

## A God of Immeasurably More

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Dr. Daniel Copp, Education Commissioner and Global Clergy Development Director; Dr. Mark Louw, Regional Director of Asia-Pacific; Dr. John Moore, Regional Education Coordinator; Rev. Kafoa Maurer, APNTS Board of Trustees chair; honored representatives from our local community, our national and international educational partners, and sister denominations; Nazarene district superintendents and leaders; local pastors; esteemed alumni; distinguished faculty, faithful staff, and much-loved students; and each of you, our special guests:

I begin by expressing my sincere thanks to all of you who have gathered here today for this special occasion in the life of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. We've come to celebrate the goodness of God for the educational mission accomplished through APNTS from its beginning until now—to His glory—and His provision for the work yet to come. To Global Missions and the International Board of Education of the Church of the Nazarene, we are indebted for your dedication and commitment to the seminary and the region that makes a day like this possible. To so many of you who have invested your hopes, your dreams, and your lives so that this school can shine as a “city on a hill,” and to former presidents, Drs. Owens, Fairbanks, Nielson, Fukue, Im, and one who is present, Dr. Floyd Cunningham, who have led us, we are indeed grateful. To my family who is here with me, son and daughter, my wife Peggy who takes on this great adventure with me and has fallen in love with our students, I renew my unending devotion to you.

There is an old Filipino proverb that states, “*Kung may tinanim, may aanihin.*” or “**If you plant, you will harvest.**” It's a simple adage but so true on many levels. It does not impose an action, but rather says *If*—“If you plant.” It's up to you. But “if” you plant, you will inevitably harvest *something*, most likely according to your labor but also on the conditions you face. The principle of taking action to accomplish a desired outcome—in this case, determin-

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\* This paper was presented by Dr. Oldham on the occasion of his inauguration as the seventh president of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

ing what, where and when to plant, tilling the soil, scattering the seed, responding to conditions faced, and then trusting the God of the harvest—will produce a result in due time.

In 1977, Dr. Donald Owens, pioneer Nazarene missionary to Korea where he had started a Bible Training School that later became Korea Nazarene University, faced the “If” principle again when the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene approved the establishment of a graduate seminary for the Asia-Pacific region and elected Owens as its founding president. What *could be* had been carefully studied and prayerfully considered. What to plant had been determined, but where and when? According Dr. Floyd Cunningham, writing on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of APNTS, Dr. Owens and then World Missions Director Jerald Johnson visited the Philippines to find a site for the Seminar and chose the Children's Garden Orphanage—the former name itself indicating the preparation of a harvest—in Taytay, Rizal, outside of the capital city of Manila, as the “where”. Dr. Cunningham wrote that Dr. Owens was instrumental in convincing church leadership that the urban setting of Manila, a cosmopolitan setting with an international airport, was the right place to begin planting what they prayed would become a graduate center of academic and spiritual training for men and women from all parts of Asia.

Though the following year was targeted for the “when” to begin classes, God’s timing for the seeds sown led them instead to begin on this site with seminars and extension classes of Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City for the first few years. As with the parable of the sower, rocks and thorns threatened when a move to Baguio was urged by some leaders, yet Dr. Owens insisted that the seminary should remain in an urban location near the “masses,” and that it not become an extension campus of the US seminary but develop an indigenous faculty who could contextualize Wesleyan theology to the Asian context. So, in 1983, the seminary was officially affirmed as an autonomous graduate school of theology, ground was broken for a two-story administration building that would later be named Owens Hall, approval from the Philippine government was received to offer degrees ranging from Bachelor of Theology to Master of Divinity to Doctor of Ministry, and on November 14, 1983 the first classes were held. It was appropriate that Dr. Owens would choose the school’s motto of “Bridging Cultures for Christ,” and the school hymn, “In Christ There is No East or West” as acknowledgement of his dedication to planting a truly global seminary in the garden known as Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

In one of his chapel addresses, Dr. Owens reflected on those early days of “planting” in this critical mission area that experts had deemed the “10-40 window,” where 55 of the least evangelized countries with more than 4.9 billion unreached people were located with only 10% of the global missionary force and where public evangelism was extremely difficult or impossible because of governmental restrictions (Missions Mobilizer 2017). He stated, “I applaud Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in positioning this institution at the very heart of what a Sovereign Lord is doing in the world.” Owens continued,

The urgent task of bringing the gospel to the lost of earth must be undergirded by the careful academic study of why He is doing it, where He is doing it, and how He is doing it. While God moves in mysterious ways to fulfill His love for mankind by mission, it is still incumbent upon the church to understand all we can (2005, 1).

The planting so carefully done to establish a seminary in such a strategic location—the only Christian county in Asia—with a people group who possessed a grasp of the English language needed so that students from around the world could share in a common learning language, would not have been accomplished merely by human efforts. Our Wesleyan holiness theology and practice and our church’s commitment to education had beckoned also to consider the “world as my parish... that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it... my duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation” (Wesley 1979, 1:201). It now stands that for such a time as this, when Asia and beyond are desperate for local pastors and tent-makers to invade the space that traditional missionaries can no longer fill, that there is a seminary that has already planted and cultivated for a field to be harvested. “The cross-cultural setting for a global view of theological education meets here,” said Dr. Owens, “at the crossroads of east, west, north, and south.” In Taytay, Rizal, Philippines. On Ortigas Avenue Extension, Kaytikling Circle, in the garden that has become Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. His promise to us remains: that “the one who calls us is faithful, and He will do it” (1 Thess 5:24).

There is a second Filipino proverb that goes like this: “*Matibay ang walis, palibhasa’y magkabigkis*” which translated into English means: “**A broom is sturdy because its strands are tightly bound.**” How true that is for people as well as brooms: people gain strength by standing together. Ecclesiastes 4 echoes the same element of truth: “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor; if either of them falls down, one can help the other

up. Though one may be overpowered; two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

In November, we celebrated our 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary at APNTS. Throughout those years, there have been crises of finances, lack of resources, an insufficient number of personnel for necessary tasks, occasions of low student enrollment, and heavy winds, both literally and figuratively. But the tight strands gathered around this campus, from around the world and close to home, have kept us together, sustained through Christ’s strength as we carry out our mission of raising leaders to reach the world for Christ. What are those strands that have bound us together?

**The first strand is dedicated faculty.** When APNTS was established, church leaders were concerned that godly professors holding doctoral degrees might not be willing to teach in a seminary away from their home country, whether within the region (Korea, Japan, Australia) or across the globe (Great Britain, Canada, the US). However, since its inception, APNTS has been recognized for academic excellence and a place where talented and godly professors train dedicated students who make effective pastors, effective missionaries, creative leaders in children’s and youth ministries and in cutting-edge urban initiatives. We must do move to provide funding for faculty development, research and publishing, and recruitment of new faculty who can join us in this great effort of advancing our holiness mission through quality education.

As the work of the Church of the Nazarene has flourished in the Philippines, APNTS graduates have served on the front lines of church planting and personal and public evangelism, a tribute to professors whose courses and character stressed the biblical intimacy of faith and works, the essential partnership of knowing and doing. In many cases professors have modeled good teaching in such a way that their students have chosen in turn to give their lives to teaching others. Alongside over 200 alumni now serving as pastors and missionaries, over 100 alumni have listed their present vocation as educators and administrators, with others in the process of doing additional academic work, and are investing themselves in schools, Bible colleges, and here at APNTS, as faculty members, administrators, and college presidents, as well as pastors and church leaders, continuing the multiplication process to God’s glory.

In 2 Timothy 1, Paul issued a challenge as only a great mentor can, admonishing young Timothy to continue to spread the gospel as his own minis-

try was ending. He urged Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God,” to maintain the “pattern of teaching” that he had been shown through Paul, and to “guard the good deposit entrusted to him.” The mystery of God’s plan to spread his kingdom lies in the simplicity, yet complexity, of leadership multiplication through teaching, training, and mentoring, pouring our lives as Paul said like a “drink offering” into others, and passing the torch to those who go beyond our reach of influence. Those who respond in obedience to go into all the world and make disciples find that evangelism and education, baptizing and teaching, go hand in hand in fulfilling the Great Commission.

I must also applaud our seminary staff members who work hard and give much to the successful operation and growth of our campus. I see them every day with computers and hammers, driving and directing, chairing meetings and cleaning in hard places, and I thank God for them. Their smiles and devotion are contagious! As our vision and our vision proclaim, APNTS faculty and staff continue to play a crucial role in advancing God’s kingdom throughout Asia, the Pacific, and the world.

**The second strand is our passionate students.** Former president Dr. John Nielson stated in his 1990 inaugural address,

Our lay people are becoming more highly educated and have higher expectations of their pastors and leaders. Such times demand that our best and brightest young men and women must hear and accept God’s call to ministry and that the church must offer them the best possible education (2004, 21).

Nielson continued that these young men and women:

Must be persons of strong character. They must transmit our holiness heritage to a new generation. They must know the Word of God well enough, and think clearly enough that they can face the new and unanticipated challenges of tomorrow with courage, creating new approaches to ministry and yet remaining faithful and true to the heritage that has been entrusted to them (2004, 21).

Since classes began in November, 1983, 472 graduates responded to their calling by completing an APNTS degree program, walking across the platform at commencement to enter ministry in 24 countries for 39 different denominations, 65% of whom serve the Church of the Nazarene.

The commitment and dedication of our students to become all that God has called them to be is never taken lightly. Administrators, faculty, and staff are constantly aware that many who walk through these halls often do so while experiencing personal and financial hardship and sacrifice. Many have left

behind family and close friends to answer God's call to prepare here, and He continues to bring them and provide for them out of His goodness, mercy, and faithfulness. Yet we still hear of those from various parts of Asia who long to come here to study, who hope to someday have sufficient financial resources to attend APNTS. Our commitment to these potential students challenges us to do more to provide scholarship support to enable their enrollment. We also are working hard to develop off-site programs, taking the APNTS experience out to these students so that they can achieve their goal of graduate level training for ministry opportunities that lie ahead.

**The third strand of our strength together comes from our support network.** We are blessed with global, regional, and district leaders, and the local pastors and congregations who resource regularly, counsel wisely, promote proudly, give generously, and pray fervently for APNTS. Encouragement from our Global Ministry Center in Kansas and our regional office in Singapore comes frequently in words and actions. Our six field strategy coordinators in Asia-Pacific met with me before I left the USA to give guidance and insight, and continue to do so today. We appreciate sharing campus space and hearts for ministry with the Asia-Pacific Resource Center and World Mission Communications, and the global call center for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, where many of our students are gaining valuable experience through internship and special projects.

Nazarene district superintendents in the Philippines have warmly welcomed me as I have travelled to assemblies and district events to interact with Nazarenes here. I chose to visit the Korea district in December as my first trip outside of Manila in recognition of their faithful partnership on so many projects over the years, and was received so warmly by DS Kim and his staff, by pastors and lay leaders in the three churches in which I was privileged to preach that week, and by our friends at Korea Nazarene University. Thank you so much for coming today. Making contact on behalf of the seminary with Nazarenes across the region will be the most important thing I do as president, and I am eager to be invited to do so at every opportunity.

When the land we stand on today was purchased by the Church of the Nazarene in 1978, there were eight local Churches of the Nazarene in Metro Manila with 450 members. Today, the Metro Manila district is made up of 61 organized churches and several new church plants, with over 5,400 members and still growing. Ten other districts with excellent leadership minister across this island nation. APNTS has benefitted greatly from our host country, from

their financial and prayer support to internship and ministry opportunities available to our students, faculty, and staff.

Our relationship with sister denominations, the Wesleyan and Free Methodist Churches, is strong, giving us over 56 graduates many outstanding faculty over the years. Our partnerships with area churches of all denominations and independent churches—Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Assembly of God, dare I even start to make a list!—are so vital to what we do and students from these churches have flourished and contributed much at APNTS.

**The fourth strand is the valuable alliance we have with our local community entities, academic organizations, and government agencies.** We work closely with our city leaders and many wonderful businesses in this local area, who provide needed resources and believe in what we are doing. We also have Asia Theological Association General Secretary and Dean of the Asia Graduate School of Theology in the Philippines, Dr. Theresa Lua in attendance today; thank you for your presence and support. We are grateful for our partnership for Asia Graduate School of Theology, the consortium of eight seminaries in the Philippines, led by Dean Dr. Azriel Azarcon, that has partnered with us to produce three excellent doctoral programs and our first doctoral graduate in 2016, with more to come. We also work closely with CHED, the Commission on Higher Education for the Philippines, and are grateful for their leadership that benefits all educational providers across this nation. We could not survive and thrive without each of you.

**Finally, the fifth and most important strand that binds us together comes from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, who has given us our common purpose.** APNTS has been planted here to prepare men and women, within our Wesleyan tradition, for Christ-like leadership and excellence in ministries, to equip each new generation of leaders to disseminate the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia, the Pacific and the world. In doing so, our aim is to “bridge cultures for Christ.” We strive to do so through living within the context of community, daily interacting with and praying for each other, committed staff, faculty and students, as we teach, train, and live out the holiness lifestyle. We share meals together at casual moments in residence halls, at times of mutual support and accountability through Koinonia groups that meet in faculty homes twice each month, and through spiritual discussions that take place in the dining hall. We shared sacred moments of worship in chapel services twice a week, with participation in choir and praise teams, by joining personal prayer groups, and throughout area churches on Sunday

and in weekly special events. We develop friendships through basketball and volleyball games, student body (SBO) events, and service projects. We become more aware and involved in personal needs as love and support each other's families, and societal needs by ministering to the awesome children living on the outskirts of our campus in the Rowenas community.

But these good things are not goals in themselves; our "shared purpose," is not simply for a "tightly bound" community to form. Our purpose is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia, the Pacific and the world, and to bridging cultures for Christ! The focus is never inward, but always outward, reaching the hopeless, the helpless, the searching, the lost. The addition of PhD programs, expansion of academic offerings into areas of holistic child development, social justice, and transformational care, have been added to our ministry program offerings as vital training for today's students to fulfil the mission of the God in a needy world.

Former president Dr. Im, Seung-An in his inaugural address declared that, The fundamental causes of the crises in the 21<sup>st</sup> century come... from... disregarding the inner value of love and from the lack of practice to love our neighbors. Without love, therefore, even the religious ministry of evangelism would be fruitless.... APNTS needs to provide students with the opportunity to participate in compassionate ministry for people in need.... Not only [in] classrooms and libraries but [in] streets and societies... to learn how to become capable ministers able to solve [today's] problems (2015, 52, 54).

Dr. Im argues that the ministry of evangelism (the Great Commission) and compassionate ministry (the Great Commandment) are not two separate values, but one united together (2015, 54).

Our theological mentor John Wesley, wrote, "The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness" (Wesley 1979, 14:321). The purpose that binds us together is preparing to meet Jesus in the streets of India, Myanmar, Korea, China, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Indonesia, the Philippines, and beyond. Where He is already at work and calling us to join Him. Through Christ's power at work within us, and only by that power, we accomplish this purpose so that, as Paul stated in Ephesians 4:13, "The body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

The third and final Filipino proverb I would like to share with you today is: *Ang hindi lumignon sa pinanggalingan, hindi makakarating sa paro-*



**roonan**, or “**A person who does not remember where he came from will never reach his destination.**” As we gather in this historic moment, it has been important to reflect on our beginnings, to remember where we have been so that we may embrace all that is good in what God has done among us. Yet all of this must ultimately lead to a vision and conversation about where we go from here today, into the future as individuals and as an institution.

How do we best move forward as a seminary into the tomorrows that lie ahead? What are the goals and aspirations that will drive us as we continue our mission of educating pastors and servant leaders who will minister to those who need God’s transformational grace; to the young believer who needs to be disciple and mentored so that he or she can do the same with others; to the poor and needy in need of food, shelter, and love; to the outcast who needs to belong; and to the neglected and abused children of our world, our region, and this nation, so vulnerable and in need of redeemers?

Examining *why* what we will do what we do in the future is as important as the question of *what* we do. When I attended Trevecca Nazarene University for my undergraduate degree in religion, one of my most revered professors was Dr. Mildred Wynkoop. Dr. Wynkoop was one of the foremost theologians in the Church of the Nazarene, and represented the power of female women in leadership that anchored the Nazarene movement in its early days and is now receiving renewed and deserved emphasis in our denomination. Dr. Floyd Cunningham, writing about the educational preparation of ministers in Asia, recounted that Dr. Wynkoop was chosen by the Church of the Nazarene to spearhead and reorganize the educational work in Japan in the early 1960’s. Her work resulted in the establishment of a theological seminary in that country. She contended that the “why” for Nazarene educational institutions in America was to build on the foundation of evangelism already established in that country, which, in her words, “had to be supported by educational muscles and bone” (Cunningham 1996, 20). Her analysis was that though evangelical preaching characterized the early days of the church, “evangelism must be defined broadly to include ‘the tedious rebuilding of the foundations of thinking,’ so that both strong character and a strong church might be built” (Cunningham 1996, 20). Her foresight, and that of many other church leaders, helped establish the long tradition of the church educating young Nazarene (and those from sister denominations) for not only bringing the lost to Jesus, but for becoming part of a well-rounded body of Christ—with strong muscles and bones of theological and ecclesiastical perspectives. Only by exploring

together the great truths of the Word of God and the writings of godly men and women testifying of the wonders of His love and grace, through in-depth study, would a strong church arise.

The powers of darkness are too strong for us to be weak. Muscles must be exercised and bones must be kept strong to withstand the arrows of the enemy. Not only must strong sound minds be developed through the Word but willing hearts must be nurtured and capable hands and feet trained and disciplined to carry and contextualize that Word into our neighborhoods, burrows, and barangays. Where better to get head, heart, and hand training at a Nazarene seminary! Our second president, Dr. E. Lebron Fairbanks, in his 1985 his inaugural address, emphasized the pivotal role of seminary community and the engagement of its graduates into the world stated that,

The basic thrust of the curriculum is *integration* between the Word and the world, study and involvement, theology and ministry, the seminary and society, the seminary and the churches. In all its programs, therefore, the seminary seeks to integrate effectively personal development, spiritual growth, theological sensitivity, cultural awareness, social consciousness and practical skills (2004, 16).

And it is still true today.

As president, I affirm our commitment to sound theological education of our students, the stringent requirement of professional research and writing through masters' theses and doctoral dissertations, that we continue to serve as a "hub" of graduate learning for Asia-Pacific. However, I also firmly believe that our future calls us to develop ministry practice that can be taken to the people in a variety of countries and contexts by graduates who leave to serve as pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders. I stand behind and will lead the Board of Trustees' direction to establish ***additional off-site centers*** to bring contextualized graduate coursework to those that long for increased formal educational training but are unable to move to Manila and reside on the main campus. To do that, we must partner with our field and district leaders and other educational institutions across the region to locate and deploy doctorally-trained adjunct faculty who live in these nations and are willing to become part of the APNTS team, to find accessible and accommodating locations, and to raise funds to finance this challenge of extension education. Together, bound in supportive strands of our mission and purpose, we can do it.

While reaching outward to new location, we must not neglect our main campus here. Research confirms that the primary ingredient in attracting new students to any educational institution is a ***quality student experience***. What

happens and what is provided in the classroom, in the library, in the chapel, in the dining hall, in the residential areas, and in the love and respect received from faculty, staff, and administrators; how they are encouraged, supported, and cared for academically, spiritually, socially, and financially; will determine whether students will stay to become graduates and whether they will recommend APNTS to prospective students from their churches, their communities, and from their families. The strength of the main campus will be the foundation for strength in off-site centers and extension courses. We must approach growth as a “both-and” proposition, as God guides us and resources are given.

Dr. Paul Fukue, the fifth president of APTNS, shared in his inaugural address that,

The real problems of the world are getting increasingly complex and the Christian ministers of today and tomorrow have to be ready to deal with tough issues of the world today.... To meet the challenge of our world today, our theological education cannot be satisfied except by putting our **roots** deep in the biblical, historical, systematic and practical theologies along with auxiliary disciplines (2004, 33).

Strong roots must grow deeply for nourishment and growth, and must also spread outward for stability and strength. Our challenge in the years ahead is to increase the availability and quality of an APNTS degree wherever those who are called may find themselves, whether they can attend the main campus or focus their studies at an APNTS center in another land.

I end this address with a brief personal note of gratitude to the Global Church of the Nazarene, the APNTS Board of Trustees, to my family, and to God for allowing me this opportunity to serve. This was not an assignment that a 17-year-old young man from the small town of Gallatin, Tennessee, USA could have ever imagined as possible when Christ took over the throne of my heart in a youth revival service in 1974. I have tried to respond as the Lord has led through the years, and I firmly believe that He has ordained my days here on this campus, however long they may be. I have learned greatly from many of you in the months I’ve been on campus, and my prayer is that you have been able to see my love for you and for this campus growing as we live, work, and minister together. I believe that there are even greater days ahead in fulfilling the goals and accomplishing our mission of equipping and training leaders, as we remain faithful to God’s calling.

**The passage of scripture** that has shaped my life over the years has been Ephesians 3:14–21. Paul began this text on his knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. My surname is

Oldham, coming from a father who was tragically killed before my birth and who I never knew. On that Saturday night when I gave my heart to this Heavenly Father, he began to re-form my identity as His child. Through the riches of His glory, He gave me strength; by dwelling in my heart through faith, He gave me love; in getting to know Him, my inheritance is to be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. What a blessing! But the greatest hope follows in verses 20–21: “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!”

Immeasurably **more**—think of it! No matter what our dreams, our hopes, our vision is, God can do more than we dare ask or think, according to His power at work within us. Now, let us begin. by faith in His promise and provision, acknowledging that all we do and He does in and through us, is for His glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. Amen!

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