the next core value. This booklet is not a mission statement. It is not a statement of belief. It's core values, and in writing the core values statement, there was a sense of trying to touch the simple theological and missional identity of the church as it has been experienced and known and has been part of our historic tradition. But also then projecting it into the future of the kind of church we are becoming or intend to be, or maybe even the language of re-traditioning, how we take who we have been and

then begin to ask the question, what does that look like in who we are becoming? “We are a missional people”, begins to bring together what has been part of our missional identity, and also who we are becoming. There are four dimensions of this third core value statement. We talked about this a long time and decided finally that after we are a Christian people, we’re a holiness people. The mission of the church, as a missional people, begins in worship. In fact, it begins and ends in worship. This is the statement.

“The mission of the church in the world begins in worship. It is as we are gathered together before God in worship, singing, hearing the public reading of the Bible, giving our tithes and offerings, praying, hearing the preached word, baptizing and sharing the Lord’s Supper; it’s here that we know most clearly what it means to be the people of God. Our belief that the work of God in the world is accomplished primarily through the worshiping congregations leads us to understand that our mission includes the receiving of new members into the fellowship of the church and the organizing of new worshiping congregations.” We put this last statement in here because it is directly tied to that sense of worship and a strong ecclesiology. The expansion of the church is always understood in terms of local worshiping bodies. We don’t think of the expansion of the church other than through the organization of local congregations. That’s the beginning place of the mission of the church. It always begins and ends in worship. That’s the statement. What do you think?

Male: I’m happy about this. It makes up for what I thought was missing in the second core value, which is the stress on the communal lifestyle of holiness. I’m happy about the categories that were placed about tithing and especially about the means of grace, baptizing and the Lord’s Supper. I agree with Dr. Greathouse. We need to give some more attention to the role which the sacraments play in strengthening and empowering our life and our holy living.

Dumerzier Charles: I really like that mission starts in the church. Before we can send people out, they have to understand what the church is and what we're doing. If we want to be honest with ourselves, there's a tendency to send people without understanding what the mission is, what worship is, what preaching is. Then somehow we end up organizing new congregations that lack an understanding of what the mission of the church is and where the mission of the church starts. If it starts in the church, then it seems to me we, as pastors, as leaders, need to get involved actively in equipping people to go outside. Sometimes I wonder how effectively we do that.

Leah Marangu: I think this statement is really very important. In the process of more people coming to the church, we may lose our mission, which we say begins and ends in worship. Are we putting membership ahead of mission? Do the people who come, who join the church, know our mission, that it begins and ends in this worship? We are worshiping God and they are coming in God's church. I think also, as probably missionaries, you go out there meeting different cultures. How much are we compromising our mission to be like the culture you've met without asking the consequences of the mission of worship? It's very important that this becomes the pillar and wherever we go, whether to the culture of the young or the culture of Africa we help them understand why they're in the church.

Male: The core value is stated here and it's a beautiful expression of our mission as a church universal, the larger church. It emphasizes the importance of the local church where worship is beautifully expressed in a community. It not only expresses the importance of the local church but the importance of adding new members. It's also a personal thing where worship results in bringing in new people to Christ and becoming part of the church. This is a statement I see as expressing three important dimensions of the church, the church at large, the church local, and personal or individually.

Male: I also believe we have to have a more expanded perspective of worship. It is more than just a worshiping act. I have been in congregations that worship very well but do not think a lot about winning others or reaching out to others. I cannot question the genuineness of their worship experience. But it is worship expanded as a lifestyle that is carried out beyond the worship service time that we must have. We have to also make it very clear that worship is not just what we do Sunday morning or Sunday night or the worship service we attend. Worship is the lifestyle, the whole experience when we come to God and we feel His heartbeat. Part of his heartbeat is for us to witness the Christian message to others.

Ron Benefiel: Implicit in the statement is that worship is focused and based in God. Worship is not primarily focused at the people who are not in the church in trying to relate to them. It's not to reinforce our own values and community culture. Worship is based in God. At the same time, I think there's this tension that while our focus of worship is in God, we are continually inviting people to participate. There's a spirit of hospitality where we are encouraging people to come and participate with us in worship of God. I think there is a tendency to place our focus of worship not in God but in us or in trying to just reach people. This changes the nature of worship. We become so focused in God that we're not aware of that spirit of welcoming people into the worshiping body, the evangelistic dimension, that hospitality of welcoming people into this worship experience.

Dumerzier Charles: It seems to me in a few concise words that the theology of worship is expressed here. But how do we move our worship services . . . sometimes tend to be ____ than theocentric, when really when you're in worship service, you have the feeling of watching a show. You can't tell if you're watching a show on TV or if you are in the church. It's a challenge for us. We . . . if we are taking this statement seriously, we really have to redefine . . .

are we going to be ___ or are we going to be theocentric? And how do we help our people to really understand that worship is God-centered. God has to be in the middle, not a show to impress or to get more people in or to just make people feel good. Maybe I'm imagining that but it seems to me that the tendency is to go to the other side.

Male: Education, I believe, is that which will help us to help our people to come to grips with the true benefits of worship. The positive aspect of this paragraph says that worship is self-surrender and self-offering. Worship is the church in loving, obedient service to God. This transcends the worship service, the evangelistic service. It transcends the musical instruments, the special numbers. It's lifestyle, 24.7. I believe that if we can get our people to understand, this is worship then we will be able to address even more aggressively the Great Commission.

Kim. Sung-Won: I like the concept of mission and worship combined. A new concept of a mission has been elaborated here as having new members in worship service and organizing worshipping congregations. In that context, worship is interpreted in a mission understanding and mission is understood in a worship context. I like the concept of a combination, mission and worship. I wonder if our mission of worship can be generally accepted in the global community? I'm raising a question.

Ron Benefiel. It's a good question.

Male: I look at worship as just not going through the motion of singing, praying, and giving tithes. We can do that without worshipping. I look at worship as an attitude, a lifestyle where I can personally worship God in my own room. But without that personal experience of worship, there cannot be a genuine corporate worship. We may praise God with the loudest voice we can

but without a personal experience of worship in us there can't be a genuine corporate worship anywhere.

Dumerzier Charles: Let me ask a question to Dr. Kim. Is he referring to form of worship or content of worship? It seems to me our standing in that statement, they're talking more about content of worship than form of worship. Cultures can change the form of worship. I don't have organs or pianos where I work in Rwanda. The forms change. The way people sing or dance. It seems to me the concept of singing, hearing the Word, the preaching of the Word, it is part of the content itself. As an international church, we cannot impose the form of worship but I think as far as the content is concerned, we can push for that. People need to be fed when they come to the church. They need to pray. They need to give. They need to support the church at every level. But as far as the form is concerned, I think there's room for flexibility for that. I'm not sure if he's talking about form or content.

Ron Benefiel: Sung-Won, do you want to respond to that and then we'll move on to the next one.

Male: Simply, I didn't think about form and content of worship but as I look at that statement, I like it. "Receiving of new members into the fellowship of the church and the organizing of new worshipping congregations." Something is going on in there so that I thought that that implies a certain implication of missions.

Ron Benefiel: Just a last comment, too. I think I would certainly agree with Angelito that worship can take place anywhere and can be very individual. but that part of this statement is also arguing for the distinctiveness of the church in worship, of corporate worship. When we're

talking about the beginning place of mission, specifically we're talking about it as the people of God gathered in worship.

And then that moves us to the next statement, which is how the people of God as they begin in worship, engage the world in mission. Mission begins in worship. It is then engaging the world in this statement. *“As people who are consecrated to God, we share His love for the lost and His compassion for the poor and broken. The Great Commandment and the Great Commission . . .”* Trying to balance this here in our statement of the mission of the church, where perhaps the Church of the Nazarene has understood its engaging the world primarily in terms of the Great Commission. It was very intentional, to bring the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in on an equal basis in understanding the way that we engage the world in mission. And of course, the Great Commandment ends in the story of the good Samaritan.

“The Great Commandment and the Great Commission move us to engage the world in evangelism, compassion and justice.” When we are compassionate, it is not to show compassion in order that we can win people to Christ, but it is part of who we are. It is the people of God in mission in the world. We evangelize because it is who we are. We share the love of God because of who we are. We are compassionate because of what God is doing in us. God makes us into a compassionate people. We stand for justice because it is who we are as Christians. So that dimension of our mission is tied to our central identity of who we are in Christ and what that looks like when the church engages the world.

“The Great Commandment and the Great Commission move us to engage the world in evangelism, compassion and justice. To this end we are committed to inviting people to faith intentionally, to caring for those in need, to standing against injustice and with the oppressed . . .” And then this environmental statement . . . *“to working to protect and preserve the resources*

of God's creation and to including in our fellowship all who will call upon the name of the Lord." There's your statement. What do you think?

Scoffield Eversley: Evangelism, compassion are two areas that the church has pretty aggressive in. I am not only making reference here to the Church of the Nazarene but to the Church of Jesus Christ generally at this point. But how emphatic we have been, how aggressive we have been as far as the justice aspect of the Christian church is concerned? I believe that the church has been too passive where it should have been more active. I believe that there is a term that we should know as the church – militant. The militancy of the church has not been in focus as it should be. I believe that the church has sat too idly by and allowed governments and other organizations to get away with murder – figurative term. I wouldn't want to settle for that. I believe very strongly that the church should have a voice in all aspects of the life of the people, even though there would be the attempts to silence us. For example, I was asked to speak on national radio. I did the recording at the radio station. I was not afraid to say what I believe should have been said on the subject from a church perspective. When the replay was done, my address was edited to suit what they wanted to hear. But I said what I had to say. I believe that we must be a people, a church, that is very aggressive. I believe that the church should position itself to determine who rules our countries.

Dumerzier Charles: I think there is a tension, or some kind of uneasiness, between what is cultural and what is injustice. I do think there are some cultural issues that are basically systemic evil that the church must address biblically in trying to help people. The message is it's our culture, but how far do we go as a holiness church, as a Christian church, to even challenge some systemic evil in the culture to help people? One example. We have Peter. God called Peter, of course, to talk to Cornelius. Well, Peter didn't really want to do it. The reason was in his culture that would be a bad thing for a good Jew to go and eat with someone who's not a Jew. For

example, I can talk about Haiti or even Rwanda. There's a systemic evil to keep women from the ministry. You have some people who are gifted, and will do an excellent job, even better than the man, but yet the church is not willing to address this issue. But at the same time, there's an inconsistency in the whole thing. They don't want Rwandan women to be pastors or Haitian women to be pastors, but they'll send single women as missionaries to teach and preach. So somehow we feel there's an inconsistency in what we believe and what we do on the basis we want to respect culture. I think somehow we have to be brave enough to use the Bible and help people to challenge their own culture. If we choose to become conformists, in order to conform to the cultural values, we need to at least look at the culture through the lens of what we believe as a holiness church as a biblical basis definition. We have some serious problems and I'm concerned about that.

Male: I believe this issue is directly connected with our trying to be politically neutral. A lot of the social issues have very strong political connotations. We as a church have been very conservative in that respect. Maybe we have to ask for forgiveness in some cases because we have associated that type of neutral political involvement, which is something that is almost impossible, has taken us out of the arena of being able to denounce social evils. I'm not saying that that's the best way or the worst way but I'm just describing. I can understand why, though I still feel that the mandate of scripture goes beyond that.

Male: I see that we are putting a lot of stress and emphasis on justice. We have been doing a lot of evangelism and compassion. We need to be very careful not to put all our efforts and resources trying to fight the battle that will take us a lot money and effort. Although it's a primary goal for us to really make sure that we help in seeing justice happen. I don't want to categorize these three but are we equipped to fight political systems or are we going to lose the battle instead of investing what we have already in evangelism and compassion. If we are

equipped, if we have a voice, if we as Nazarenes have a big number and we can affect that election, I think we should. But if we are very little and weak, are we going to use the resources we have fighting a battle that's larger than us? Not to ignore that we have a battle, let's remember that at the top of all this, there is a God who sees the resources we have.

Dumerzier Charles: I'm not sure our commitment should be to change political systems. I think, at the end of it, the question would be, where do we fit. We're talking about fitfulness to do what we think is right, to stand up for justice. We might not mention in any political system. So if we take whatever we have, our resources, to change political system, I think we are going the wrong way because some political systems would take a long time. I guess what we . . . at least my understanding of standing against injustice is to be able to, in our own way, as a person, as an individual, as a local church, to stand up for justice, not to invest money for a political system. I think at that point, we're talking about fitfulness to what we believe and what we do and not to compromise with whatever political system we're talking about.

Male: And I agree with you, but the point is we are not talking about only words, just making statements. We're talking about involvement in seeing justice happening with all possible means that we might possess. Whenever we have the means, we are to press and use them. I think we are to use the resources that we have to accomplish the things that we are able to accomplish, rather than engaging in a battle that's beyond our abilities.

Leah Marangu: I think sometimes we may look for different types of resources and indeed those are not the resources God wants us to use to change the world to God's culture. The most valuable resource we have is our attitudes. God has given us liberty to choose what attitudes we should bring as Christians. These core values are our biggest weapon that can help us to change any system for that matter. Let's not look for big weapons, while we know God uses us for

small weapons that make a difference. It is the attitude of the people that have made the world become the way it is now – that it is unlivable. Change people’s attitudes by being Christlike and the world will be better.

Male: I think we have to be a little more honest and say, our attitude has been to be silent, to be inactive, to be insensitive, to do nothing. I don’t think God likes that.

Leah Marangu: No. That’s not the attitude I’m talking about.

Male: That’s the attitude we have to change. I don’t think we’re talking about becoming political activists but at least our voice has to be heard. Some things we need to do for our holiness to be holistic, for holiness to reflect the justice of God upon our world.

Leah Marangu: I think . . . let me mention this. Last October I was asked to speak at a national conference called by our president. The conference was to help change the views of our people so they can be more professional. And my question was that we forward for the country. The most appalling thing is that the people who are in the government that we’re working with are no longer there now. They have lost their jobs. Now we are saying, how can we have people at the top who, when we have an approach like this, will not fire others but they will take as a word forward for our people to shun corruption, to come to value . . . really to bring ethical standards of our people. If we have somebody higher than us, we would be implementing all that we did that time. That’s what we are talking about.

Ron Benefiel: We need to bring this part to a close so we can move on so some closing comments, but I’m interested that your comments have gone all toward justice as opposed to evangelism and compassion and justice. I think Raja’s initial statement that perhaps our focus

has been on evangelism and compassion so much that this is bringing in another dimension and it's not to the exclusion of evangelism and compassion. In some ways, that's understood of our mission. How are those connected?

Male: Well, there are several approaches to these problems of injustice, oppression and environment. I do not disregard sociology and other sciences in solving these problems but I guess my bias as a pastor would lead me to say that I biblically believe that the root of all this oppression and injustice is sin. When we deal with sin, we are dealing with these problems. I have a member in my local church that has some 30-40 employees. The moment he got saved, the first thing that he did was to review their salaries. It changed the whole color of his business from being money-oriented to being spiritually-oriented. He reviewed the salaries. He reviewed the transaction. Why? Because he became a Christian. I think compassion and evangelism are an integral part of our mission. We cannot solve injustice just for the sake of injustice. We must deal with the root of injustice, sin.

Dumerzier Charles: That's true, though, but what about when the sin itself came from what we call the Christian institution itself. I know that the people who were preaching against sin, there are those who are participating in so this same person who is preaching against sin, this same person thinks you have to keep the poor people down, you have to keep everybody in place to have order. And you know, that's changed. You have somebody in the world, you preach against sins, they're changed. But some times we have people in the system, who preach holiness, but yet their action does not reflect that.

Ron Benefiel: One last comment and then we're going to move on.

Kim, Sung-Won: We have to relate the justice to evangelism. When we make a denominational voice on injustice or disharmony of the society, we have to be very careful because sometimes the cultural issues involved in social issues, contribute to better condition in the future. So we have to be very careful when we make a voice of injustice as an official voice of the denomination. If we make a great decent nice voice of injustice, then we will attract many people to pay attention to our church. For instance, in Korea, whenever there is something happens to the bishop, one famous cardinal appears and he makes a very careful and nice statement about bishop. Then people hear that message and they want to come to church because the church believes, you know, in harmony and justice with a pure heart. So I think the voice of injustice can attract the people to evangelize and to come to the church.

Ron Benefiel: I want to make sure that all of you understand that even though I had a hand in writing these core values that my interpretation of core values does not necessarily represent the views of the establishment. I don't intend in any way to be speaking for the Board of General Superintendents in the way that they intend their statement to be understood. I did have an opportunity to participate in the project and so some of the thinking that went into some of the initial ideas but this may not be the way they would interpret. I want to make sure you understand that.

Okay, going to page 12. *“We are committed to being, inviting others to become, disciples of Jesus.”* That's the core statement right there, committed to being and inviting others to become disciples of Jesus. *“With this in mind, we are committed to providing the means . . .”,* Sunday School, Bible studies, small accountability groups, etc., *“through which believers are encouraged to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith and in their relationship with each other and with God. We understand discipleship to include submitting ourselves to obeying God and to the disciplines of the faith. We believe we are to help each other live the holy life*

through mutual support, Christian fellowship, and loving accountability. Wesley said, ‘God has given us to each other to strengthen each other’s hands.’” Just comments here. There is kind of a Wesleyan dimension of submitting to the disciplines, the means of grace, the disciplines of the Christian faith. We had less to say about this in our discussions before and in the interest of time, I think I’ll go right to the last dimension. This third one is fairly straightforward even though it’s very, very important. I’m not trying to underestimate the importance of this. We did want to talk about our mission of Christian higher education.

In some ways, this one seems disconnected and that’s part of the discussion here. Why does this one belong in a core values statement? The rest have a theological position. The reason that we included this one on Christian higher education was that even though this isn’t distinctively necessary to be Christian, it has been distinctive of the Church of the Nazarene from its beginning to emphasize Christian higher education. *“We are committed to Christian education through which men and women are equipped for lives of Christian service. In our seminaries, Bible colleges, colleges and universities, we are committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the development of Christian character and the equipping of leaders to accomplish our God-given calling of serving in the church and in the world.”* We debated in the original writing of this quite a bit in a little theological discussion, whether or not that last statement was “equipping of leaders to accomplish our God-given calling of serving in the church”, or whether or not we were also to add “and in the world.” We finally decided that we needed to include both. Well, there’s the statement. What do you think?

Raja: I would like to repeat again the objection I presented when we were in our small group. I think, as a church, we are to put high emphasis on higher education. But I’m still questioning the validity of having higher education as a core value. What I asked of the small group and I again present it here is, would we still continue to be a Christian church and would we be faithful to

who we are without higher education being a core value? What I thought was higher education is to be a high priority in our mission but it's not a core value. It does not consist who we are. It's not in our essence as a church.

Ron Benefiel: As you may discover, Raja represents the minority opinion on this particular point but it's good to go ahead and put it out on the table. From here on, we can take shots at Raja.

Dumerzier Charles: I think we can still be a Christian church but the term I think we use is a Christian holiness church. I think the history of our church, shows the commitment we have from the beginning to the voiceless, to the poor, to those who are at the bottom of society. At least I understand it from Wesley up to our church's beginning. One of the ways that we did that in the past and we try to do that now, or we should commit ourselves to do, is empowerment, or trying to get people to be able to get up from the bottom and be able to live their life in society. We also help people to express what we believe in a more open way. I think, we've been talking about having dialogue with the communities. Now if we cannot express our faith clearly, logically, and biblically, we will have a hard time helping people embrace what we believe. Just to tell someone "I was sanctified" doesn't really mean too much. Buddhists also believe in some kind of sanctification. It is our responsibility somehow to express very clearly what we mean by entire sanctification, what it means for our people.

To that point, I don't think the church, as I understand it, is calling for all Nazarenes to have a bachelor degree or all Nazarenes have a diploma. I don't think that's the question here. I think there is a call for us to commit ourselves at every level, to empower people, to help people to express not only what they experience but what they are living and why they do what they do. At least, that's the way I understand it. Now if we said, in every country, you have to get a bachelor's degree, a diploma, a Ph.D., I think we're going to kill ourselves with that one. But

somehow we have to commit ourselves to empower people and help people to help themselves. That's what we mean by higher education.

Male: Then I will continue this conversation in heaven.

Male: I understand that it is the church's stance to teach the life of holiness. In this last section, we began with the teaching of worship, then evangelism and compassion. Both things are related so we can fulfill our mission. The problem we talk about Christian education, looks like there's a disconnection between preparation and the mission. The purpose of our church is that higher education provides the resources to maintain that connection, so the first moment when someone becomes a member of one of our churches, they start discovering their gifts and their talents. They develop in their own environment, their own setting so they can produce changes. That means having some type of a degree. The title itself is not so important. What is important is the talent or the development, ability, to make the church develop and fulfill its mission. There is not an opposition between preparation and mission.

Male: I just would add that if we're talking about education and not training, not indoctrination, or any other forms that sometimes are confused with education, we cannot put a lid on our education. Education, by its nature, is an ongoing process that we have to develop to the maximum stages, which would include higher education. I don't think it is a question among the Church of the Nazarene because of its historical background. That makes us maybe a little bit distinctive, and maybe not. We cannot just talk about Christian education if you want to make that difference, and say well, we'll just deal with that and we'll be Christians anyway. Our historical perspective may be from our founding leader, who was, in a sense, before his time. Now we have come to a place in time and history where it's even more necessary.

Male: Raja asked the question whether the education is really of value or not. In east Asian country, education is a value because it has the potential for something good. So education, if we take this statement in east Asian context can be considered as a value, very high value.

Raja Nweiser: But the question that I'm raising, is it of our essence or is it for the good of our essence. That's my question? It's not a question of will we do it or not. We ought to do it. There is no other way. It is necessity. But is it of our essence or is it for the good of who we are?

Male: I would respond that for us, it is a core value. It is something that not only describes us but is essential to who we are.

Raja Nweiser: Again, I feel lonely.

Male: I like this statement of the core value where it puts the balance between pursuit of knowledge and the development of Christian character. I hope we don't divorce that because we might end up starting higher education with persons with so many degrees you can't count them. Some have three degrees but they're below zero. The balance must be there, the development of Christian character.

Male: Well, I would choose to agree with that, but I think we have to think more in holistic terms. That has been our problem. We have left out our emphasis on character. It is not as simple as just saying we have to emphasize this alone, but we have a more holistic approach to education and more participative ways that we can learn together—balance.

Leah Marangu: I think this will be very personal but sitting down here with Raja, I feel like I'm sitting next to my mother. My father was for education of both girls and boys. Believe it or not, my mother, did not see why we girls should have gone to school. She fought it all the way and one time, she almost won. And if it weren't for a missionary who walked 20 miles to look for me, why I'm not in school, I would not be here today. I am the living example why education is important.

Ron Benefiel: A key question all of this is if liberal arts higher education, Christian higher education in the liberal arts tradition, has been of value in the church in the United States over the course of its history, now as we become a global church, is that a value that we take into the future globally, with the advantages of course, that if you provide education, it empowers the church perhaps to be able to have the resources to sustain itself. It also is an empowerment kind of ministry as it provides education to people who otherwise perhaps would not have education available to them. Then the big question is, given the scarce resources in the church, will we be able to put those resources, into the development of liberal arts schools globally, or is that something that's just really impractical? On the other hand, we have the examples of ANU and KNU. Is this the trend of where we are going into the future or are these anomalies? All right, we're going to open the two mikes and we would invite your responses and comments. You can direct them at the panel or me.

Greg Crofford: I'd like to thank the panel for what they had to say. Until 1918, the name of our denomination was the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene and it took a General Assembly vote in 1918 to drop the word Pentecostal from the name of our church. I was just looking in Danny Gale's copy of the *Manual*. I can't find the word international attached to Church of the Nazarene anywhere in the current *Manual*. But on the back of this book, we are the International Church of the Nazarene. Now this has practical implications when you're talking about planting

the church, because we're trying to get local congregations started and say, "Hey, this is where it happens. You need to support your own pastor. This is where the ministry happens." Yet somehow in their mind, the church is this international organization with deep pockets that needs to somehow pay the pastors and do all this other stuff. My plea is for consistency in what we do. Even in this book, throughout the inside, it says Church of the Nazarene but on the outside, it says International Church of the Nazarene. So which is it?

Dumerzier Charles: If you look at the time we have from '97, when we have the General Assembly, to now, how many new countries and new churches we have. So as we grow, as we expand, we will have to keep redefining ourselves, or clarifying ourselves, if I can say that. And so the concept of International Church of the Nazarene, there are some places we have to do it. Let me give you an example. You refer to the *Manual* when we talk about Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. I have a pastor who is Pentecostal. He took the *Manual* to me one time. He said, "You Nazarenes, you missed the point. I am the real Nazarene because we are Pentecostal." In the services, he speaks in tongues whenever he wants and he quotes the *Manual* to some of the people and says, "We are Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. They made a mistake in the past." So as educators, we have the responsibility to express or to explain to our people, to give them a concept of ecclesiology and that's something we have to do. Or otherwise, what you're going to have, I guess, we'll be talking about the local churches trying to disconnect themselves from the international church. And if we don't do that, we will be sorry in the future.

Ted Esselstyn: I'd like to just say two different things here. I think we fail often to realize how closely justice and evangelism are tied together. I am firmly convinced that one of the reasons we have a slow growth rate in some parts of South Africa is because, in our endeavor to be neutral on political issues, we became associated with injustice and we are still perceived as champions of some kinds of injustice. As a holiness church that doesn't make mistakes, we find

it very difficult to seek forgiveness for our perceived actions. The other side is, I really don't care if we number 3d, 3d or if we want to number it 3c.1 because to me, you cannot have discipleship in a holiness tradition without including Christian higher education in a well-rounded education. If you want to call that liberal arts, that's okay with me, as long as it is a well-rounded education.

Raja Nweiser: As if I have had not had enough opposition, thank you. (laughter)

Ted Esselstyn: Let me just say here, I don't see that in opposition to you. I think that in some sense, you are correct, that it is an extension of 3c.

John Haines: I'm speaking in regards to 3 as a whole and starting out by sub-categorizing worship. I'm always a little anxious that we misfire in our denomination, in our church, in our movement and worship becomes basically this little fragmented thing that happens occasionally. We contribute to it in this way, I think. I look at worship as being that out of which the mission of the church is flowing and the education and the discipleship of believers is flowing and compassion and evangelism is flowing. I've not been happy with this since it came out because of that.

Ron Benefiel: That's interesting because the intent was exactly what you're saying, to put worship right at the beginning, out of which everything else emerges.

John Haines: Right, but they made it a sub-point. You see, they say, we are a missional people, a word which basically is an unknown term in, I think, any of the languages on our region. I don't know of a single language that has translated this book that has found the term for missional. They've had to create a whole paragraph to describe what that means. But to

understand or articulate what it means to be a worshipping believer, worship is a translatable term and concept. But to put worship as a sub-point . . . and I think, to follow along with that just for a moment, in regard to our mission of compassion and evangelism, it ties back to this idea of the worshiper. I feel like sometimes we misrepresent our role in being partners with God, in seeing His purposes fulfilled in the world. The things that are articulated here, I see flowing out of a worshiper's heart, a worshipping heart, to join God in the restoration of all things. I applaud those who made the point of worship as a lifestyle, but I think somehow this whole 3, in my mind, needs to be re-worked so that worship is not some sort of a sub-category but that out of which everything else is flowing or emerging.

Ron Benefiel: If you have a plan on how to do that, we'd be really interested. In fact, one of the things about this whole document is that it is very much intended to be a document in process. So rather than this being kind of a final statement, if it will continue to have a life of its own, where people continue to interact, especially as the international global church engages this, I think there are a lot of changes that would need to be made. Suggestions along that line would be really helpful.

John Haines: I agree. Now I'll speak practically as one who is responsible for trying to get this produced in 27 languages. I would like to think that it is an historic document that will sit as finished or even "fait de accompli" thing. But I'm afraid, given the practicalities of translation and the efforts of putting it into languages, coming out from a mandate from the Board of General Superintendents, you will make this a top priority for your literature committees, blah, blah, blah . . . all of that sends a signal of permanence, of something that is to be copyrighted with this date. Anything else will have to occur 20 years from now when we want to do a reprint, because it's an expensive venture. And I would like it to be much more alive, as you're saying, but I'm afraid it won't be because of some of those practical issues.

Ron Benefiel: Understood.

Male: Hopefully we can find a way . . .

Male: Don't be hopeless. You never know, they might change it.

Steve Weber: Dr. Lambert encouraged me to step up here. One of the reasons I was asked to serve as executive director of the Jesus Film is that we found, to some surprise, that as the church we really do not have a very good plan of discipleship in many areas. I think my comment, or at least my search, is that you, as higher educators work on 3D, that we must take a fresh look at 3C. Compassion and evangelism flow out of discipleship. It's easy to follow through the worship idea where you've got worship centers. But when you do not have many worship centers—one in the country, for example—then it gets to be really a task of being creative in how we do discipleship, which ultimately would lead to higher education. I'm trying to find working models of discipleship around the world for new believers in large numbers. I'm not sure there's all that many that exist so I guess my question is, if you are one of those that are doing that, I sure would like to talk to you because we need a lot of help with the Jesus Film. Thank you.

Ron Benefiel: Thanks, Steve.

Male: I think the purpose of theological extension and lay people program address that statement.

Dean Blevins: Ron, one thing that comes to mind goes back to a comment that Dumerzier Charles said earlier about struggling with form and content and whether that's even the right language. What's been helpful for me is to talk about worship in its various expressions. It works in a couple of ways. It doesn't separate the core, the heart of what we are about from the activity that surrounds it. Does that make sense? It also allows worship, not only talk about expressions as in different forms of worship in a local congregation, but understanding how evangelism, discipleship, compassion are also expressions of that same worship. Why I find that helpful is that there can be a variety of expressions but they all find their heart in a sort of organic connection with who God is and how God helps define each of those expressions. The United States likes to play with form and content and in doing so, often bifurcates those and doesn't talk about the relationship to each other. So I just prefer to use the term that there are certain things we do but they take many expressions, and that hopefully will leave sort of an organic connection between the two of those. Just a thought.

David McEwan: I think I'll support Raja, being a European. It shows again there really is a cultural difference in the way that we do look at the place of higher education. Europe has a totally different picture to the rest of the world. It's neither good nor bad. It just is. Perhaps my other, more major concern, is with the second one, "we are a holiness people." There is a danger when we take a very good brief statement and decide to expand it. I share, for different reasons, John Haines' concern about this thing becoming set in concrete. Many from my end of the world would certainly take objection to the way item 2 has been expanded. Theologically, it leaves a great deal to be desired. It is anchored in one, and only one, expression of the church's understanding of the doctrine of holiness, that works itself into a paradigm that if it is not left as a dynamic statement, will, in many parts of the world, be outdated. It is already for us. This is a paradigm that we in many ways dispensed with quite a while ago, and certainly not a paradigm that in much of current Wesleyan theology, would be approved. I would share concern that

when we start to expand what is a basically good brief statement and then make it a much longer statement, that's when you lose what you're trying to do.

One of the things I love about the Church of the Nazarene, of which I am passionate, is that in order to join it, you only have to agree to that agreed statement of belief. I think that's wonderful. We don't unpack it too much. We leave it as some very central issues. I would share concern that if we start to unpack it too much as a core statement, then you wind up losing what you're trying to achieve, which is to keep us together.

Ron Benefiel: Just as point of interest, what part of the expanded statement makes it outdated and doesn't resonate with where you are in the world.

David McEwan: Okay, and I guess this is not a theology conference. I don't want to turn it into one and may well, in the debate, see the two sides of that of the church. It seems to me that it still remains a ___centric focus that a Christocentric focus. The language is often substantially encultic rather than relational and more in the area of healing. There are some questions that are clearly not absolutely agreed by the church in the divine act of entire sanctification, also called the baptism with the Holy Spirit. There's a significant part of the church that would thoroughly disagree with that statement, even in the U.S., if the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* debates are anything to go by. I understood that it is the work of Christ that is applied by the Spirit, not the work of the Spirit in some of these areas, that the statement near the bottom, "He cleanses us from original sin and indwells us with His holy presence," is dangerous language. It tends to denigrate the first work of grace. "The Spirit of Jesus produces in us His own character." Who is the "His"? Grammatically, in English, the His is the Spirit, where really it should be the character of Jesus, if we want to be Christocentric. The quotation from Ephesians, one might debate very profoundly whether that even remotely is referring to entire sanctification. The

divine image restored? No, I wouldn't claim that for entire sanctification. For glorification, yes, but entire sanctification, we're still on the way, if I understand our faith. There would be some debate about the language, "we identify with the Arminian tradition of free grace. Jesus died for all and human freedom." That's very easy to misread as human free will, and as Wesleyans, as I understand it, we profoundly don't agree with that. We do agree with grace-enabled response but not just humanistic response on its own. The bottom paragraph sounds awfully nice, "a magnificent obsession with Jesus," but we're in real danger there of turning into a Jesus only movement rather than a Trinitarian movement.

Ron Benefiel: You are responding mostly, if I understand, to the supporting essay. Is that correct?

Male: Yes, and that's my only concern. If that gets . . .

Ron Benefiel: The supporting essay is different than the elongated statement. There probably are some problems in some areas of the essay and I would agree with you. But to put it back just to the elongated statement, I think . . .

David McEwan: There are still a couple of issue there you might want to deal with.

Ron Benefiel: Thank you, that's helpful.

John Haines: I just wanted to say, what I appreciate about this and this activity today is that if this activity today were the result of this around the world, I would applaud it as loudly and long as I could. The truth of the matter is I think that's what a piece like this is really useful for, is to get the church dialoguing and interacting with one another about some of these very things.

Actually these last few minutes has been a model of that. If we can do that without de-Christianizing others who have a comment that's a little different from our own perspective because of the culture, it's packed with a lot of different things, this piece can be a real benefit to us. My comments earlier had to do with I don't want to see something like this become a permanent fixture which is locked within a binding and cannot be broken out. If it can be in the dynamic of discussion and dialogue, I think it's a very good thing.

Dean Blevins: One quick add. One thing with David and I think maybe this is very important. It's interesting, talking to John, I understand the desire to make sure there is a Christocentric orientation versus the ____ reorientation, particularly in certain areas of the world. We're moving more toward a Trinitarian expression and trying to turn back to the historic Trinitarian creeds. One possibility might be to leave intact the words in italics as sort of central statements but allow each region to work out its commentary, particular to the theological task that it sees within that region. So it becomes a broader document. We hope the three statements are at least broad enough that every culture can identify with but their commentary could be placed underneath those to help overcome those types of regional issues.

Dumerzier Charles: One of our concerns as a church, as we move around the world, is not to have individual churches but to have the Church of the Nazarene. For example, the United Methodist church in Rwanda has nothing to do with the United Methodist church in the States. We are concerned that we keep the Church of the Nazarene, the same belief, the same commitment. My concern is that if we have this statement and tell each region to define whatever that statement means to them, then South America would be different for the Africa Region. We will have individual churches of Africa churches and individual churches of South America but yet we differ in many of our beliefs. Maybe I don't understand what you're saying. I think the core values for the church need to be embraced all around the world. However, we

respect the culture. We respect whatever we have to do but it seems to me we have to come to the understanding that we are one church.

Dean Blevins: I can understand that, Dumerzier. Would the material in the italics be enough of a central definition of who we are that could still allow for theological reflection beyond that that becomes particular to the regions themselves.

Ron Benefiel: So there's a core and a supporting essay that could . . .

Male: If we continue to work and rework this commentary, I'm not sure we could ever produce a commentary that would be satisfactory, AKA generic enough, to suit all of our regions anyway. The italics are convictions. They're central expressions of what we believe. The commentary then becomes, to use my language again, expressions that work within. Now the challenge will always be cross-conversations and the hard task of doing theology in our own specific settings. One thing I would be concerned about is if we say this is exactly who we are, then what is the task of theology beyond that? So that's why I'm hoping there will be some way this would be a living document. I do understand what you're saying, Dumerzier, and I've seen it in other denominations where the diversity is so great there is no point of commonality. Just try to find out what is that point of commonality, then how can we allow for expression beyond that.

Ron Benefiel: We still have, I think, a few minutes. We came up with eight questions and what we'd like to do is split you up into eight groups and give you the choice of where you would like to go. These are spin-off questions out of our discussions related mostly to the core values booklet. Dumerzier has the first one which is, is the primary goal of the church growth—numerical growth—or is the primary goal of the church to be authentic witness of the church in

the world—authenticity. Authenticity could include numerical growth but if numerical growth is the only goal, does that necessarily mean it is Christian in every sense?

Dumerzier Charles: I don't think we should be afraid of change or having new people coming in. We cannot prevent the change. We cannot prevent the changes in the society and the world. We will face changes. We'll face paradigm shifts. The question is how so we as a church, recommit ourselves to deal with the changes? I think that's the question we have to deal with as a church and as educators, not only as pastors, I mean as educators, and as the lay people level. Are we going to help them to equip them when new people are coming in, for them to invest their lives helping those people to stay with Christ and to grow in this special work. Educators, pastors, district superintendents, I think from the bottom up, we must have this movement of committing ourselves to help the people coming in to be what God has called them to be.

Ron Benefiel: Rene is going to lead a group on the tension between being the local church and having a kingdom perspective. We have heard that the only church is the local church and the denomination only exists to support the local church, which we think is true, but then there's this tension. If the only church is the local church, does that really separate us from one another? If the denomination isn't helping our local church, then why do we need the denomination? Is there a need for us to be thinking not only in terms of the local church, not necessarily appealing back to denominational loyalty, but to a kingdom perspective that forces us to think outside of ourselves.

The third group with Ramon is going to talk about the difference between being a sending church and a sent church, the possibility of a paradigm shift here where we have thought about being an American church with a missionary program where we send people to a global church where the whole church is sent. Also part of that is sometimes there's been a withdrawal tendency within

the church and should there be more of an incarnational engagement where the church is being sent into the world?

Fourth, Raja's group is going to discuss the difference between the clergy in ministry or all of the church. Just a brief word about that.

Raja Nweiser: The part clergy play in ministry, which led to not using the resources we have among the laity. We want to discuss how we can continue our positive tension between using the clerical resources we have but at the same time, the laity resources that we have.

Ron Benefiel: Okay, Angelito is going to talk about the tension that we have two churches in the Church of the Nazarene as we move toward a global church. In order to be a missional church, does it require us to think more globally or do the two structures need to move more toward being one global structure. There was also the discussion in the group about do we need to move more away from a top-down leadership style to something that's more collaborative in the decision-making process in the church?

Sung-Won is going to talk about, in his group, exclusiveness . . . has the Church of the Nazarene been fairly exclusive. Have we been somewhat sectarian? Do we need to be more engaging as part of the larger body of Christ? Should we be emphasizing more issues of unity and cooperation with the church?

Scofield is going to talk about worship focus, which is in our focus of worship, is there too much of a focus on us or even on making our worship style something that is appealing to people as opposed to something that is centered in God and what's the tension between those?

Leah wants to pick up the discussion of liberal arts education. Should it be U.S. only or is there a need for us to be thinking globally about higher education in the church? You have twelve minutes from right now to discuss these issues and bring us a report.

Ron Benefiel: Okay, the request is to have a very, very brief statement from each group.

Dean Blevins: We primarily began to discuss the issue between the need for either authenticity or growth as a beginning point. I believe the consensus was that authenticity is at the core of what we think is most important but it should include growth. Though it's more than that. If that's the case, it would probably challenge two things I've got listed here. Authenticity has a tendency to challenge any kind of programmatic approach. But it would be any kind of programmatic approach to evangelism that excludes other expressions of the church. We talked about the key to make what we do flow really out of our being, out of our very lifestyle, be it evangelism or compassion or any of the other expressions, including discipleship. And we would almost challenge any kind of a programmatic approach that would deny the reaching the real human needs through evangelism or other approaches, so if there's any other kind of exclusive approach that comes out of a programmatic, then anything that would deny growth would also equally be poor. In some ways, we thought that the key would be that growth should be an expression of who we are, that what defines us authentically as the Church of the Nazarene, that growth should emerge out of that, and in some sense, then, the doing follows the being of who we are. We did acknowledge that, between knowing, doing and being, there's an interdependence and that sometimes in the very activity we discover our authenticity. So that's about as far as we could get in the time but that gives sort of an idea of what we were working with.

Ron Benefiel: From Ramon's group.

Interpreter: We were talking about the paradigm shifts from being a sending church to a church that is sent. We started talking about the historical problems that we have of making such a sharp distinction between the clergy and the laity. In general terms, missionaries have been clergy persons and they go and laity has just been expected to give offerings, pray and not go. We also need to recover the reformations, at least declaration, of the fact that we are all priests, we all need to be sent and also the concept that we are a holy church separated from the world. We are also a church in mission, sent or sent again, into the world. Jesus himself through compassion tells us in scripture that we are to be the salt and the light of the earth. What can we do? We need to redefine what mission is about, and expand our concept of mission and beginning from the local church realize that we have all been sent, not maybe to other parts of the world, but sent to our world to share the gospel. We also talked about the fact that we need to reconstruct or redefine our concept of missionaries. Who is a missionary? I've heard the debate often among people that work in missions, that if everybody's a missionary, nobody's a missionary. We need to look into that, if that's really true or not.

Ron Benefiel: Good point. Thank you. Raja's group.

Male: We discussed the use of lay persons to perform the work of theology. We do recognize that there has been an over-emphasis on ordained ministry and it is our thinking that as a result, this has inhibited our maturing as a church. So as a church we need to use the lay human resources, skills, knowledge, and gifts within the church. We have to increase the knowledge base in our churches. There may be lay persons who are faithful and committed and these can be used to perform some of these duties and responsibilities in those areas where they are knowledgeable.

Ron Benefiel: Very good. Angelito's group.

Male: We talked about the dichotomy in the way that things are run and accountability and such between the world areas and the United States and Canada. The idea was that there ought to be one system for all. As it stands right now, in world areas, a regular district would not only have a district superintendent but would also have to report to the area director and also to the regional director before they could get access to a General Superintendent. In the States and Canada, the district superintendent goes directly to the General Superintendent. If it is truly an international church, then the United States and Canada ought to be under the same system, not that we want to do away with the system necessarily on the other regions. The international center in Kansas City, or wherever that international center might be, would truly be an international center with international people—personnel—as well. The United States and Canada should have a regional center which could be in Kansas City but in a different location from the international center. One final comment was perhaps we're at the point now where we need a General Superintendent on each region instead of the General Superintendents in in Kansas City, but there would be a General Superintendent that might be in residence in each region. Just an idea that was presented.

Ron Benefiel: Interesting thoughts. There's room for discussion there. Rene's group.

Interpreter: We talked about the tension between the local church and the institution—the great institution. We talked about the fact that we believe in the local churches where the kingdom values are incarnate, sometimes we have local churches that maybe would not respond as faithfully to the denominational programs as some would like. We believe that sometimes the local church is simply going through the wrong path. Another model could be where the local church is really incarnating the principles of the kingdom, maybe even better because it is not

their preoccupation to reflect the structure. Many times the local church is more interested in living out the kingdom principles than maintaining the structure. All of us that are involved in theological education should be very conscious of what the local churches are asking us because they are very interested in the kingdom.

Ron Benefiel: Thank you for that. Good report. Sung-Won's group is next.

Kim, Sung-Won: Korea's KNU is having a problem—or a challenge—on the area of hiring faculty members. We have very limited Nazarene professors who hold a Ph.D. In the theology department, we require they be a Nazarene but other departments, we hire who are not Nazarene but it has to be a good Christian, like a Presbyterian or a Methodist holiness church. Like last time, we hired the one Catholic professor because we're rehabilitation technology is not that common in Korea so very hard to find outright professor so we . . . the first time we had a very difficulty to have a common sense in Board of Trustees members and the personnel committees and also the president had a reluctance to hire him. On the student's side, we have very less percent of . . . we have a very small number of the students, a small percent of Nazarenes, in our student body, so there are very many denominational Christians are coming to our school. So we cannot just be independent from other major denominations. It may not be the best way to expand the kingdom of God in the 21st century. So I think we need to have some type of relationship and work together shoulder to shoulder to deal with the world issues and global activities. Probably there might be some question of on identity of the Church of the Nazarene so we have to work hard to develop creative advancement of our denominational identity. I'm not sure I said it properly but that's what we did.

Ron Benefiel: Thank you, Sung-Won. Scoffield's group.

Diane Lecerlc: We were talking about worship in the church and if I were to summarize the conversation, there seemed to be two elements that we want to hold on to. Those two elements are very much in tension with each other. The form of worship is not restricted in that the Church of the Nazarene as it is in many other areas would be inclusive. We talked about the worship wars in at least the United States, that we have contemporary worshiping championing that this is true worship and yet those that are more traditional championing that this is the only way to worship and the result is that we, in our larger churches, we have split the congregation in two and we have persons who worship at 9:00 in a contemporary way and at 11:00 in a traditional way.

To give you another example, I in the last year, have been pastoring a church that wants very much to be Nazarene. It's a liturgical church. It is self-supporting. It is not in need of home mission funds. It raised \$60,000 to call its own pastor. It is ready and willing and very desiring to be recognized as a Church of the Nazarene but our district superintendent . . . I'll be honest enough to say that in this context . . . had no desire whatsoever to bring a liturgical Nazarene church into the fold and so he has rejected any attempt to join. So a burden of my heart is that whether it be cultural or expression of worship or whatever it might be, that we can all recognize that we're attempting to worship God in our own way and want to be included in the Church of the Nazarene. So on the one hand, we have this sense of inclusiveness. The problem is that if you give people permission to worship God in their own way, it's a very fine line before we shift into the fact that worship is all about me and how I worship and a selfish attitude and a self-oriented expression of worship where we lose the whole focus of worship to begin with. So the tension between wanting to allow for inclusiveness in expression of worship and yet guarding against that permission to turn into, not worship at all, but selfish self-gratification.

Ron Benefiel: Thank you. And last but not least, Leah's group.

Bob Woodruff: We were discussing liberal arts education and we're for it, where it's appropriate. In places like Indonesia, Christian universities have changed the tone of that country to the extent that it's a much smaller percentage of Muslim people than is reported even in the press. The Catholics and many Protestants have done well in this area. Secondly, I would say after having been involved in opening Africa Nazarene University that it's not easy to open a university in the United States or outside. The first years will be rugged but it needs to be an awareness on our lives that it's God's call upon that part of the church. Having said that, we realize that in many world areas, including the U.S., that many of our universities throughout the wider Christian church started as Bible Institutes and then Bible colleges, theological colleges, and then later, universities. And we realize that they did not start always, intentionally, to start a university but it grew out of the felt needs as the church developed in that area. I would say this and I said it there and they agreed. First of all, many of us, even in that small group, thought that it was less a core value and more a means toward the core values and that represented more of an international perspective.

Secondly, we have to be honest. In some countries we cannot have universities for various reasons. That does not take away the need to develop educated people within the church but there are many ways of doing that. In countries where they already have established universities that we could never compete with, we can support the university students who are there by having dormitories. We can have tutors in every academic discipline who are Christians. We stand alongside them in their discipline area and we also can have, in these dorms, chapel times, discussion times with integrating faith and learning. You can also, in countries where you cannot have a university, such as the one in which I live, our college now has a year after university called a graduate diploma, only open to graduates of a university and is a year of bringing faith into that which they've already learned. Also you can have, in places where it's

truly needed, a Christian—not a fundamentalist, but a Christian high school that offers the years 11 and 12, which in our part of the world is where the liberal arts are covered anyway. The three years of university are not liberal arts. They're specialization built up on the liberal arts of grade 11 and 12. If we need liberal arts, that would be the appropriate place to do it. And what I'm saying is, we need to be creative. The end of a developed laity, as well as clergy, is what we're after and there will be many ways of doing that.

We also felt that Christian universities, where we do have them, should be universities of excellence. And if we know that our university education would be second-rate, it would be looked down upon, it would not represent Christ well, then we should find something else that we can do to support those students so we can still support, not only Christ, but the excellence that He wants in every endeavor we do in His name.

Al Truesdale: A big round of appreciation for . . . Ron and the panel. Thank you very much for leading us in a very, very stimulating morning.