



To: The members of the Sword of the Spirit

From: The President

Beirut, 1 November 2009

Dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings!

A few months ago (May 2009), Steve Clark passed on the baton of the presidency of the Sword of the Spirit. This was not just another routine incident in the life of our international community, both because of who Steve is and because of the particular season we are in.

Steve is the founder of the Sword of the Spirit, and from its beginnings he has worked tirelessly at establishing, maintaining, and defending the vision he received from the Lord to build a Bulwark, a community of disciples on mission. This required from him courage to start the work, and more courage and boldness to build in good times but also in times of difficulties and persecution. He demonstrated an even greater measure of courage and trust in the Lord in handing on the leadership to other brothers when he was still capable at all levels to go on - something rare in the history of founders of movements in the church. He did not simply retire when things were not going well. On the contrary! The Sword of the Spirit is now experiencing a season of unprecedented growth with a promise from the Lord of a season of grace and more open doors for mission, a season, according to Steve, like that at our beginnings.

Brothers and sisters, I believe that in this season the Lord is inviting us to trust Him and move forward in boldness and courage in the mission that is ahead of us. All of us need this in our daily evangelism, our communities need it for their outreaches, our regions in their missionary efforts. A couple of months ago, I participated in a mission trip led by more than a hundred university young men and women from Europe and the Middle East to try to establish a University Christian Outreach in a very resistant and difficult environment, Aleppo, Syria. During the day they reflected on the book of Acts, and many were struck by the secret of the success of the beginning of the mission of the church: the boldness of the apostles (see Acts 4). During the evening, with trust in the Lord, expectant faith, and courage and boldness, these young men and women evangelized, and miracles happened both in their lives and in the lives of people they had never met before.

The apostles had another decisive weapon for the success of mission that our young people discovered: the power of prayer and intercession. *"And now, Lord, ... grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."* *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness."* (Acts 4: 29-31) In this "Year of Personal Prayer" I invite you all -as well as the regional presidents and the senior coordinators- to integrate intercession for the mission as part of your regular personal, family, community, and regional prayers.

As the apostles moved in faith, the Lord provided them with all the extraordinary gifts as well as the human and material resources they needed for the mission. The Lord has promised us the same in this season. The members of the first community were generous in offering the Lord and the apostles their resources, their time, their talents, and even their lives, *"for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet"* (Acts 4: 34-35). May the Lord make us even more generous in offering what we have to His mission, to *our* mission.

Finally, I hope to be able to visit your communities during the coming four years, especially in conjunction with my participation in regional council meetings or regional Kairos conferences.

Your brother in Christ,

Jean Barbara

President of the Sword of the Spirit



Jean Barbara was born in 1957 in Beirut, Lebanon, and is married to Marie-Therese. They have four children: Victor, 22, who is serving as a gapper in Michigan; Nicole, 20, a UCO leader in Lebanon; Peter, 19, a youth leader in Lebanon, and Philip, 8, currently the only child providing his parents with some company at home. Jean is a coordinator and Marie-Therese a senior woman leader in the People of God, Lebanon.

Jean received a Master of Business Administration from the American University of Beirut, and is currently a Tax Advisor (working part-time) in his own company. Jean served as Senior Coordinator of the People of God, Lebanon, from 1990 until 2008 and now leads the Sword of the Spirit mission in the Middle East. He was President of the Europe and Middle East Region of the Sword of the Spirit from 1999 until 2005, and Moderator of Christ the King Association until 2002.

According to the Constitution of the Sword of the Spirit, the President is responsible for the following:-

- preside over the Sword of the Spirit
- lead the Sword of the Spirit Assembly, and the International Executive Council
- coordinate the legislative process
- represent the Sword of the Spirit both within and without the Sword of the Spirit

The President is the primary international leader of the Sword of the Spirit and a key focus of unity. The President meets regularly with the various Regional Councils so that he can know first-hand the issues and opportunities the regions face, and so that he can know personally the leaders of the regions. It is through this first hand contact that he is able to guide the work of the International Executive Council and set direction for the Sword of the Spirit overall.