

by

ROSS E. PRICE



NAZARENE  
MANIFESTO

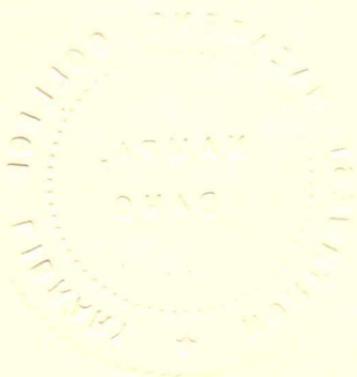


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## Preface

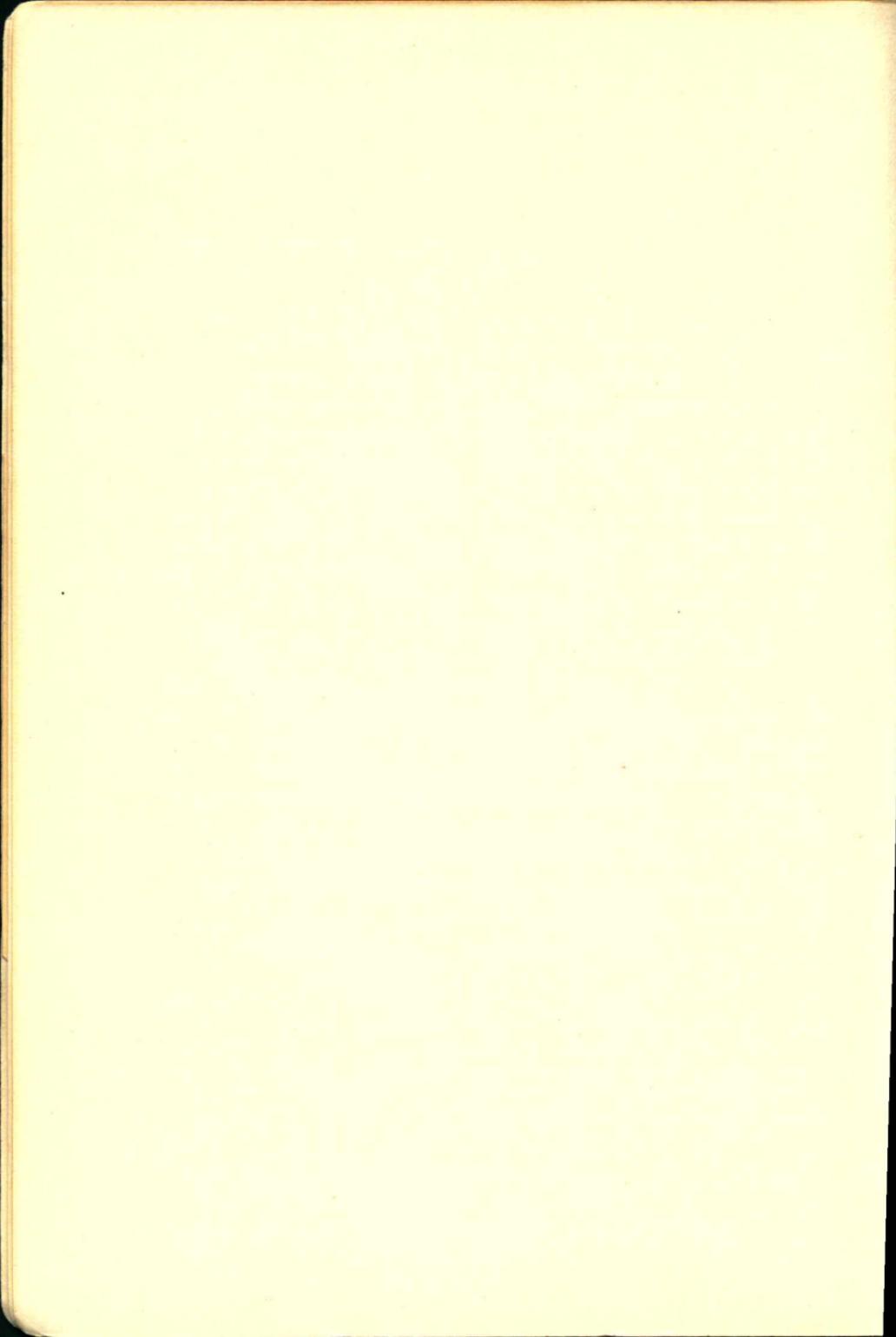
This book has been written from the viewpoint of a member and a minister in the Church of the Nazarene, with reference to the modern ecumenical concern among many churchmen. It presupposes an understanding of, and agreement with, the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene and the writings of H. Orton Wiley concerning the church as set forth in Vol. III of his *Christian Theology*. It is not a full portrait of either the Church of the Nazarene or its ministry, but rather an attempt to present what might be termed "the Nazarene attitude" toward some present implications of the theological climate of thinking about the church.

Since Nazarenes are avowedly Arminian and Wesleyan in their doctrinal stance, the writings of both Arminius and Wesley are frequently referred to as suggestive of what would usually find approval among us. However, issue is taken with John Wesley's sacramentarianism and our deviation from his Anglican viewpoint is set forth.

This is not offered as a substitute for what our leading theologian, Dr. Wiley, has written, but rather as a footnote or supplement thereto.

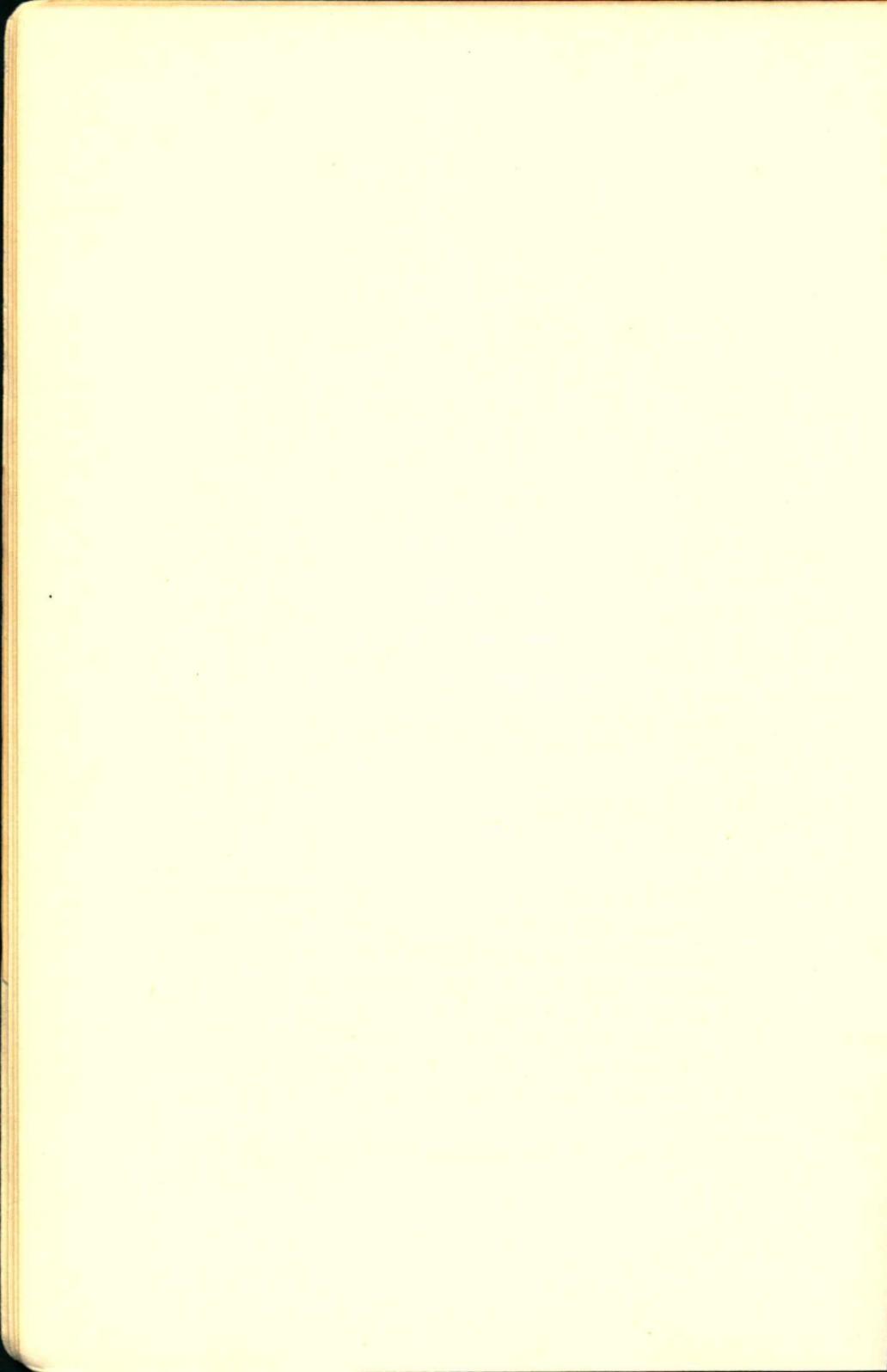
—ROSS E. PRICE

The manuscript of this book was originally prepared for presentation at the Nazarene Theology Conference held in Kansas City, Mo., August 27-29, 1967, and has been only slightly modified for publication.



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## CHAPTER ONE

# The Church of God in General

“The Church of God is composed of all spiritually regenerate persons, whose names are written in heaven.” So reads paragraph 21 of the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. If this be a true statement about the Church in general, then the Church is not of a dual nature—composed of saints and sinners. This is in line with Wesley’s declaration that “none that is dead to God, can be a member of his Church.”<sup>1</sup> Those who

<sup>1</sup>*The Works of John Wesley* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, n.d.), VI, 400.

think otherwise often appeal to Jesus' parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) to substantiate such a dual composition for the Church. But Jesus expressly says, in His interpretation of the parable, "The field is the world" (Matt. 13:38). That being the case, the parable does not refer to conditions within the Church but to conditions in the present world, where we find both saints and sinners, believers and unbelievers.

Only spiritually regenerate persons compose the one Church of God, and "the Lord knoweth them that are his" (II Tim. 2:19). Jesus declares that there will be religionists in the judgment who will be told, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23). God knows the regenerate because their names are written in heaven, and their character is in the image of His own, but whosoever name is not thus written is destined for the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). It cannot be said of God's true Church, "You are," and, "You are not." There is a basic character distinction between the Church and the world. Wesley's position is valid when he reasons: "If the Church, as to the very essence of it, is a body of believers, no man that is not a Christian believer can be a member of it."<sup>2</sup>

The Church is therefore the objective economy wrought by the Holy Spirit, comprised of those "called out" of the world, and who, by divine grace, have become such as can be designated *kuriakos*, "of and pertaining to the Lord." As Wiley has noted: "The Church, therefore, may be regarded as at once the sphere of the Spirit's operations, and the organ of Christ's administration of redemption."<sup>3</sup>

So it is that God alone really knows who comprise His true Church, and hence its reality of being is that

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Christian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1943), III, 103.

invisible and mystical body of Christ, animated by His Spirit. As such it transcends all human divisions as to denomination, race, sex, or age (Joel 3:28-29). It involves the old man and the young man, the youth and the maiden, the servant and the master—yea, “all flesh,” just as Joel saw it in prophecy and as Peter saw it in fulfillment (Acts 2:17-18). Of it Paul could declare: “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3:11).

The Church of God is therefore trans-temporal, trans-racial, trans-social, trans-cultural, and trans-ritual in its nature. It comprises the Blood-washed out of every nation, kindred, people, and tongue (Rev. 7:9, 14), or as Wesley has it: “all the Christians under heaven.”<sup>4</sup>

1. *The Church is the assembly of “called out ones,”* the true *ecclesia* composed of the divinely adopted sons of God. It is not, and therefore cannot be, a merely human organization. Its life is in Christ, its divine head. Its unity and apostolic succession are through the Holy Spirit’s administration alone. Wesley, in answer to the question, “What is the Church?” replies: “The Catholic or universal Church is, all the persons in the universe whom God hath called out of the world. . . . men endowed with living faith.”<sup>5</sup> James Arminius very ably defines the Church in general as:

A company of persons called out from a state of (*animalis*) natural life and of sin, by God and Christ, through the Spirit of both, to a supernatural life to be spent according to God and Christ in the knowledge and worship of both, that by participation with both, they may be eternally blessed, to the glory of God through Christ, and of Christ in God.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>*Op cit.*, p. 393.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 395-96.

<sup>6</sup>*The Works of James Arminius* (Private Disputation 50) (Buffalo: Derby, Miller and Orton, 1853), II, 123.

Arminius also insists that:

. . . a distinction must be made among the men or congregation, *as they are men*, and *as they are called out and obey the call*; and they must be so distinguished that the company to whom the name of "the church" (*aliquando*) at any time belonged, may so decline from that obedience as to lose the name of "the church," God "removing the candlestick out of its place," and sending a bill of divorce to his disobedient and adulterous wife.<sup>7</sup>

Again, as to the Church in general, he says:

The Catholic church is the company of all believers, called out from every language, tribe, people, nation and calling, who have been, are now, and will be, called by the saving vocation of God from a state of corruption to the dignity of the children of God, through the word (*gratuiti*) of the covenant of grace, and ingrafted into Christ, as living members to their head through true faith, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. From this, it appears that the catholic church differs from particular churches in nothing which appertains to the substance of a church but solely in her amplitude.<sup>8</sup>

2. *The Church is also the international and inter-epochal "brotherhood of believers,"* acclaiming Christ as Lord by the enabling Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:3), crying, *Abba* (Rom. 8:15), to our one God and Father Almighty, who is the Maker of heaven and earth. The faith that unites a man to Christ unites him also to other Christians. Thus the Church is more than an aggregate of Christians; it is a fellowship, the social organism of Christ's incarnation. Wesley however allows for what he calls "a National Church," of which he says: "That part of this great body, of the universal church, which inhabits any one kingdom or nation, we may properly term a National Church; as the Church of France, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.* (Private Disputation 54), II, 132.

<sup>9</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 396.

But in spite of Wesley's contention we must insist that the person who belongs to Christ belongs primarily to a worldwide community, and only secondarily to a local or even national manifestation of it as a congregation in any particular place or nation. Wherever he travels he is to be received in the local congregation as a brother in Christ. Thus the Church is a universal society of interrelated Christians, and there is a real solidarity of all believers in Christ.

3. *The Church is the body of Christ, the mystical extension of His twofold nature*—His deity, and His humanity—and thus it is comprised only of those who have been made partakers of that divine nature. In this blessed organic relation to Jesus Christ, the Church is the means by which the Holy Spirit supernaturally extends to men the redemptive work of Christ, and through it He extends His life-giving and sanctifying offices among men. As the body is the man in his outward being and manifestation, so is the Church in the world for Christ. And just as a personality is never divorced from a body but pervades the whole and cannot be localized in any of its parts, so the whole Christ is in each part of His corporate personality indwelling each individual believer.

As such a body of Christ, the Church knows the true organismic unity and oneness produced by the dynamic "one Spirit." It functions as one body under its exalted Head. Its growth, as such, is through the vital ministry of that same Spirit, and by the individual contribution of its several members ministering as the same Holy Spirit enables. Hence we may insist, with Wesley, that the Church, as the Apostle Paul intends it under the term "one body" (Eph. 4:4), means "the saints, the holy persons, who assemble themselves together to worship God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; whether in one or in several places."<sup>10</sup> As the

<sup>10</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 394.

universal Church it must surely comprehend "not only the Christians in the house of Philemon, or any one family; not only the Christians of one congregation, of one city, of one province, or nation; but all the persons upon the face of the earth, who answer to the character here given."<sup>11</sup>

We may, therefore, contend that where Christ is not present as Lord, the Church is not present; and a body which does not possess Christ does not possess the fundamental mark of the true Church. Christ is the Life of the Church, its Sustenance, its Growth, and its Unity. It is therefore far more than the mere tool of Christ in the world, for He himself penetrates and animates the Church with His life in a way that no man ever penetrates a tool he is using.

4. Again, *the Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the habitation of God.* Ancient temples were not so much for worship as they were the housing place of the particular deity for which they were built. Worship took place outside the shrine or the temple. And so the Eternal dwelleth not in temples made with hands (Heb. 9:11). It is in His Church that the Almighty dwells and walks about (II Cor. 6:16).

The Church of God is therefore a spiritual entity—a spiritual assembly, a spiritual brotherhood, a spiritual organism, and a spiritual temple. There is no one within the Church but redeemed humanity. Actively it is the organ of Christ's manifestation to the world, and passively it is the temple or sphere of the Holy Spirit's operation. Humanly it is comprised of that new race of the redeemed; partakers of the *new humanity* instituted by Christ and destined for eternal life. "And they that are with him are CALLED, and CHOSEN, and FAITHFUL" (Rev. 17:14, my caps). "Blessed and HOLY is he that hath part in the first resurrection:

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6, my caps again); that is, throughout the entirety of the church age and its ministry.

No human being is saved, or can be saved, by membership in the visible organization. Salvation is only by personal and vital union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, as to the visible manifestation of the Church, Wesley correctly argues that the term church

. . . may be taken indifferently for any number of people, how small or great soever. As "where two or three are met together in his name," there is Christ; so (to speak with St. Cyprian), "Where two or three believers are met together, there is a Church." Thus it is that St. Paul, writing to Philemon, mentions "the Church which was in his house"; plainly signifying, that even a Christian family may be termed a Church.<sup>12</sup>

Wesley continues:

Several of those whom God hath called out of the world (so the original word properly signifies), uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger church; as the Church at Jerusalem; that is, all those in Jerusalem whom God had so called. But considering how swiftly these were multiplied, after the day of Petecost, it cannot be supposed that they could continue to assemble in one place; especially as they had not then any large place, neither would they have been permitted to build one. In consequence they must have divided themselves, even at Jerusalem, into several distinct congregations. In like manner when St. Paul, several years after, wrote to the Church in Rome (directing his letter, "to all that are in Rome, called to be saints"), it cannot be supposed that they had any one building capable of containing them all; but they were divided into several congregations, assembling in several parts of the city.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 392-93.

And he goes on to point out that:

The first time that the Apostle uses the word Church in his preface to the [First] Epistle to the Corinthians: "Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth:" The meaning of which expression is fixed by the following words: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus; with all that, in every place," (not Corinth only; so it was a kind of circular letter), "call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." In the inscription to his second letter to the Corinthians, he speaks still more explicitly: "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in all Achaia." Here he plainly includes all the Churches, or Christian congregations, which were in the whole province.<sup>14</sup>

Significant for Wesley is the fact that St. Paul

. . . frequently uses the word [Church] in the plural number. So, Gal. 1:2; [reads] "Paul an Apostle,—unto the Churches of Galatia;" that is, the Christian congregations dispersed throughout that country.<sup>15</sup>

Wesley would further note:

In all these places (and abundantly more might be cited), the word Church or Churches means, not the buildings where the Christians assembled (as it frequently does in the English tongue), but the people that used to assemble there, one or more Christian congregations. But sometimes the word Church is taken in Scripture in a still more extensive meaning, as including all the Christian congregations that are upon the face of the earth. . . . In this sense it is unquestionably taken by St. Paul, in his exhortation to the elders of Ephesus: (Acts 20:28) "Take heed to the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." The Church here undoubtedly means the catholic or universal Church; that is, all the Christians under heaven.<sup>16</sup>

It will be seen from the foregoing that the Nazarene declaration about the Church in general is quite in keeping with the teachings of Wesley and Arminius, both of whom claim scriptural grounds for their positions.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 393.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

## CHAPTER TWO

# The Churches of Christendom Severally

Here we must consider the various denominations and their respective congregations. The statement of the *Manual* (paragraph 22) reads: "The churches severally are . . . composed of such regenerate persons as by providential permission, and by the leadings of the Holy Spirit, become associated together for holy fellowship and ministries."

If there be such an organization—denomination, if you please—as is composed totally of unregenerate sinners, then you have no church, but at best a religious

society, club, or congregation only. Regrettably, today we do have sects that are, for the most part, unregenerate in nature and company—departed from the truth, “giving heed to seducing spirits,” and promulgating “doctrines of devils.” Communism is surely a religion. One may even wonder how Unitarianism can call herself a church of Christ and yet reject His essential deity. Furthermore, we have seen the beginnings of such organizations as the Church of Satan, in these contemporary times.

But be it known for certain that Nazarenes do not comprise the total of those regenerate persons who have “by providential permission, and by the leadings of the Holy Spirit, become associated together for holy fellowship and ministries.” We do surely contend that we are a part of that great company.

There are many denominations in whose congregations are found truly regenerate persons who are, by virtue of this new life in Christ, a part of the Church of God in general. To all such we, who are subjects of a like experience in the Church of the Nazarene, can say with Wesley, “If your heart is as my heart, then give me your hand”—yes, even the right hand of fellowship in a common body of believers and in the mystical body of Christ.

Surely we can see the providential hand of God in the raising up of most all of the old-line denominations, even though we may disagree drastically with many—even most of them—as to particular items of doctrine and practice. We are not so narrow-minded or ecclesiastically bigoted as to see the hand of God in only our own denominational history. These others have been mightily used of God in some time or other and in one way or another. There are today regenerate persons in their memberships. Hence a part of them is to be identified with the Church of God in general.

So we may speak of the churches severally as being

each, in part at least, a portion of the Church in general, even as we hope a great part of our own Zion to be.

Who would dare to question the active providence of God in raising up Luther and his followers, from whence came the denominations called Lutheran? And surely no one dare deny the manifest operations of God's providence that resulted in the work of the Reformers: Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox, from which came such denominations as the Presbyterian and Reformed, with their emphasis upon the covenant and the atonement. And in spite of their early Anabaptist fanaticisms and vagaries, none can fail to recognize God at work in the raising up of a people called Baptists, with their insistence upon baptism as a moral Rubicon in which one renounces the world, the flesh, and the devil, and identifies himself with those who acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

We Nazarenes are sure that God had a hand in the conversion and calling of John Wesley and his associates, and that He gave providential permission and the leadings of the Holy Spirit to the organization and association of Methodist Societies for the promotion of scriptural holiness around the world. Nor would our brethren from New England want us to overlook the moving of God's Spirit in the Congregational churches associated together for holy fellowship and the special ministries involved in the promotion of holiness.

And what shall we say of the Disciples of Christ, the Friends, the Salvation Army, and the Evangelicals or the United Brethren?

Is denominationalism totally evil? Are we not correct in contending, with J. S. Whale, that "that which attaches a man to no denomination detaches him from all"?<sup>1</sup> Is it not true that modern, so-called "interde-

<sup>1</sup>*The Protestant Tradition* (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), p. 327.

nominalism" with its emphasis upon the idea of a non-denominational fellowship has become a kind of association of Plymouth Brethren—comprising what might well be called the "interdenominational denomination"? Thus we have only added another denomination to those of the modern church scene. Or, where this is not the case, we have merely a fading away into disintegrating independencies that flourish while the human leaders live and decay upon their death.

Whoever heard of any horse pulling a load, or plowing a furrow, until he was both harnessed and hitched—had some straps and restrictions, and was teamed up with others for like purposes? So it happens that the Church of the Nazarene is not anti-denominational. We are aware—to some extent at least—of the unique contributions being made to the cause of Christ by each of the various denominations within Christendom—Catholic or Orthodox included, even though we may take exception to many of their forms of worship.

Yet it is right here that we encounter human systems and organizations, and here is where there arises a certain dualism in the *notes* and *attributes* of the church generally and organizationally considered. It is because the church is composed of human personalities that we must say that it is both one and many, that it is both holy and only nominally so, that it is both universal and provincial. Or, as Wiley lists these notations: the church has both "unity and diversity," "holiness and imperfection;" it is both "Catholic and local," "visible and invisible," "militant and triumphant," "Apostolic and Confessional."<sup>2</sup> It is likewise because of its being composed of human members that its type of organization may be papal, congregational, episcopal, or presbyterial. And for a similar reason each denomination spells out its conditions for membership and stipulates wherein authority in the church is vested.

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.*, III, 111-16.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF DENOMINATIONALISM

What, then, are the constituting principles of denominationalism? We are bound to recognize the validity of each of the five principles discussed below though we object to a denominationalism which is based upon any one of them singly. In brief, they may be listed as:

1. Institutionalism
2. Dissent
3. The Personal Principle
4. The Voluntary Principle
5. The Spiritual Principle

### 1. *Institutionalism*

True to the Reformed tradition, we look upon the visible church as a living community of believers. The church has therefore an objective givenness as an institution to which every individual believer should belong. Such an institution must develop and apply its necessary agreed statement of belief and ecclesiastical discipline. In doing this, its form of government must avoid the "high-church" malady of clerical dictatorship, and the "low-church" anarchy of private individualism. A valid and a working balance must be struck between authority and tolerance. Conformity to traditions must not become totalitarianism. Concern for "the inner light" must not become the canonization of private opinion under the category of a divine oracle. Authority imposed from without must not stifle vitality expressing itself from within.

Hence the institution must provide for both order and ardor, uniformity and spontaneity. Its worship must be both individual and social, corporate and private, formal and free. There must be the liturgy of an order of worship combined with "the liturgy of the Holy Spirit." One is stipulated; the other is spontaneous.

We cannot regard the church as less than an institution of worship. It is a Christian society, organized for the expression of its faith through creeds, liturgy, preaching, witnessing, and sacraments. It is the institution that has been raised up by God for the provision of probational training in brotherhood.

Moreover, it is a prophetic community, aimed at transforming individuals and societies in accordance with the divine will. And while membership in the visible institution does not guarantee membership in the kingdom of God, yet no one is a proper candidate for membership in the visible church until he belongs to the Church invisible. Hence, as such an institution, it is composed of the people of God, living and worshipping together in a spiritual fellowship. But this also means that it must ever be more than a mere institution. For, as George W. Forell so aptly states it:

Whenever the church is merely institution, organization, machinery—apart from people—it is no longer truly church. And whenever the church is only a collection of individuals who like each other, who meet because they like each other—it is no longer church. . . . It would not be too difficult to give examples of protestant churches which have much more in common with a well-run corporation like the General Motors corporation than the New Testament Church. Sometimes machinery for machinery's sake accumulates, and when the church meets, it seems more like a stockholder's meeting. The Protestant Faith would assert that a church which is merely an efficiently run corporation designed for the preservation of its organizational life is no longer a Protestant Church. Conversely, when the church becomes a group of like-minded individuals who have a good time together, who belong to the same race, the same nationality, the same income group, the same educational level, sometimes the same family—a group of individuals who meet because they enjoy each other's company—we see another aberration from the Protestant concept of the church.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>*The Protestant Faith* (Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 204-5.

As an institution the church must have and exercise the right of admission to, and expulsion from, its membership. The unworthy must not be admitted and the worthy must not be excluded. Moreover, the church must defend itself against the destructive influence of unclean members and false doctrines. This calls for standards of faith and conduct, together with a clearly formulated methodology of church discipline. It likewise calls for a good degree of wholesome self-criticism on the part of the church. Hence it becomes the duty of every church to make a formal statement of its articles of faith and its ideals for conduct. It must also establish the authority of these and state who shall administer the same.

## 2. Dissent

Now, since the methods and modes of ecclesiastical government are not a matter of divine appointment, but are largely a matter of human invention and growth, there must be another basic principle acknowledged in our denominationalism, namely, *the privilege of dissent and withdrawal*. In short, one must be permitted to associate or disassociate himself with the visible institution of his choice. Therefore a church established by the state which makes it necessary for the sake of citizenship in the state to be likewise a member of the establishment is invalid.

In relation to the church, mere schism is to be deplored, and tolerance is to be manifested, both by its members and by its administrators. Wesley notes that numberless books and arguments have appeared dealing with this problem of schism, while all the while the accused and the accusers have failed clearly to define the term.<sup>4</sup> He pleads that it be defined in a true

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Sermon LXXV, "On Schism," in his *Works*, VI, 401 ff., from which the following brief excerpts are taken.

scriptural sense. He would also remind us that it is "not a separation *from* any Church (whether general or particular, whether the Catholic, or any national Church), but a separation *in* a Church." Wesley then goes on to show that in the scriptural sense of the term it denotes a "splitting into several parties" within the religious community of a local congregation (I Cor. 1:10 and 11:18). The net result of such was the establishing of false classifications of status within the brotherhood. Wesley also notes that the word *heresy* carries a similar meaning in spite of the fact that it has been "strangely distorted for many centuries, as if it meant erroneous opinions," whereas "it simply means, wherever it occurs in Scripture, divisions, or parties, in a religious community." Having established the true scriptural meaning of these terms, Wesley then becomes willing to allow that the term schism may also carry a "remote sense" and mean "a causeless separation from a body of living Christians." "There is," he says, "no absurdity in taking the word in this sense, though it be not strictly scriptural." He then adds: "And it is certain all the members of Christian communities should be carefully guarded against it. For how little a thing soever it may seem, and how innocent soever it may be accounted, schism, even in this sense, is both evil in itself, and productive of evil consequences."

At this point let us recall that it was the saintly James Arminius who gave to the world his famous oration "On Reconciling Religious Dissensions Among Christians,"<sup>5</sup> which is just as valid for today as when he gave it on the eighth of February in 1606.

At this juncture these words from Dr. A. M. Hills seem extremely pertinent:

Since men may come to different opinions about the interpretation of Scripture, it has been the custom from the

<sup>5</sup>Cf. *The Works of James Arminius*, I, 146-92.

early days of Christianity to give the consenting voice of the meaning of Scriptures by assemblies of ministers and learned Bible Scholars, who reverently studied the Word and prayerfully reached the best united conclusion they were able to attain. Such a decision or creed has authority as to what will be allowed to be taught within the pale of a church or connection of churches. But it has no authority with an individual soul, as to what he shall believe for his own salvation. That is between him and his God.<sup>6</sup>

And thus rightly has James Arminius contended that the church must

not assume to herself the authority of binding, by her laws, the consciences of men to acts prescribed by herself; for she will thus invade the right of Christ, in prescribing things necessary, and will infringe Christian liberty, which ought to be free from snares of this description.<sup>7</sup>

Here the Church of the Nazarene agrees with Augustine's dictum:

In essentials—unity,  
In nonessentials—liberality,  
In all things charity.

Sectarianism is the generic term covering manifestations of the liberty of the individual conscience. The sect-type of church has had, and still has, great and precious importance. Whether, therefore, the group be "come-outers" or "put-outers," it must be admitted that it is no part of true religion to seek to compel religion. It should be adopted freely, and not by force. Those of us who recall the times when "holiness people" were "read out" of the membership of the "old-line" churches must not fail to concede to others that toleration which we sought and claimed should have been extended toward ourselves. Let us recall the fact that the High

<sup>6</sup>A. M. Hills, *Fundamental Christian Theology* (Pasadena, Calif.: C. J. Kinne, Pasadena College, 1931), II, 291.

<sup>7</sup>*Op. cit.* (Private Disputation 56), II, 139.

Calvinists of the Netherlands were no sooner emancipated from the persecutions of the papacy-loving Duke of Alva of Spain than they turned in harsh intolerance and slaughter upon the remonstrating Arminians and, in the name of Christianity, instituted one of its blackest historical pages in that travesty of justice known as the Synod of Dort.

But no sectarian can justify the divisive practices of mere schismatics. As Wesley has noted: "A breach of brotherly love . . . brings forth evil fruit. . . . It opens a door to all unkind tempers, both in ourselves and others. It leads directly to a whole train of evil surmising, to severe and uncharitable judging of each other."<sup>8</sup> Simply because the Visible Church is composed of humans, and thus cannot escape its disagreements, none should delegate to himself the right to divide the fellowship or to sow discord among the brethren. This can only give occasion to offense, anger, and resentment, and these in turn will surely issue in bitterness, malice, and settled hatred. Here Wesley continues:

But the ill consequences . . . do not terminate in the heart. Evil tempers cannot long remain within, before they are productive of outward fruit. . . . so he whose heart is full of prejudice, anger, suspicion, or any unkind temper, will surely open his mouth in a manner corresponding with the disposition of his mind. And hence will arise, if not lying and slandering . . . bitter words, tale-bearing, backbiting, and evil-speaking of every kind.

From evil words . . . how many evil works will naturally flow! Anger, jealousy, envy, wrong tempers of every kind, do not vent themselves merely in words, but push men continually to all kind of ungodly and unrighteous actions. A plentiful harvest of all the works of darkness may be expected to spring from this source; whereby . . . souls . . . may be turned from the way of peace, and finally drowned in everlasting perdition.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 406.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 406-7.

While it must be admitted that a constructive and conscientious critic may be one of the best guardians of the church's purity and polity, we must acknowledge the wisdom of Wesley's words: "Do not rashly tear asunder the sacred ties which unite you to any Christian society. . . . Take care how you rend the body of Christ by separating from your brethren."<sup>10</sup>

Following their principle of conscientious dissent, Protestants have generally been suspicious of those who insist that organizational unity is the condition for the oneness of the Church. There are some cases where the quest for organizational unity has only promoted further disunity. Hence the quest for organizational unity must also seek to foster that inner life of evangelical freedom where love operates in the name of grace. The real oneness of the Church is that of faith, hope, and love, which characterized the primitive Christians.

### 3. *The Personal Principle*

Closely related to the principle of dissent is the personal principle. True religion is always intensely a personal matter. Christ's Church is made up only of His believing disciples who consciously take Him as Master and Lord. Hence a merely nominal Christianity is a contradiction in terms. Being born in a so-called Christian nation does not make one a member of Christ's Church. Each must be born from above into this fellowship. Must we elaborate the obvious? Does any man go to the dentist by proxy? So all human thought and belief, like human life itself, are inherently and inescapably personal. Of course we may find it necessary when traveling abroad to remind our foreign friend that not all Americans are Christians. But this is only to admit that mere nominal religion becomes the enemy of the genuine in all ages and lands.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 409.

In speaking of the freeman's revolt against the claims of an exclusively mediatorial priesthood, Whale notes: "The path to the mercy-seat is so narrow that two cannot walk abreast there."<sup>11</sup> So we Nazarenes have always insisted that personal faith and discipleship is a fundamental presupposition to church membership. Moreover, that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," is always a personal experience and state of grace.

The danger lies in pushing this personal principle to the extreme. One cannot by reason thereof declare himself independent and unneedful of the brotherhood of believers. To seek to do so would be ultimately to reduce Christianity to a merely atomistic individualism which would destroy the church. Let all so-called "splinter groups" take note! Religion is also inescapably social in its lived-out expression and practice. Each of us may be a priest of God, but the universal priesthood of all believers does not eliminate the need for gathering ourselves together (Heb. 10:25). The fact remains that the true church is a faithful people, gathered together by the Spirit of Christ and according to His Word, submitting themselves to Him in all things. We may therefore agree with Henry Barrow that:

The true . . . Church of Christ is a company of faithful people, separated from the unbelievers and heathen of the land, gathered in the name of Christ, whom they truly worship and readily obey as their own King, Priest, and Prophet; and joined together as members of one body, ordered and governed by such offices and laws as Christ, in His last will and testament, hath thereunto ordained.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>12</sup>Henry Barrow (1550-90) was a separatist and martyr. Cf. his book, *Discovery of the False Church*. Our quotation is from F. J. Powicke, *Henry Barrow* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clarke, 1900), p. 91.

Since each person is a priest in his own right, there is really no qualitative difference between pastor and people. Rightly do we regard our teaching-ruling elders very highly in love for their work's sake. But since we too are joint heirs with them and with Christ, we remind them that they are never to consider themselves lords over God's heritage. And having reminded them of this, we must hasten to admit that one of the clear notes of a true church is its right and power to discipline itself, and its elders are those duly appointed for the exercise of this power. Yet, even here, they may only direct and must never dominate.

All members of the Church of Jesus Christ are directly responsible to Him for maintaining His authority in the Church, and this responsibility cannot be shifted to the ordained minority. Just as surely as all members must be Christian, so surely must all members acknowledge the supreme authority of Christ over their consciences and conduct. Whenever and wherever we are gathered together in His name we will also recognize the authority of His presence. Where every individual believer seeks supremely that which seems good to the Holy Spirit, there too will be realized "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

#### 4. *The Voluntary Principle*

Paragraph 23 of the *Manual* states that: "The Church of the Nazarene is composed of those persons who have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the doctrines and polity of said church." But here let us admit, in agreement with R. W. Dale, the fact that:

when Christian churches are described as voluntary societies it is not meant that Christian people are at liberty to please themselves whether they will form churches or not, but that churches are to be formed

in free obedience to the authority of Christ—not by the power of the State.<sup>13</sup>

It is a historical achievement of the sect-type of churches—this vindication of the right to freedom of worship. The voluntary principle rejects the idea that one's monarch is the supreme head of the church, as conversely it also rejects the concept of the head of the church as a monarch over its members. In our rejection of the church-state we not only assert that the church must be pure (the personal principle), but we also assert that it must be free (the voluntary principle). Uniformity is not, therefore, axiomatic and neither is conformity automatic. No magistrate of the state or the church can compel either.

We Nazarenes claim a certain autonomy for our denomination, and each of our congregations claims for itself a similar autonomy, as do also the individual members within our churches. Any local congregation may, if it chooses, withdraw itself from the main body of the Church of the Nazarene, just as any individual member may withdraw himself from any of the local congregations. However, in the case of a congregation it may not withdraw from the parent denomination property built with money raised in the name of that denomination.<sup>14</sup>

There are no "birthright" Nazarenes. Even the experience of the new birth does not make one a member

<sup>13</sup>*Manual of the Congregational Union of England and Wales* (8th ed., 1898), p. 26.

<sup>14</sup>Any properly incorporated local Church of the Nazarene agrees in its "Articles of Incorporation" to be governed by the rules and polity of the parent denomination as established from time to time by its General Assembly—in which case, paragraph 120 of the *Manual* forbids "trustees and/or a local church" from diverting "property from the use of the Church of the Nazarene." Cf., also paragraphs 168-69.

of the denomination. We have therefore stated in the *Manual* (paragraph 28):

The membership of a local church shall consist of all who have been organized as a church by those authorized so to do and who have been publicly received by those having the proper authority, after having declared their experience of salvation, their belief in our doctrines, and their willingness to submit to our government.

Note the use of the word "willingness." We have further spelled out this voluntary principle in paragraph 26, sections 1 and 2. For, although

we are agreed on the necessity of a superintendency which shall foster and care for churches already established, and . . . shall . . . organize and encourage the organizing of churches everywhere. [yet] we are [also] agreed that authority given to the superintendents shall not interfere with the independent action of a fully organized church. Each church shall enjoy the right to select its own pastor. . . . Each church shall also elect its delegates to the various assemblies, manage its own finances, and have charge of all other matters pertaining to its local life and work.

It will be evident that our church has considerable confidence in the spiritual maturity and competence of the ordinary member and humble believer. This is in keeping with the Reformation principle which believes that those who are in Christ Jesus should not remain always under tutelage as babes in Christ, but should be growing in grace so as to vindicate their freedom and responsibility as God's adult children—led of the Holy Spirit and seeking that which seems good to that same Spirit. And it is for exactly this reason that it is stated in our special rules (paragraph 39) and in our government (paragraph 64) that: "local churches in selecting their church officers are directed to elect only such as are clearly in the experience of entire sanctification."

Of course our ministers are expected to preach frequently and clearly on this state and experience of

grace so that members of their congregation may enter into it both joyfully and willingly—and, let us add, intelligently. Thus, the only kind of hierarchy our church recognizes is that of spiritual maturity in contrast with immaturity and lack of experience in the things of God. Pastors, therefore, may well take guidance and admonition from the sanctified laymen of the church, and of course it is expected that laymen shall submit themselves to their duly elected leaders in the Lord. On the Day of Pentecost, all had the right to prophesy, and yet all spake only “as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

### 5. *The Spiritual Principle*

Our discussion has thus brought us to the inescapable consideration of the spiritual principle which must ever govern our Zion. Our primary emphasis rests upon the indwelling Spirit, Word, or Light. This is the true Pentecostal principle. Men are both justified and sanctified by grace alone on God's part, and by faith alone on man's part. No pastor or priest can be exclusive purveyor of God's grace in forgiveness and cleansing.

We recognize, on the other hand, the dangers of radical individualism, or that private opinionatedness which fails to give due respect for the united conscience of the brotherhood of believers. He who would contend that God reveals His will for the church to him alone is nothing more than a religious bigot. The net results of such an attitude could be at most a society of religious anarchists. The history of the Church of Jesus is marred with “splinter groups” given over to frenzied spiritual emotions, gathering themselves into dissident groups of “super-saints,” and giving themselves to unwise activities not so saintly. To quote Luther, the great rebel of the Reformation: “There is nothing more

poisonous, more hurtful or more devilish than a rebellious man."

On the other hand, we must surely revere the awakened and regenerate-sanctified conscience of man as the dwelling place of the "inner light," and sanctified judgment induced by the Spirit of God. Here we come to the great Arminian-Wesleyan principle of tolerance, which would allow, and even insist, that it is the duty of every human soul to guide itself freely by the light of God's Spirit and the revelation of God's Word. In that divine cloister of the human heart, God speaks His holy will for each man individually. Let him indeed be a man of the inward word. But let him also distinguish between what may be God's personal will for himself privately and what may be God's will for the brotherhood of believers publicly and collectively. But even in the application of this spiritual principle, let us beware of the extreme of asceticism on the one hand and that of antinomianism on the other.

Montanism is the classic example of an overemphasis upon charismatic gifts, which opens the door to an unbalanced subjectivity. Right well might Pelagius fear the loss of faith, of a proper emphasis upon the will, and upon moral practice.

Let us never forget that the New Testament gives us our ideal for empirical Christianity. The gifts are for the edification of the body of believers; the graces are for the individual to profit withal. There is nothing wrong in believing in private revelation and a direct fellowship with God. It is a great and indisputable reality. But woe betide us if an overemphasis thereon should turn us into a mere set of "whirling dervishes." Yet, again, it were far better to have a living church rather than a lifeless one, even though it includes a few radicals, ranters, diggers, and enthusiasts who are sometimes apt to confuse noise with piety.

Here Whale's observation seems valid:

Men do not necessarily become separatists out of obstinacy and caprice, but often because conscience and high principle compel them; and . . . until modern Protestantism has rediscovered for itself a high theology of the church which, while true to its classic first principles, shall be demonstrably relevant to the need of the modern world, it will have no convincing answer to earnest, if fanatic, spirits who advocate "reformation without tarrying for any." . . . For a living church men will pay the price even of sectarianism.<sup>15</sup>

We Nazarenes who are careful to remind the "old-line" churches that we were not "come-outers" but "put-outers" (excommunicated for our emphasis, or overemphasis, as they insisted, of this spiritual principle) need now to beware lest we in turn follow their example in excluding from our ranks those whose zeal and vigor could serve to revitalize our Zion. To this end enthusiasm must not be always suspect, prophesyings must not be despised and squelched, lest we be found to quench the blessed Spirit himself. Let us not open the door to that unbelief which knows no working of the Spirit but what is transmitted from a distant past through outworn, outward ordinances. Thank God, His blessed Holy Spirit is not under lock and key to any ancient or modern ecclesiasticism!

Always the recurrent issue is that between order and ardor, between authority imposed from without and vitality expressing itself from within, between the correct uniformity of law and the dynamic spontaneity of life. Let us not overlook the fact that the same apostle who said, "Let every thing be done decently and in order," also said, "Quench not the Spirit." The church may surely be considered a great institution, but it is likewise a free association of believers.

<sup>15</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 210-11.

Therefore, in charting our course between freedom and authority we must seek always the unity of the Spirit. Mere individualism spells anarchy; collective ecclesiasticism spells regimentation. Neither is in the will of God for our Zion nor in what Sam Shoemaker so often refers to as "the stream of the Holy Spirit." No man is an island. Insularity is but an illusion created by the covering sea, since the islands are all part of one pelagic, submarine continent, united in the depths. So let it be among Nazarenes. We have our individualities given us by grace and race, but deep down in the ocean of that grace, if we are Christ's, we are one in Him. Let the majority recognize that the rights of the minority are real, and let us not despise the brave and courageous witness of some who sit in judgment on our denominational faults.

Many a denomination owes a great debt to its non-conformists. Let us remember that, if our liberty is to be real, then toleration must be its vital correlate. We who are of the questing mind must be open and tolerant, not losing patience with the slow response of the less enlightened. We who are the lovers of the good old status quo must also be tolerant of the experimenters and the innovators. A man filled with the Holy Spirit will show a genuine respect for the convictions of his neighbor. By all means let us seek to preserve the inner life of evangelical freedom where love is allowed to operate in the name of grace.

We shall do well to recognize the great dangers to church unity, which are: (1) individualism, or the arrogance of privacy; (2) sectarianism, or the divisive tendency; and (3) fanaticism, that simulated, spiritual superiority that doubles its effort after it has lost its aim.

### CHAPTER THREE

## The Church of the Nazarene Particularly

Already our focus has turned from the denominations severally to the one among them which we love the most. We call it "our beloved Zion"—the Church of the Nazarene. In that name the second definite article should be capitalized and the last word is always singular. Jesus alone is THE Nazarene, and only as we are in Him can any of us be true Nazarenes. So what is our creed at this juncture?

The Church of the Nazarene is composed of those persons who have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the doctrines and polity of said church, and who seek holy Christian fellowship, the con-

version of sinners, the entire sanctification of believers, their upbuilding in holiness, and the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church, together with the preaching of the gospel to every creature.<sup>1</sup>

Here a brief analysis of this paragraph from our constitution may be profitable.

1. *Persons who have voluntarily associated themselves together.* This principle of freedom we have already discussed in the preceding chapter. Suffice it here to say that a true Nazarene is one by choice—and in the same manner as one becomes a Christian by choice. Therefore one cannot be the best kind of Nazarene unless he knows why he is one. That is why we have contended that there are no “birthright” Nazarenes.

But we trust that our church is more than a human society with voluntary membership. We believe that God leads and calls people into the fellowship of our church just as He added to the New Testament Church those who were being saved. Therefore he who is a Nazarene from mere convenience is not a genuine Nazarene. This leads to the next point.

2. *According to the doctrine and polity of said church.* Here it is important to read carefully the *Manual's* “Agreed Statement of Belief”:

Recognizing that the right and privilege of persons to church membership rest upon the fact of their being regenerate, we would require only such avowals of belief as are essential to Christian experience.

We, therefore, deem belief in the following brief statements to be sufficient. We believe:

1. In One God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. That the Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary inspiration, contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.

<sup>1</sup>*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 23.

3. That man is born with a fallen nature, and is, therefore, inclined to evil, and that continually.

4. That the finally impenitent are hopelessly and eternally lost.

5. That the atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race; and that whosoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.

6. That believers are to be sanctified wholly, subsequent to regeneration, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. That the Holy Spirit bears witness to the new birth, and also to the entire sanctification of believers.

8. That our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.<sup>2</sup>

Thus as to *doctrine*, we are Trinitarians, not Unitarians, or tritheists. We base our authority for faith and Christian living on the sixty-six books of the Protestant Bible, and we contend that "whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith." Only these Scriptures carry that full and complete quality of divine revelation as to the "things necessary to our salvation."

We contend that man is a fallen being with a nature that is spontaneously turned toward evil. We believe that unless the individual man repents of his sins he is forever lost and estranged from God.

We are Wesleyan-Arminian in our interpretation of Christ's death-resurrection. We teach that it was an atonement for human sins and a remedy for human sinfulness, universal in its intention and adequacy, and applicable to anyone who will repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as his divine Saviour. And it is our contention that whoever does so is justified, regenerated, and adopted into the family of God. It is our belief that by this new birth human nature is changed.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, paragraph 24.

We are also Wesleyan-Arminian in our belief that, following this regenerating transformation, one can and must be sanctified entirely, and this is achieved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Since it is God's act of cleansing, conditioned only upon man's faith and submission, it occurs instantaneously.

Furthermore, it is our belief that the Holy Spirit of God as a divine character Witness lets us know personally what manner of men we are, and that He himself witnesses (testifies) to our new birth and to our entire sanctification as forgiven and cleansed believers.

Finally, we are confident that our Lord Jesus will return in person to this earth, that the dead (both the sinners and the righteous) will be raised, and that the final judgment of all mankind is certain.

As to *polity*, ours is a representative form of government; a combination of the episcopal and congregational principles.<sup>3</sup> We have our overseers whom we call superintendents. We have local churches who select their own pastors, elect their own officials and delegates, and manage their own property and finances. We have a *Manual* of faith and practice which spells out for us the specific mode and methods of operation for our church—local, district, and international.

### 3. *Who seek:*

a. *Holy Christian fellowship.* Our quest is the *koinonia* of true Christians. Our emphasis in this fellowship is upon holiness and Christlikeness. In our General

<sup>3</sup>This was the great issue of debate by our founding leaders at their uniting General Assembly held at Pilot Point, Texas, in 1908. This form of government was a compromise suggested by Rev. H. D. Brown of Seattle, Washington. The easterners were from a congregational background; the westerners were from an episcopal heritage. The southerners were from both types of church polity.

and Special Rules we seek helpfully to spell out how one may demonstrate such holiness and Christlikeness. We feel a kinship to every like-minded soul.

b. *The conversion of sinners.* The church must be a redemptive society, or it has no excuse for being (no *raison d'être*) to justify its existence as a denomination. Unless sinners are being converted to Christ, our church fails in part of its divine mission. Men must be turned from sin to the Saviour, from the power of Satan unto God.

c. *The entire sanctification of believers.* God has raised us up to be a people who are His own private property, purified by His Spirit and zealous for good works. This purpose is in keeping with our cardinal doctrine. We seek to persuade every born-again believer to seek the mighty sealing and cleansing baptism with the Holy Spirit which purges away any spontaneity for sin and infuses a positive spontaneity for godliness. Along with James Arminius we hold that "the sprinkling of the blood of Christ" not only "serves for the expiation of sins, and . . . is the cause of justification," but that it "belongs also to sanctification; for in justification, this sprinkling serves to wash away our sins that have been committed; but in sanctification, it serves to sanctify men who have obtained remission of their sins, that they may further be enabled to offer worship and sacrifices to God through Christ."<sup>4</sup>

d. *Their upbuilding in holiness.* Our church seeks the edification of believers in holiness, contending that after the crisis experiences of divine grace there must come the ever ascending process of Christian growth in Godlikeness. Hence we affirm:

There is a marked distinction between a perfect heart and a perfect character. The former is obtained in an

<sup>4</sup>*Op. cit.* (Private Disputation 49), II, 121.

instant, the result of entire sanctification, but the latter is the result of growth in grace.

Our mission to the world is not alone to spread scriptural holiness as a doctrine, but also to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Our people should give careful heed to the development of holiness in the fear of the Lord, to the promotion of the growth of Christian graces in the heart, and to their manifestation in the daily life.<sup>5</sup>

This growth involves an increase in Christian love, although the heart that is sanctified already knows perfection in love. Like Wesley, we insist that Christian perfection is improvable. "It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before."<sup>6</sup>

*e. The simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church.* Nazarenes are to be Spirit-led people. In the New Testament Church false distinctions were removed and human classifications were exchanged for such as were spiritual. Believers were constituted a brotherhood in Christ, whether they were schooled in the university at Tarsus with graduate work at the feet of Gamaliel or were unschooled fishermen; whether they were male or female, bond or free, rich or poor—all were brothers of Christ, their Elder Brother, and members one of another. And, as Wesley points out, the sin of schismatics was to create a division *within* not *from* the church.

Christian simplicity was manifested also in their manner of dress and demeanor.

The chief concern for the Primitive Church was the release of spiritual power through and into redeemed personalities. Many were the anointings of the Spirit

<sup>5</sup>*Manual*, "Special Rules," paragraph 40.

<sup>6</sup>*Op. cit.* ("A Plain Account of Christian Perfection"), XI, 442.

which enabled them to triumph over the moral corruption of their age and to see evangelism become effective in the very strongholds of Satan.

True Nazarenes are plain folk. They loathe spiritual pride as earnestly as any other of pride's manifestations. The power that comes through purity must ever be our chief concern. The power of the New Testament Church came as it was Spirit-filled.

*f. Together with the preaching of the gospel to every creature.* In line with the Great Commission, ours is a worldwide evangel. It is our conviction that no man has a right to hear the gospel twice until every person of Adam's race has heard it at least once. We insist that we are debtors to every man to give him the gospel in the same measure as we ourselves have received it. We must therefore, as the *Manual* states it (paragraph 25), be found constantly "pressing upon the attention of the unsaved the claims of the gospel, inviting them to the house of the Lord, and trying to compass their salvation."

What about our denominational identity? We are a branch of the Church of Almighty God, and one of the several denominations of Christendom—a providentially associated people with the above-stated doctrines of belief and goals for endeavor. We are both ecumenical and denominational in our origin, in our government, and in our interpretation and use of the sacraments. This ecumenicity is manifest in our attitude toward non-Nazarenes. We will baptize anyone who seeks baptism, provided he is born again, whether he seeks to unite with our church or not. At this point we are at least sixty years ahead of the present-day Consultation on Church Union, for we have always been willing to baptize the believer according to his own choice of mode, whether by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion. Let us note their (the C.O.C.U.'s) declaration of principles:

Baptism is to be administered only once. . . . Both infant baptism and believer's baptism shall be accepted as alternative practices in the united church. Neither shall be imposed contrary to conscience. . . . In the united church, baptism shall be administered in water (whether by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling) in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, after appropriate instruction and preparation. The rite shall include a confession of sin and repentance, an affirmation of faith, a promise of continued life in the Church, and a life of obedience to Christ.<sup>7</sup>

A comparison with our own constitution will show this to have been the position of the Church of the Nazarene from the start. But here again we have adopted Wesley's position as set forth in his "Treatise on Baptism." Yet we do not agree with Wesley on some other points of his teaching about water baptism.

We could not agree with Wesley that in baptism there is "the washing away" of "the guilt of original sin,"<sup>8</sup> or even that "the virtue of the free gift" is "applied to us in baptism," rather than in our justification. Nor would we admit Wesley's Anglicanism which contends that "children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved." He apparently failed to realize that the obverse of this must therefore be true, namely, that unbaptized children though they have not committed any sins will be lost. And surely this would be the case if baptism be that which removes from each person the guilt of original sin.

We are ready to allow with Wesley that "by baptism we enter into covenant with God," but we would question whether by the same sacrament we are "admitted into the Church, and consequently made members of

<sup>7</sup>*Principles of Church Union* (Forward Movement Miniature Book), p. 39. This is the document approved at Dallas in May, 1966, and submitted for study to its member churches by the Consultation on Church Union.

<sup>8</sup>See his "Treatise on Baptism" (*op. cit.*, X, 190-93), from which this and the following excerpts are taken.

Christ." Since he believes that people are "mystically united to Christ" and sustain a "spiritual, vital union with him," then how can he say that it is through water baptism and affirm that "there is no other means of entering into the Church or into heaven"?

Still further, we must reject his sheer sacramentarianism when he says, "By water then, as a means, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again," declaring further that "herein a principle of grace is infused." Someone needs to remind Mr. Wesley here that all the water of Neptune's ocean poured over his body cannot suffice to wash away the sin of his soul, be it either original or actual.

Wesley continues his argument on behalf of infant baptism by saying: "Infants need to be washed from original sin; therefore they are proper subjects of baptism." But he seems not to realize that this Roman and Lutheran position argues also that unbaptized infants are lost. He does, however, definitely declare that "infants are guilty of original sin. . . . This original stain cleaves to every child of man; and hereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation." Dr. H. Orton Wiley offers this corrective word: "The term 'guilt' . . . needs to be carefully guarded. It may mean . . . either culpability (*reatus culpae*), or mere liability to punishment (*reatus poenae*)." In the case of Adam's sin "the culpability belonged solely to Adam, and resided in the first sinner as the natural head and representative of the race." It is incorrect then for Wesley to contend that infants are guilty before God because of Adam's sin. Wiley continues: "The consequences of his sin were passed on to his descendants as the *reatus poenae*, or liability to punishment. Hence Wiley declares: "We understand that no child of Adam

\*Cf. H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, II, 126-35, from which this and the following excerpts are taken.

is condemned eternally, either for the original offense, or its consequences. . . . None are predestinated unconditionally to eternal damnation, and . . . culpability does not attach to original sin." It is Wiley's contention that the guilt of original sin was removed from the individual descendants of Adam by the death of Christ, whereupon "the Free Gift" passed upon all men, involving "the reversal of the condemnation and the bestowal of a title to eternal life." Thus, to quote Wiley further:

We must believe that condemnation in the sense of the doom of the race, never passed beyond Adam and the unindividualized nature of man. It was arrested in Christ as regards every individual, and thereby changed into a conditional sentence. Man is not now condemned for the depravity of his own nature, although that depravity is of the essence of sin; its culpability we maintain, was removed by the free gift in Christ. Man is condemned solely for his own transgressions. The free gift removed the original condemnation and abounds unto many offences. Man becomes amenable for the depravity of his heart, only when rejecting the remedy for it, he consciously ratifies it as his own, with all its penal consequences.

In this contention Wiley stands in agreement with such thinkers as Zwingli, Arminius, and Fletcher. Wiley quotes Zwingli as saying: "Whether we wish it or not, we are compelled to admit that original sin, as it is in the descendants of Adam, is not properly sin, as has already been explained, for it is not a transgression of the Law. It is therefore properly a disease and a condition."<sup>10</sup> Likewise he quotes Arminius as having said: "There is no ground for the assertion that the sin of Adam was imputed to his posterity in the sense that God actually judged the posterity of Adam to be guilty of and chargeable with the same sin and crime that Adam had committed. . . . I do not deny that it is sin, but it is not actual sin. We must distinguish be-

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 107.

tween actual sin and that which is the cause of other sins, and which on that very account may be denominated sin."<sup>11</sup> He also notes that, in his third check to Atinomianism, Fletcher shows that infants are justified without either faith or works and solely and universally on the basis of God's free gift through Christ (cf. Romans 5:12-19).<sup>12</sup>

In the light of these considerations one is tempted to exclaim, "O Wesley, where was thy usual acumen, to write such a treatise as this on baptism!" "For," as Arminius so aptly observes, "grace cannot be immediately conferred by water." Moreover, "because it is a sign confirming the promise and sealing it, it is unwisely asserted that, through it, grace is conferred."<sup>13</sup>

We can take the Lord's supper with anyone who knows he is born again, or at least feels contrition for his sins, and we will accept his own testimony as to his worthiness thus to receive the sacrament at the hands of one of our ministers, be he Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic,<sup>14</sup> or otherwise. There is no fencing of the tables of the Lord with us. For we can welcome to the Lord's Supper any repentant believer of any denomination. But does one have to be a born-again believer or just a repentant sinner to come and partake? Here our church is not as clear as is John Wesley himself. We say: "Let all those who have with true repentance forsaken their sins, and have believed in Christ unto salvation, draw near and take these em-

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 108.

<sup>12</sup>*The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher, Late Vicar of Madeley* (New York: Waugh and T. Mason, 1833), I, 161 ff.

<sup>13</sup>*Op. cit.* (Private Disputation 63), II, 160-61.

<sup>14</sup>Not until now (in 1967) have our Catholic brethren decided to allow Protestants (whom they now refer to as *separated brethren*) to receive Holy Communion at the hands of a Roman Catholic priest, and that only under certain specified circumstances, where urgent need is specifically known. Cf. Vatican Decree of May 26, 1967.

blems."<sup>15</sup> Thus it seems that we would insist that only a born-again believer in Christ is to receive the sacrament. But Wesley regards it as more than a confirming means of grace. With him it is a means of possible conversion or a converting means as well. He says:

In latter times many have affirmed that the Lord's Supper is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance. And among us it has been diligently taught that none but those who are converted, who have received the Holy Ghost, who are believers in the full sense, ought to communicate. But experience shows the gross falsehood of that assertion, that the Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance. Ye are the witnesses. For many now present know, the very beginning of your conversion to God (perhaps in some, the first deep conviction [of sin]) was wrought at the Lord's Supper. Now one single instance of this kind overthrows the whole assertion.<sup>16</sup>

Manifestly, at this point, we are at variance with Wesley's position.

Nazarenes would surely disagree with Wesley's insistence in the same entry of his *Journal* that those to whom Jesus' command was, "Do this in remembrance of me," "were then unconverted . . . who (in the full sense of the word) were not believers." But first let us note that the manuscript evidence for Wesley's text being in the Greek original is very weak. He did not have access to the more reliable Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrian manuscripts, which were discovered later. Secondly, let us note that in any case this expression was addressed to Jesus' disciples concerning whom He prayed, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14), and, "They have believed" (John 17:8). One wonders how Wesley can say they were not yet believers (cf. also John 16:19). Thirdly, and in the light of this, we cannot agree that it is an

<sup>15</sup>*Manual*, "Ritual," paragraph 584.

<sup>16</sup>*Op. cit.*, I, 279. Cf. *Journal* for 27-28 June, 1740.

“indisputable” example of Jesus giving the sacrament to sinners, unbelievers, or unconverted folk.

That Wesley felt the need to explain himself more correctly appears from the next day’s entry in his *Journal* for Saturday, June 28, 1740. There he adds:

I showed at large, (1) That the Lord’s Supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sancrifying grace, according to their several necessities. (2) That the persons for whom it was ordained, are all those who know and feel they want [lack] the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image of God. (3) That inasmuch as we come to his table, not to give him anything, but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us, there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever he pleases to give. And, (4) That no fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; everyone who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ, in this as well as all other ways of his appointment.<sup>17</sup>

We can agree with Wesley that none of us should feel himself worthy of or meriting God’s grace, but we cannot agree that the taking of the sacrament is a converting, forgiving, or sanctifying rite. This is too Romish for us to acknowledge.

However, it is quite evident that Wesley later modified his position at this very point. For in his sermon on “The Means of Grace” published in 1771 he quite plainly urges:

Before you use any means, let it be deeply impressed on your soul,—there is no *power* in this. It is, in itself, a poor, dead, empty thing: Separate from God, it is a dry leaf, a shadow. Neither is there any *merit* in my using this; nothing intrinsically pleasing to God; nothing whereby I deserve any favour at his hands, no, not a drop of water to cool my tongue. But, because God

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, *Journal*.

bids, therefore I do; because he directs me to wait in this way, therefore here I wait for his free mercy, whereof cometh my salvation.

Settle this in your heart, that the *opus operatum*, the mere *work done*, profiteth nothing; that there is no *power* to save, but in the Spirit of God, no *merit*, but in the blood of Christ; that, consequently, even what God ordains, conveys no grace to the soul, if you trust not in Him alone. On the other hand, he that does truly trust in Him, cannot fall short of the grace of God, even though he were cut off from every outward ordinance, though he were shut up in the center of the earth.<sup>18</sup>

Here, then, Wesley is on firmer ground and more in agreement with Arminius, who contends that apart from faith no grace is conferred; and where there is faith, grace is conferred even apart from the sacrament.

It is of particular interest that at this point of the observance of the Lord's Supper the World Council of Churches has encountered difficulty. Not yet has the entire Council been able to partake of this sacrament in total unison, having been unable to agree upon a suitable theology thereof and a valid and acceptable *modus operandi*. Here, at least, we are more ecumenical since we can welcome any believer of any denomination. And though our ritual specifies "unfermented wine and unleavened bread," yet no Nazarene would be liable to excommunication were he to partake in some other church where the leavened bread and fermented wine were used. Some of our ministers will consecrate the elements; most, however, will consecrate their people, whom they urge to prepare their hearts for the partaking by means of serious self-examination and sincere consecration to the will of God, coupled with the removal of any barriers to fellowship that might have arisen between themselves and the brethren. But here again we differ somewhat from John Wesley, who

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, V, 200-201, his italics.

said that "there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary."

With us the sacraments are not ends in themselves but means of grace, and no magic pertains to them. The elements are not objects of worship; they are signs and seals of the grace which they proclaim.

As to the *ministry*, we Nazarenes will recognize the ordination of a minister outside our own denomination. And in case he wishes to associate with us, he is not required to be re-ordained in order to become a Nazarene minister.

Our contention is that apostolic authority comes from the Lord Jesus himself by way of the calling and commissioning of the Holy Spirit. Ours must be the ordination of the pierced hands if we are to stand in a line of succession with the apostles.

We can associate and officiate on any platform or in any pulpit with any other minister of any other denomination for the achievement of any of our above-stated purposes, be he Jew, Catholic, or Protestant. We are ready to say with Wesley, "If your heart is as my heart, then give me your hand." It was our founder, Dr. P. F. Bresee, who declared: "We are blood-brother to every blood-bought, blood-washed, son or daughter of Adam's race."

Our God is very much alive and real to us. He acts within the arena of history and invades our personal lives. Most any of us could testify: "I know He lives, for I have talked with Him today."

We contend that our agreed statement of belief, as we have outlined it above, is both ecumenical and Christian.

We cooperate with the National Council of Religious Education for the sake of the Sunday school lesson outlines and cycles, and we always have some of our leaders at the meetings of the National Association of Evangelicals, but we are in bondage to neither. We

do not hold membership in either the National Council of Churches or the National Association of Evangelicals. Our contention is that church unity, to be had at all, must come by way of the Holy Spirit's melting God's people together as one, and by the divine providences that associate us together in a common cause. This unity is organismic life in the Spirit, welding us into a oneness with everyone who is Spirit-filled. That is why we send our fraternal delegates to the various assemblies of our sister holiness denominations.

The task of the Church of God generally, as we see it, involves *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diaconia*, which, spelled out, would include these seven items:

1. *Tarrying* for the enduement of power and purity from on high, which assures the presence of the Holy Spirit in every undertaking.

2. Then *traversing* all the world in a globe-girdling promotion and heralding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. Coupled with this would come *testifying* to a world of sinners what transforming grace can do for any repentant soul.

4. This would be followed by the *teaching* of all believers those things pertaining to God and man, a trusteeship of the truth.

5. The dynamic of it all would be a passionate concern which would inspire great *travailing* in prayer for a genuine explosion of evangelism.

6. This would surely result in the *transforming* of souls, and society in general, tearing down false distinctions, racially, economically, and socially, so that loving service would be the delight of all endeavor.

7. Then indeed would the Church be *triumphing* as a company of the Lord's overcomers, valiant for the truth, earnestly contending for the faith, and enduring as seeing Him who is invisible. This would make her sense of eternal realities both vital and valid.

Isn't it about time the Church turned to her task with all seriousness in just such power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit?

As for those of us who call ourselves Nazarenes, our task would include all of this plus the fact that God has raised us up to spread scriptural holiness around the world. We must share the "good news" with all of our Christian brethren, namely: "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12).

It is our contention that moral reform is prior and basic to social reform. We are committed to the salvation of sinners (conversion), and the sanctification of believers (cleansing), and, following this, their edification in holiness (growth in grace). We have been persecuted and ostracized because of our testimony to the Holy Spirit's work of grace in our hearts. But let not this dissuade or even deter us. True social reform is the by-product of true evangelism, as Timothy Smith has convincingly showed us in his book *Revivalism and Social Reform*.

We are frank to confess that, although we believe we have been divinely raised up to do a work for God in this age, we are still human. In many areas of our relationships we have been, and are, too provincial and exclusive. In others we are or have been too broadly inclusive and extra-denominational. Our church has had, and it still has, its cranks and radicals. But we have never put a premium on either ignorance or noise. We have been blessed with our own good share of Ph.D's. and Th.D's. in our educational institutions from the very beginning. Likewise there is no place for race prejudice in our faith, though some of it creeps into our fellowship at times by way of those whose conception of our church is narrow and bigoted. We need to pray that we may be kept from mere selfish propaganda and the octopus of ecclesiastical mechaniza-

tion. Basically, ours is an international church with a worldwide program in process of realization in many lands and among many nations and races.

The Scripture is our only rule of faith and practice. Yet we hold to a very precious tradition which goes back even to Pentecost. We may trace it through the teaching and preaching of Wiley, Bresee, Asbury, Wesley, Limborch, Episcopius, Arminius, Luther, Savonarola, St. Francis, Augustine, Chrysostom, Macarius the Egyptian, the Latin and Greek fathers, to the apostles (with Paul himself as a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes"), and to Jesus THE Nazarene. Yet we cannot claim to be the only true church, for one day the Master himself, when informed that His followers had forbidden one who was casting out devils in Jesus' name simply for the narrow-minded reason that he was not one of their company, said: "Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me" (Mark 9:39). However, we do stand in the magnificent line of tradition as we have already traced it—a tradition for the promotion and preaching of holiness. We are sure of what we believe, and we know why we believe it.

We are not so sure that a mammoth organization comprising all the churches of Christendom is the answer for our age. It could be only a mammoth compromise. We are also convinced that a divisive, holier-than-thou attitude will get us nowhere as we seek to save a lost world. We did find it expedient during the crisis of World War II in Japan to amalgamate with many other holiness and evangelical denominations for the sake of the preservation of the evangelical witness there while our missionaries had to be withdrawn. And we could do so again elsewhere under similar circumstances. But we are definitely opposed to, and rightly afraid of, hatching chickens for some other hen to mother. We have had some sad experiences with

converts whom we sent back to spiritually cold churches where their ardor was frowned upon and their testimonies were stifled.

In our zeal for conservatism we have yielded at times to a bigoted separatism, but this is not our general attitude. We believe in both separation and cooperation: separation from the world—(sometimes radically so), and cooperation with all good causes—(sometimes blindly so). Yet we do not propose to compromise our faith or be sidetracked from our purpose. We must insist on purity and power.

We remain aloof from foreign politics in countries where our missionaries serve, for the simple reason that we are not abroad to change the politics of any nation. We take an active part in politics at home, for, as citizens of the home state, we believe we should put our Christian ideals into practice and do whatever may be possible to improve the statesmanship of our leaders.

We Nazarenes have a stewardship and also a calling. Ours must be both an achieving faith and an achieving frenzy. The time for the promotion of salvation in the hearts of men is very short, and eternity is so everlastingly long. The night approaches when the harvest must cease. The door of our God-given opportunity may soon close. We haven't time to waste in futile arguments as to whether the Church is the body or only the bride of Christ.

Let us retreat for power, let us take counsel for wisdom, but let us advance for conquest, remembering a poor, lost demon-ridden world that needs to be brought to Jesus for healing. A compassionate Saviour calls to us with His passionate imperative: "Bring him unto me" (Mark 9:19).

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