

THE QUADRENNIAL ADDRESS
OF THE BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS
TO THE 26TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE CHURCH ABLAZE

Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you. — 2 Timothy 1:6

On June 8, 2002, not far from my Colorado home, a 38-year-old woman struck a match, burning in anger a letter from her estranged husband. It was a single match, a single letter, a single fire. But when the last wisps of smoke had faded and the fire was presumed extinguished, canyon winds caught a spark and fanned it into a flame. The flame spread, becoming a raging fire with an insatiable appetite for everything in its path. Firefighters and volunteers battled the blaze for days.

The results were extensive, complex, and long-lasting: more than 137,000 acres severely affected; 600 structures in four counties destroyed, including 133 homes; thousands of people displaced; suppression costs exceeding \$39 million; land restoration of \$25 million; almost \$24 million in private property loss; untold amounts in lost employment, reduced property values, and tax revenue; devastation of gas and electrical

systems; and a fractured ecosystem affecting soil erosion, water quality, and natural habitat.

One match, one spark, one flame whipped by the winds became a roaring, raging fire with inconceivable consequences. The power of fire is awesome, mysterious, and indescribable.

Fire has symbolized the work of God in the human heart since John the Baptist predicted that Jesus “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). This prophecy was fulfilled when the consuming fires of the Holy Spirit fell on the believers gathered in an upper room on the day of Pentecost. “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:2-4).

Thus the Church of Jesus Christ was born! It started small, with only 120 people. But that small group, ablaze with the Holy Spirit, marched with militant force into a world of universal corruption and hopeless degradation and changed forever the moral and spiritual climate of that world, winning multiplied thousands of converts to Jesus Christ.

When the Church is aflame with the powerful fires of the Holy Spirit in any generation or any situation, God’s mission in the world is being accomplished. Fire warms! Fire illuminates! Fire purifies! Fire has the power to set something else on fire! Fire burns, consumes, and destroys! Fire characteristically ignites in a burst of flame followed by a long, steady glow.

The natural tendency of fire is to go out. Even the fire of the Spirit can dwindle and cool within the Church. That's why the apostle Paul admonished young Timothy: "Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you" (2 Timothy 1:6). During the past two millennia the breath of the Holy Spirit has often ignited spiritual fires within the Church. The Church of the Nazarene is an illustration of this truth. The Methodist Church burst into flames when John Wesley's heart was "strangely warmed" by the Holy Spirit in 1738. With a renewed emphasis on the doctrine of biblical holiness, the Methodist Church spread throughout England like a prairie fire out of control. It eventually landed on U.S. soil, which proved to be fertile ground for the holiness message. In the mid- to late-19th century, the doctrine of Christian holiness, fueled by revivalism, swept like a firestorm across America, even leaping over denominational barriers. Slowly but surely, resistance to the doctrine set in, the fires of the Spirit were dampened, and only dying embers remained.

Again the Holy Spirit moved, fanning into flame a passion within His people to "spread scriptural holiness." Little fires of holiness evangelism flared up across the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Ultimately, these sweeping flames from all sections of the country converged at Pilot Point, Texas, in 1908, and the Church of the Nazarene came into existence for a specific purpose—to give special emphasis to the doctrine of scriptural holiness.

At the second General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, E. A. Girvin reported on the state of the young church: "From the very beginning the manifest blessing of God has been upon us, and He has enabled us to establish centers of holy fire." At the heart of these "centers of holy fire" were a deep conviction and fiery fervor

about the holiness message. The message was their mission. And their enthusiasm about the message ignited a fire that became a conflagration that resulted in a Holiness Movement. Those early Nazarenes were not driven to plant new churches, do compassionate ministries, and develop educational institutions. They did these things, but they were secondary and flowed naturally out of their primary passion to “spread scriptural holiness.” This was the driving force for everything they did.

The message they proclaimed is enunciated clearly in the Articles of Faith of our *Manual*. It has remained essentially unchanged for almost 100 years. We believe, as do other Evangelicals, that there is “full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed, and acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior.”

We are distinguished from most other theological traditions by our view of entire sanctification as “that act of God, subsequent to regeneration” that “comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.” This experience has always been viewed as essential to holy living but never the terminus of one’s spiritual journey. It opens the door to limitless possibilities of grace where we are living in close and loving relationship with Jesus as Lord and increasingly maturing in Christlikeness of character and life. This fullness of life in Christ must be lived out in a local church where everyone is being held accountable in love and the church is modeling a Christian lifestyle that fundamentally challenges the worldly values and practices of its surrounding culture. Such a church proclaiming such a liberating message may indeed be called a “center of holy fire.” Such a church is ablaze with hope, and how desperate is our world for hope.

THE CHURCH ABLAZE WITH HOPE

The natural catastrophes that happened in the recent past—tsunami, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires—have been indescribably devastating in the loss of life, the destruction of property, and unsettling lifestyles for multiplied millions of people. Then there are the human-created conflicts, atrocities, unbelievable inhumanities and injustices that we inflict upon each other. In many cultures human life is cheap. Our brother in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pastor Damian Rumazimisi, experienced the murder of his wife, two children, and a dear friend in his own home by a man who stole his cow and then endeavored to kill the whole family rather than pay for the cow. One cow was more important than four human lives. And then there is disease, HIV-AIDS, poverty, orphans, abuse, starvation, genocide, war, and death. Millions are hopelessly addicted to drugs, alcohol, pornography, hedonism, and materialism. The litany could go on and on!

Our 21st-century world is seething in a cauldron of despair. People are being tossed mercilessly on the sea of utter hopelessness. What a time for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Last fall in Toluca, Mexico, a *JESUS* Film team began preparations for yet another showing of this evangelistic tool that has led so many to the hope in Jesus Christ. That morning a torrential rain fell, and though it had subsided, it left the streets filled with water. A complication, they thought—an inconvenience that led them to change their plans and show the film instead on a basketball court near a main highway. In complications and inconveniences, we must never forget: the One who sends the rain also sends the fire. On the precipice of a bridge over that highway stood a 50-year-old

man without hope, desperate with life's circumstances. He had gone there to end it all that very night, planning to jump to his death. But standing on the bridge on the brink of eternity, he saw on that screen the representation of Christ the Hope. He felt a strong urging to go closer to see if the love of Jesus could replace the anguish in his heart. Sobbing before one of the counselors, he begged, "Please, I want to know more about Jesus. Teach me." That night he gave his heart to Jesus, was gloriously transformed, and received the hope to sustain him in this life and the life to come.

We have the message so desperately needed by the world's grim, despairing masses—Jesus the Hope. And we are spreading this message. Today 254 Nazarene *JESUS* Film teams are spreading the gospel in 155 languages in 98 world areas. The six-year results have been staggering—4,795,308 decisions for Christ with 1,827,699 of those involved in initial discipleship, 12,665 new pastors trained, and 5,952 mission churches started. *My Best Friend, Jesus*, the salvation booklet developed by our Children's Ministries, is now being used by *JESUS* Film Partners in Northern Europe. Jesus the Hope is our message to all generations.

In his address to the First General Assembly in 1907, Phineas Bresee charged the newly-merged church to strengthen the home base and then to radiate around the world. "I fully believe," Bresee stated, ". . . that only a few years will be necessary to give to this work a thousand centers of holy flame in this country, and that from them the streams will flow out to the world."

Today a thousand thousand centers of holy flame burn brightly through the Church of the Nazarene in 149 world areas. From the pulpits, Sunday School classes, and small groups of our local churches, Jesus the Hope is our message to the people of all

cultures. The pastors and laypeople of these local churches are to be commended for their faithful and fruitful service. At the end of the 2004 statistical year, we are able to report for the past quadrennium the following:

13,672 churches (a gain of 8.7%)

1,496,296 members (a gain of 7.7%)

Additionally, 445,607 new Nazarenes were received into membership—the largest number of new Nazarenes in any four-year period.

Believing that our theme for the 2001-2005 quadrennium is poignantly relevant for our times, the Board of General Superintendents has decided to continue the same theme for the next four years: “Jesus . . . the Hope.” We are prayerful that it will be more than an occasionally-referred-to motto or slogan. When we state in our core values that “We are Christian,” we are voicing our faith in Jesus, who said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). We embrace the conviction of those primitive Christians who stated clearly: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). It is this redeeming, uncompromising truth that we Nazarenes must fan into flame. Jesus . . . the Hope for today. Jesus . . . the Hope in desperate times. Jesus . . . the Hope for eternal life. Jesus . . . the Hope of the world.

THE CHURCH ABLAZE WITH MISSIONAL PASSION

The Church of the Nazarene is approximately 100 years of age. Before we gather again in the global family setting of the General Assembly, we will have celebrated our

centennial anniversary. In his notable address to district superintendents in 1946, “All Out for Souls,”—an address that re-fired the church’s passion for the lost—Dr. J. B. Chapman said: “Brethren, I was born in the fire, and I cannot endure the smoke. I am a child of the bright daylight, and mists and fogs and depressing gloom are not to my liking.”

It is quite true, as Dr. Chapman points out, that a church born in the fires of revival can suffocate on the smoke of apathy for the lost and broken or uncertainty regarding its reason for being. But it is equally true that a renewed spark can be fanned into a flame for God that will express itself in spiritual conversions as well as statistical growth. The Church of the Nazarene is on the move throughout the world. Nowhere is this more evident than in the United States churches breaking the 1,000 barrier. Seventeen years ago, the K-Church project was begun in an effort to assist pastors in taking their congregations to 1,000 in attendance. At that time, only nine churches in the USA were averaging 1,000 or more. This quadrennium, the group of COK churches (Churches Over 1,000) has grown to 33 congregations. To the list of churches like Grove City, Ohio Church; Denver, Colorado First Church; and Olathe, Kansas College Church have been added York, Pennsylvania Stillmeadow Church; Flint, Michigan Central Church; Lakeland, Florida Highland Park Church; Chandler, Arizona Crossroads Church; and many others.

Nineteen Nazarene congregations over 1,000 exist in world mission areas, and churches of all sizes around the world are reaching the lost in ever-increasing numbers. There is much evidence that the Church of the Nazarene is ablaze with passion for Christ, His Church, and the lost and needy as seen in the data from the 2001-2005 quadrennium:

- World Evangelism Fund and Mission Special receipts totaled \$270,357,175, and more than \$5 million in World Evangelism Fund overpayment went to explore and enter new fields. The Church of the Nazarene Foundation was inaugurated to provide innovative giving avenues for donors, and the response in the first year has exceeded all expectations.
- Eight hundred and one missionaries and volunteers served in 149 world areas, including 14 new areas entered.
- Fifty-seven Nazarene colleges, universities, and seminaries trained future leaders throughout the world.
- Nazarene Publishing House exceeded \$97 million in net sales as it continues to be the primary publisher of holiness materials.
- Our Sunday Schools averaged 769,396 in attendance worldwide.
- Nazarene Youth International membership rose to 336,950 across the globe.

While we rejoice in this incredible record, statistical success is an indicator, not the end toward which we strive. Our mission is to respond to the Great Commission of Christ to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). More specifically, our mission is “to make Christlike disciples in the nations.” To this end, the generous giving of Nazarenes enables us to continually expand our world mission, evangelism, educational, compassion, and publishing ministries to the world.

The Board of General Superintendents is profoundly grateful for the highly-valued and gifted members of the Global Mission Team at International Headquarters.

The team includes:

Jack Stone

General Secretary/Headquarters Operations Officer

Marilyn McCool	General Treasurer/Headquarters Financial Officer
Louie Bustle	World Mission Department Director
David Graves	Sunday School Ministries Department Director
Tom Nees	USA/Canada Mission Evangelism Department Director
Jerry Lambert	Education Commissioner
David Felter	General Editor
Nina Gunter	Nazarene Missions International General Director
Gary Hartke	Nazarene Youth International Director
Hardy Weathers	Nazarene Publishing House President

These are the operational people who work collaboratively with the Board of General Superintendents in providing leadership for the denomination. Their reports, which include an overview of activities in their particular areas of ministry, are included in the General Assembly delegates' notebooks, under the "Quadrennial Reports" tab.

After years of study and analysis by committees and multiple consultants, the 2005 General Board overwhelmingly approved building a new International Headquarters facility rather than remodeling the current aging buildings. Studies showed that it would be less costly over a 15-year period to build new rather than face maintenance, code compliance, and remodeling challenges in our existing seven buildings. It was a stewardship decision. Additionally, the General Board decided to build on a new location.

The time has come to place our 265 employees in a new structure designed to serve our global needs better. And we will do so by remaining in the Kansas City area. Initial plans call for a 3-story, 110,000 square-foot administrative office building in

Lenexa, Kansas, prominently located at the highly visible intersection of 95th Street and I-435, giving quick access to the entire metropolitan area. Fundraising, options for the Paseo property, and other strategic steps are well underway.

At this pivotal moment in human history and in the Church of the Nazarene, the Board of General Superintendents acknowledges the importance of strategic, forward-looking leadership. With this in mind, the Board has named a group of Thought Partners who will, along with the Global Mission Team, assist in identifying, examining, and proposing strategies for addressing critical issues facing the church. In response to requests of district superintendents from the Southwest Region in the United States, one general superintendent will be assigned to serve all districts on this region during the last two years of the new quadrennium. This will be done on a trial basis only and then reviewed to determine its missional value.

The Board of General Superintendents has established three ministry priorities as we seek to be the Church Ablaze in missional accomplishment.

1. We must do compassionate evangelism.
2. We must make Christlike disciples.
3. We must start new churches.

Do Compassionate Evangelism

We acknowledge that acts of compassion and evangelism are different in meaning, yet both flow from a heart that is being filled with the love of Jesus. We do not do compassionate ministries for the express purpose of evangelism. We act with

compassion because that is the Jesus way. He “went around doing good” (Acts 10:38). And Nazarenes are following His example.

In the past four years through Nazarene Missions International we have distributed more than 124,000 Crisis Care Kits for people in critical need; 5,621 Nazarenes have provided meals, care, and education for 60,000 needy children in 69 countries through the Compassionate Ministries child sponsorship program; in recent months more than \$2.6 million has been contributed directly to tsunami victims, with many of our people directly involved in hands-on relief efforts in Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Horn of Africa. These are only a few of the expressions of our love through Christ for the desperately needy and suffering people of our world.

Compassionate acts in Christ’s name sometimes open the door for evangelism. When the Church Ablaze missionally manifests itself in glad self-sacrifice for others, it breaks down barriers, and hard-hearted pagans begin to melt like ice under the noonday sun. Compassionate caring will almost always win when all other attempts fail. Thus, compassion and evangelism are conjoined in our embrace of the world’s lost and broken.

Dr. Bresee said, “He [the Holy Spirit] comes upon individual souls. He will make every believer . . . a flame of fire.” Fire begets fire! One person can set another person on fire with the salvation message. The match of a single life can be the ignition point of a roaring conflagration that will sweep across communities, cities, nations, and even the world. In the spirit of our Lord, we “preach good news to the poor . . . proclaim freedom for the prisoners . . . release the oppressed” (Luke 4:18). We are not restricted to any particular methodology but are willing, with the apostle Paul, to “become all things to all men [people] so that by all possible means I [we] might save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Make Christlike Disciples

Our commission from the Lord is clear. He did not say, “Go and make converts.” Obviously, conversion is a vital aspect of our mission, but Jesus did not view it as the destination. Thus, our charge is to “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). Discipleship is essential to our understanding of the Christian faith. Developing Christlike disciples within the church is an integral component of our Wesleyan theology.

Sunday School Ministries is focused on the development of Christlike disciples at all age levels. Part of the genius of the Sunday School is its emphasis on small groups where persons develop meaningful interpersonal relationships with other caring persons and are committed to grow in Christ and to advance together in Christlikeness. The primary responsibility of the teacher is to make a significant change in the lives of the hearers so as to shape them into Christlike disciples.

Nazarene Publishing House provides discipleship training materials through WordAction curriculum and Beacon Hill Press. These are Nazarene materials designed from a Wesleyan perspective. The Board of General Superintendents strongly encourages all Nazarene churches to use our own Nazarene-published materials, including WordAction curriculum. They are excellent and need not be reviewed for theological accuracy.

Our discipling process must also deliberately focus on developing leaders. The success of every enterprise, including the church, rises or falls with leadership. We need leaders at every level of the church, and no leader is more important than the pastor of the local church. We are committed to the education and resourcing of our pastors throughout

the world. The Modular Curriculum for Theological Education in the Course of Study toward ordination will soon be implemented, providing quality control and standardization of our clergy training. The International Board of Education will continue its 21st-Century Global Education Strategy, Preparing Great Commission Pastors. Nazarene Missions International's anniversary project, Books for Pastors—Tools for Ministry, will provide theological and professional-skills materials for thousands of pastors in their own languages.

Our leadership cultivation must also include the new generation of youth that has burst forth on the 21st-century stage. This past quadrennium, Nazarene Youth International (NYI) hosted Third Wave, a global emerging-leaders' conference in Quito, Ecuador, involving 163 participants between the ages of 16 and 29 from 44 countries. Thousands of youth attending regional NYI conferences throughout the world received discipleship and leadership training. Barefoot Ministries, a partnership between NYI and Nazarene Publishing House, was launched to resource youth ministry more effectively. Connecting a New Generation, the denomination-wide decadal emphasis for children and youth, is coordinated by a global task force from all the world regions.

The Board of General Superintendents is committed to raising up new leaders. The changing face of the church necessitates leaders, including general church leaders, from all cultures, all races, all colors, both genders. We must be intentional in addressing this burning issue. In every level of our global church, the leadership must look like the church. The Board of General Superintendents urges all General Assembly delegates when voting to give prayerful consideration to the need for diversity at all levels of the church.

Start New Churches

It is a historical fact that the single most effective form of evangelism engaged by the Christian Church is to start new churches. The Board of General Superintendents, believing that this is essential to missional accomplishment, has made church planting one of our three ministry priorities. We must start new churches—and we are doing it! Throughout the past four years, 460 newly-reported congregations were established in the USA/Canada. Approximately 50 percent of these are among cultural and language minority groups. In the six world regions, 1,374 new churches were established, an 18.9 percent gain. Now that our pastors and laypeople are catching the vision, we anticipate exponential church planting in the new quadrennium.

THE CHURCH ABLAZE WITH CHRISTLIKENESS

At the center of our core values, we state without apology, “We are a Holiness people.” In the foreword of our *Manual*, it states that “The primary objective of the Church of the Nazarene is to advance God’s kingdom by the preservation and propagation of Christian holiness as set forth in the Scriptures.” We believe that God desires to cleanse believers from the sinful condition that inclines us towards self-rule in our lives. He wants to renew us in the image of God, enable us to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbors as ourselves, and produce in us the very character of Christ. Holiness in the life of the believer is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.

When we Nazarenes refer to ourselves as “holiness people,” we are making a lofty profession. Such a claim must be justified by both vertical and horizontal aspects of the gospel of the kingdom—love to God and love to neighbor. The visible expression of our love to God is to continue to do “all that Jesus began to do and to teach” (Acts 1:1) during the days of His flesh. Proof of our holiness is having “the mind of Christ” (Philippians 2:5) and living Christlike lives in this world. Nothing will impact people so forcefully as seeing common people such as you and me living like Jesus.

Many polls and surveys conducted in this country demonstrate very little difference in the lifestyles of Evangelical Christians and the world in general. George Barna has concluded that “American Christianity has largely failed since the middle of the 20th century because Jesus’ modern-day disciples do not act like Jesus.” What an indictment. And I doubt that it is unique to the U.S.

My brothers and sisters in the global Nazarene family, we can change the world’s perception of Christians by more intentional Christlike living. Look at Jesus—His love, purity, righteousness, justice, compassion, humility, servant mind. I want to be like Jesus. Don’t you? Here’s a daily formula for Nazarenes who desire to live Christlike—worship Jesus, love Jesus, think Jesus, talk Jesus, live Jesus. Let us be guided by His kingdom values. He challenged the rich to share their treasures with the poor. He embraced the marginalized whom society rejected. He touched the lepers, healed the disabled, and gave women a place of respect. He rebelled against injustice in all its forms. His was so revolutionary that He even commanded, “Love your enemies.” If we Nazarenes take seriously Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount, we, too, could “turn the world upside down” (Acts 17:6, KJV) just like those primitive Christians.

A Hindu leader recently met with village heads in a community where World Vision—the Christian humanitarian organization—was engaged in doing good in Jesus’ name. The Hindu leader warned them to be on the alert because the World Vision staff would try to make them Christian. The people replied, “If you saw how they live, you would want to become a Christian too.” The proof is in the living, not the verbiage. “Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18). Each of us is meant to be walking, living evidence of the resurrected Jesus by the way we live.

Now is the time for us to reaffirm our call to be holy people and renew our commitment to live the radical and revolutionary Jesus lifestyle.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

We look forward to the centennial of the Church of the Nazarene in 2008. The most fitting celebration of a Church Ablaze is to carry out its mission to the fullest extent. Goals have been set. These goals are ambitious and unattainable within human standards. But faithful stewardship combined with the spark of a Holy Spirit revival will lead to new spiritual movements where goals are met and exceeded. To this end, we have embarked on a mission to achieve by 2009:

- 1 million new Nazarenes
- 2 million in membership
- 2 million in weekly worship attendance
- 1 million in Sunday School attendance

- 18,000 churches

The Centennial Textbook Initiative launched by Beacon Hill Press of Nazarene Publishing House celebrates 100 years of holiness teaching with the production of several new textbooks. Already these five have been released: *Discovering the Old Testament*, *Discovering the New Testament*, *Philosophy of Religion*, *A Century of Holiness Theology*, and *Reading the Bible in Wesleyan Ways*.

Because the Board of General Superintendents is eager for our global Nazarene family to participate in the event, we are officially announcing today that the centennial celebration will take place in local churches in all 149 countries on October 5, 2008. Whether in spacious church buildings or the sanctuary of God's creation under a shade tree, congregations on every region around 24 time zones will celebrate our heritage of holiness. Extensive resource materials are being developed to provide unity of worship within diverse cultures and worship styles and will be distributed to all churches without charge. It will be a great celebration of what the Holy Spirit has accomplished in 100 years through the people called Nazarenes.

CONCLUSION

In January of this year, I stood in Maputo, Mozambique. Before me were several ministers of the gospel, waiting to be ordained. One of them particularly caught my

attention. He was neatly dressed with one leg of his trousers tucked into his belt. Where his right leg had been, he supported himself with a cane.

A Christian since the age of 20, Rev. Evaristo Branquinho felt the call of God to ministry while serving in the military during the Mozambique civil war. Beginning as a lay pastor in an Evangelical church, he preached the gospel, and people were gloriously saved. In a nearby river, he baptized believers who celebrated their new life with joy. As the congregation proceeded back to their church, Evaristo, bringing up the rear, remembers an explosion, the searing white fire of pain, and ultimately losing his leg just above the knee to a remnant land mine from the civil war.

No amount of pain or disability could deter Evaristo's passion for God. With all their earthly belongings in one cardboard suitcase and three plastic shopping bags, Evaristo, his wife, and his three children arrived at the Nazarene Seminary in Mozambique. He had discovered the Church of the Nazarene by overhearing a conversation on the street. No amount of struggling with a seventh-grade education could discourage Evaristo from studying hard, hungering all the more for holiness and the ability to preach it to others.

“One day in class we were talking about the sinful nature,” Evaristo says. “My heart started beating fast; I knew I needed to deal with that problem. I saw Jesus coming near to me, and He changed me that day.” Right there in Professor Margarida Langa's Doctrine of Holiness class, Evaristo yielded control of his life to Christ, experienced the cleansing and filling of the Holy Spirit, and was entirely sanctified. “From that time on,” he says, “my preaching has been different and has been blessed with the power of the Holy Spirit.”

When Evaristo united with the Church of the Nazarene in 1996, District Superintendent Mazimba and Missionary Phil Troutman found that this lay pastor was already a church planter. He brought with him not one but eight Evangelical congregations. He had shared with them the liberating message of full salvation that he had experienced in that seminary classroom. They, too, came into the experience of heart holiness and wanted to become Nazarenes.

Like the tongues of a forest fire, spreading from one treetop to another, leaping over trenches, uncontrollable by firewalls, Evaristo's ministry reached out to another location and another and then another. The pastor who stood before me in January to be ordained—the seventh-grade-educated lay pastor turned seminary-graduate, holiness preacher—had organized three more Churches of the Nazarene. The fire of passion burned unquenchably in him, and again three more preaching points quickly followed—congregations 12, 13, and 14. Evaristo is the only elder serving these 14 congregations. He is now mentoring 11 lay pastors, most of them enrolled in the certificate program of Nazarene Bible Institute.

Were 14 congregations enough? Not for one energized by the Holy Spirit, enflamed with a love for lost and broken people, and alive with a passion for God and His holiness. Since I ordained Rev. Evaristo Branquinho in January, he has started a new preaching point—congregation number 15. The first service was held on February 13, and already they have 30 believers.

One man ablaze with the Holy Spirit. The result—11 lay pastors and 15 congregations. The first signs of a Holiness Movement may be stirring in Mozambique. It began with one person. God is looking for more Evaristo Branquinhos. “The eyes of the

Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chronicles 16:9). Great movements always begin with a few. One person can change a church. One church can change a community. One household of believers can change a neighborhood. One church can plant another church and thereby create a model that can be multiplied exponentially. And a movement begins!

One match, one little fire, gale-force winds and within days a raging inferno consumes 137,000 acres of land.

One church—

one small church with 1.5 million members—

one small church totally and radically committed to Jesus Christ
and His counter-culture lifestyle—

one church set ablaze by the same violent winds of the
Holy Spirit that swept across the 120 believers on the Day
of Pentecost—

One church.

Yes, the Church of the Nazarene can be God’s instrument to create a moral and spiritual conflagration that will have global impact. It can happen! We can experience afresh the fires of the Holy Spirit and become a mighty movement to “spread scriptural holiness.” Church, let’s “fan into flame the gift of God,” which is in us.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents

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