

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Board of General Superintendents

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4 June 2020

Dear Friends,

The last few days have been exceedingly difficult for the global family. For months now, the world has encountered the deadly effects of the coronavirus, which has affected our societies, our churches, and our families. Yet, this week, the news of an older virus that continues to affect many segments of our society—and even our churches—has added to the world’s grief. The virus of ethnocentrism, expressed in explicit and/or veiled racism, has struck again the core of our society; we are now witnessing the many ways in which people respond and react to such a rampant disease. People are in the streets calling for justice and a human cure to this endemic sin of the heart manifested in violence, political division, and great suffering.

With so much bad news, what does it mean to be a people of hope? More specifically, what is Christian hope and how does it change our perspective?

Two fundamental aspects of Christian hope are absolutely linked together.

Christian hope is based in a Person.

Hope is not the power of positive thinking. It is not based on circumstances, either good or bad. It is not new and better ideas, utopian philosophies, or reformed politics. It is objectively focused in the person of Jesus Christ who has been revealed to us as “the grace of God,” “the salvation of all people” and our “blessed hope” (Titus 2:11-13). Hope in anything else will not give us what we are looking for. Jesus is the only One who can satisfy the deep hunger of our hearts and the pain of our world. A deep embracing of Jesus’ life, teachings, and sacrifice will give the world the true sense of peace, justice, and harmony that brings about hope.

Christian hope looks forward to a promised future.

Our hope in Jesus Christ is the hope that there is coming a day when God will make all things that are wrong in the world right again. Our hope is that God will remake the world the way He intends it to be. Our hope is that we will live a resurrected life with Jesus and with all the family of God, from all races, cultures, and times. Christian hope looks forward to a better future.

GLOBAL MINISTRY CENTER

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That hope changes us.

Looking forward in hope changes our behavior. Suddenly we find ourselves acting very differently and thinking very differently. "It teaches us to say 'no' to ungodliness and worldly passions" (Titus 2:12). The old way of life does not have the same pull on us that it used to. Looking forward in hope changes our purpose. Our priorities change. Our passions are redirected. "It teaches us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:12). We begin to live today as though God's promised future were already at hand. Looking forward with hope means we see God's vision of a world with no more injustice, no more violence, no more poverty, no more prejudice.

Because that is a picture of what our future hope looks like—as citizens of the kingdom of heaven and people who believe that God always keeps His promises—we start working toward that vision right now, here on earth.

We begin to long for, and pray for, and work for a time where there is justice and peace; where hungry people can eat and where diseased people can be made well; where holy love enables us to live together joyfully even in our great diversity. We begin to live toward the time where there is no hatred, prejudice, unjust systems, or racism. We live today the way God wants His world to be tomorrow. Hope demands we do more than speak a good word—it is a call to act on behalf of God's preferred and coming future.

Because of our deep sorrow for the way things are, and our profound hope in God's faithfulness to bring about a more just and loving world, the Board of General Superintendents calls the global Nazarene family to a **Day of Prayer and Fasting on Sunday, June 7, 2020 (also known as Trinity Sunday)**. The prophet Joel declares, "Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly" (Joel 2:15-16). We ask our district superintendents and pastors to lead our churches in prayer for the healing of the world according to God's vision for reconciliation, justice, unity, and holy love.

In the case of the current news in the United States, we are moved by the responses of pastors and district superintendents who are calling their congregations to address these issues in their communities. We join with the [prayer that one of our USA district superintendents](#) wrote from the depths of his heart.

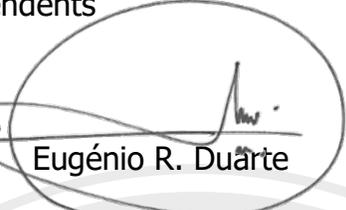
God's promised future gives us the courage to risk much more than we could dare without it. "All things becoming new" is the future hope of God's tomorrow

and gives us the strength to pray, "Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

Praying with hope,

Board of General Superintendents

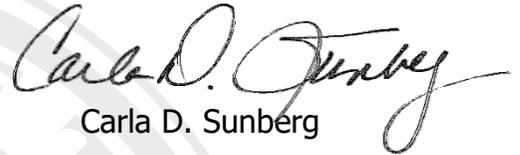

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