



**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS  
TO THE  
87<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL BOARD  
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

**February 2010**

***“A TRANSFORMING MISSION”***

I greet you on behalf of the Board of General Superintendents (BGS) in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as we come together for the 87<sup>th</sup> session of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene and the first session of the new quadrennium. To our guests on site and on the Internet, we extend warm greetings.

This is our third plenary meeting in the 2010 General Board Session. It is a time of accountability for the general superintendents to report on the past year and to look at the future direction of the church.

Eight months ago we said good-bye to our colleagues, James H. Diehl, Paul G. Cunningham, and Nina G. Gunter, at the 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Orlando, Florida, U.S.A. We were privileged to welcome Eugénio R. Duarte, David W. Graves, and Stan A. Toler as our new colleagues. They are providing spiritual leadership, presiding at assemblies, and becoming world travelers.

Each is making a unique and important contribution to the Board of General Superintendents and to the Church of the Nazarene.

Of the 48 General Board members elected at General Assembly, 31 are serving for the first time as we meet here in Overland Park, Kansas, U.S.A.

A lot of work goes into preparing for the General Board Session. To General Secretary David Wilson and his staff, to the BGS staff, to the officers, directors, and administrative personnel at the Global Ministry Center (GMC) and regional offices, we want you to know that we appreciate what you do. You are a dedicated group.

To our pastors, missionaries, evangelists, laity, district superintendents, educators, chaplains, and compassionate ministry directors, we recognize your faithfulness and your contributions to the Kingdom and to the church. We pray God's blessings on your ministry. This is really your report.

### **The Haiti Earthquake**

On 12 January 2010—just 40 days ago—Haiti, with a population of 9 million and considered to be the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, was hit with a devastating and deadly earthquake.

The magnitude 7.0 quake—the most powerful to hit Haiti in a century—struck shortly before 5 p.m. Eastern Time and was centered about 10 miles (15 kilometers) southwest of Port-au-Prince, as reported by the United States Geological Survey. Witnesses said it could be felt strongly in eastern Cuba more than 200 miles (322 kilometers) away.

General Superintendent J. K. Warrick had arrived in Haiti that same day to begin district assemblies representing 555 churches and nearly 120,000 Haitian Nazarenes. Dr. Warrick was with Bill and Martha Dawson and volunteer Rachel Reed when the earthquake struck.

As soon as Dr. Warrick was able to communicate with the outside world, he issued a call for the Church of the Nazarene to pray and respond immediately and generously to the needs of Nazarenes in Haiti.

I would like for Dr. Warrick to share the latest on the situation in Haiti and to lead the General Board in a special time of prayer for all Haitians and relief workers.

### **Nazarene Mission**

The church's response to the disaster in Haiti underscores what it means to be a connectional church. Being "Nazarene" is having a sense of shared belief, shared mission, shared values, and *shared responsibility*.

In the midst of difficult economic times, the church's collective compassion is once again coming through for the people of Haiti, just as it did following the Indonesian tsunami in 2004 and Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast of the United States in 2005.

We say that we are a Christian church, a holiness church, and a missional church making Christlike disciples in the nations; but, what is it that you and I believe that Haitian Nazarenes also believe? What provides a common bond across cultures and languages? What causes us to share the pain and suffering of Haitians and others? What prompts us to pray? What motivates an outpouring of response?

It is being a people whose hearts have been transformed by faith through the gift of God's grace and the blood of Jesus Christ.

“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you” (Ezekiel 36:26, NLT).

John Wesley wrote about a “mind changed from sinful to holy, from carnal to spiritual. Ours is now a sanctified heart and a new holy frame which is given to us, not by our own power.”

This is how we can live a deeper life.

Consider David, who wrote these words: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalms 51:10, NASB). He cannot forgive himself, and David knows he needs God’s mercy so he can have a fresh start—and get on with the more important work of leading Israel.

How will others know of God’s forgiveness so they too can start fresh—with a clean heart and a new spirit?

For 101 years the Church of the Nazarene has proclaimed scriptural truth that the sinful nature can be done away with, that we can become like Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said, “... with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26, NIV).

This is the essence of our mission—living the holy life here and now. Within the context of a transforming mission is this glorious message of transformation.

What results from a transformed heart?

Changed lives. Changed relationships. A passion to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Compassion for those in need. A right relationship with God. This is how He calls us into His mission—as pastors, laity, missionaries, and educators. He calls us through the heart that is transformed by the infilling with the Holy Spirit in His sanctifying power.

“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life” (Romans 6:22, NASB).

This is why our transforming mission must be the number one priority in our lives. It is the result of being transformed by the sanctifying Presence of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves—whoever they are and wherever they may be.

There will not be Christlike disciples without “a new heart and a new spirit.” While the Bible makes it clear that all are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, a new heart and a new spirit is the beginning of the journey.

Accepting this gift of God’s grace by faith and following Jesus can be a costly decision. It is with a great deal of sadness that I report to you that there have been 47 Nazarene martyrs in the last five years. In one nation alone 30 churches were burned to the ground; two pastors and nine laypersons were killed.

Yet, in the midst of this devastation, 54 churches have now been planted in this same nation. It is as though there is life coming from death. We do not always know how God works—we just know that He does. Even in the dire circumstances facing our Haitian brothers and sisters in Christ, God is at work.

The mission of making Christlike disciples in the nations needs to be understood in the context of our purpose as the Church of the Nazarene since many denominations share a similar mission. Our witness emphasizes:

- Making known to all peoples the transforming grace of God made available to every person by grace through faith.
- Proclaiming the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification to all believers, encouraging and nurturing them in Christian community toward a surrender of their will to the will and purposes of God. Without this message we have no mission—without this mission we have no message.
- Incorporating believers into the fellowship and membership of congregational life.
- Equipping for ministry all who respond in faith.
- Deploying Christlike disciples who make disciples—for the sake of the mission.
- That the ultimate goal of the “community of faith” is to present everyone—whether in Haiti or Holland, South Korea or Sri Lanka, the Congo or California—complete in Christ at the last day (Colossians 1:28).

### **The Fruits of Mission**

God continues to give fields of harvest to the Church of the Nazarene. At the close of the 2009 reporting year, church membership neared the 2 million mark. *Praise the Lord!*

What a tremendous responsibility is ours for the discipling of this great host of people.

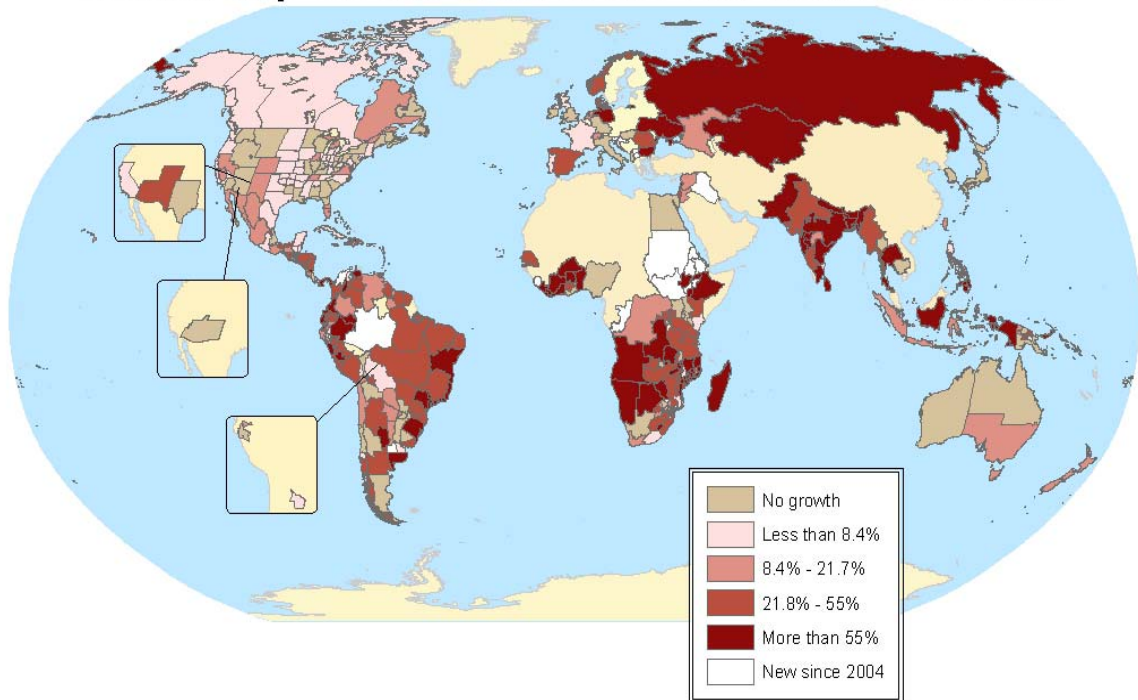
The following facts are notable for 2009:

- 165,661 new Nazarenes or 450 new Nazarenes every day
- 1,178 new churches organized or 23 new churches every week
- 24,485 churches reported worldwide, with 17,277 organized
- Total membership at 1.9 million, a gain of nearly 6 percent over 2008
- One-third of all Nazarene growth this past year can be attributed to starting new churches.

Sometimes pictures are worth a thousand words. The District Membership Growth graphic (*below*) showing cumulative gains from 2004 to 2008 may fall into this category.

The point being made here is that not all growth is outside the United States (where churches received nearly 40,000 new members in 2009) and that not all districts outside the United States are growing.

## Membership Growth in Nazarene Districts, 2004 to 2008



Source: Research Center, Global Ministry Center, Church of the Nazarene

This four-year analysis by the Nazarene Research Center shows that membership increases in the Church of the Nazarene came from 315 out of 398 districts from 2004 to 2008.

As we move into an era of “global mission,” it is important to celebrate the states, nations, and provinces that are growing while we recognize the contributions that all areas are making to world evangelization.

The members of our Board have just returned from jurisdictional tours within the regions to which they are assigned. We all have incredible memories of seeing God at work and of people making Christlike disciples, sometimes under intense persecution and opposition. The church is growing, and as mentioned previously, in some places it is growing exponentially.

One of the best kept secrets is what is happening in Cuba on the Caribbean Region. That island nation, so long ignored by much of the Western world, is the backdrop of the wonderful story of dedicated Nazarenes doing the work of mission with zeal, joy, and effectiveness.

While we have been cautious about publicizing the ministry in Cuba, in recent days the leaders of that nation have encouraged the Church of the Nazarene to tell their story widely. And what a story it is!

The progress of the church in Cuba has been stirring. In 1985 there were nearly 500 Nazarenes and 17 churches. Today there are 71 churches led by pastors who have been educated in their own seminary; there are approximately 6,600 Nazarenes and 263 preaching points. Twenty-three churches have been started since 2006.

This is the Church of Jesus Christ—making Christlike disciples in the nations, changing lives, and ministering to the people of Cuba with schools, a seminary, and a dedicated team of pastors and laity.

### **Implementing General Board Action**

In 2009 the Board of General Superintendents brought several recommendations to the General Board. All were approved.

Here is an update on the status of these changes:

1. Create a “global mission” entity (formerly “World Mission” and USA/Canada) incorporating all areas into one “mission.” Louie Bustle is the first global mission director in the Church of the Nazarene.

Status: In place

2. Open a USA/Canada Regional Office located within the Global Ministry Center with Robert Broadbooks as the director

Status: In place

3. Establish a “global World Evangelism Fund” at 5.5 percent based on income minus missions spending. (The formula for Education (USA) is set at 2.5 percent and Pensions and Benefits USA, at 2.0 percent.)

Status: Changes effective with the 2010–11 district assemblies

4. A new committee structure for the General Board:

- A Global Mission Committee
- A Global Ministries and Services Committee
- A Global Education and Clergy Development Committee
- A Global Administration and Finance Committee

Status: In place with this General Board

Bylaw changes were presented to this General Board in previous plenary meetings. These revisions clarify reporting relationships and, in the case of officers and directors, the method of election.

In 2009 our Board also recommended the creation of a coordinated effort to improve the communication of vision and mission to the church. The Church of the Nazarene has an inspiring story to tell about what God is doing through the denomination. This narrative needs to be better communicated to more people, especially new Nazarenes.

What the Board is hearing from pastors, laity, and district leaders can be summarized this way: Nazarenes not only want to know that the church is in 155 world areas (although outreach is important to them); they also want to know what the church is doing in those 155 world areas.

Planning for this comprehensive communication effort is now underway.

The Board of General Superintendents is also working to provide clearer direction for the church through its major addresses, such as the General Board Report and the Quadrennial Address.

Additionally:

- A BGS white paper was produced giving background and rationale on proposed structural and formula changes.
- Lines of communication are opening up with more information available on the [www.nazarene.org](http://www.nazarene.org) website.
- We have sought and received feedback on a variety of issues facing the church through [bgs@nazarene.org](mailto:bgs@nazarene.org).

The Board will be launching its own Facebook page since Internet users are gravitating to this site for information and networking. The general superintendents will expand to other social media in the coming year.

Beginning 1 March 2010 General Board receipts will be accessible on the Nazarene Financial Services website (<http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/NFS/display.aspx>). This is yet another way of increasing the transparency of General Board finances. Nazarenes need to be aware of the current financial condition of the World Evangelism Fund, mission specials, and other offerings taken throughout the year.

### **2009 General Assembly**

Our 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was historic. Were you there on 30 June 2009 or watching on the Internet when the delegates elected the first non-Anglo general superintendent, Dr. Eugénio Duarte, from Cape Verde? Did you know that on the day of the election the president of the nation of Cape Verde interrupted the parliament in session to announce that a son of Cape Verde had just been elected as a general superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene? The parliament stood in applause and passed a resolution of congratulations to Dr. Duarte.

The Lord is guiding the church's steps forward by putting in place capable spiritual leaders.

Ninety-six resolutions were adopted and five study groups created by the General Assembly. A Commission on the Nazarene Future, recommended by the Board of General Superintendents, was approved.

This effort is being chaired by David McClung, and it includes the International Church Committee recommendations for the design of a new global *Manual*.

The Commission on the Nazarene Future, focusing primarily on ecclesiology, will present an annual progress report to the Board of General Superintendents, with a final report due in 2012.

### **Funding the Mission \***

While the World Evangelism Fund (WEF) is the primary source of financial support and remains critical to the global mission, it is time to broaden the understanding of how the Church of the Nazarene funds its mission.

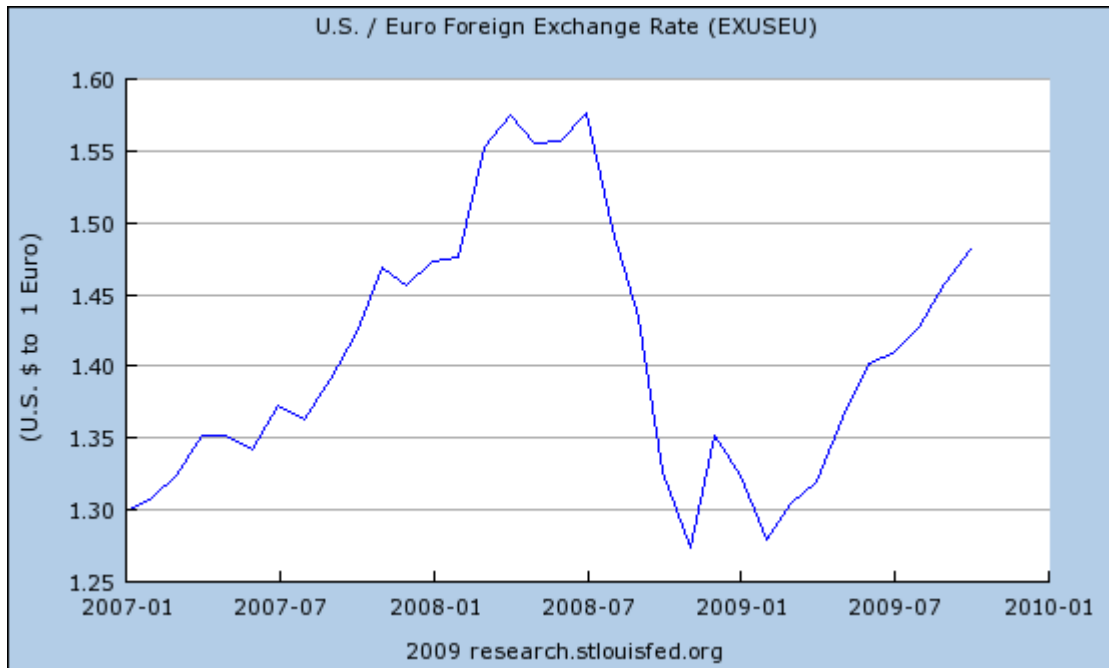
Suffice it to say that the denomination has more mission dollars in circulation than are reported through WEF.

In the 2005 General Board Report, General Superintendent Paul Cunningham stated that “stewardship is not about money, it is about discipleship.”

He said new ways of funding the mission were already in place. They include combining WEF and mission specials with major gifts, partnerships, and grants to leverage the contributions. The Church of the Nazarene Foundation is part of this effort.

There are countries such as South Korea, Brazil, Japan, and Australia that are sending missionaries at their own expense but they are not always accounted for in official reports.

Some regions have lost half the value of their WEF and approved specials funds due to a significant drop in the exchange rate of the U.S. dollar against other currencies. The outreach initiatives underwritten by different countries are helping the church to fulfill the Great Commission at a time of significant pressure on financial resources.



The global economic recession has been a harsh reality for many. As difficult as finances have been for many churches this past year, WEF receipts fell only 3.7 percent, from \$48.7 million in 2008 to \$46.9 million in 2009. Under the circumstances, the decline in WEF giving could have been much worse.

Mission specials dropped 12 percent, from \$29.6 million to \$26.2 million. Specials are likely seen as more discretionary in nature than the World Evangelism Fund, particularly in a slow economy.

Thankfully, our faithful Nazarenes remained committed at an extraordinarily high level, and out of hearts of love they gave over \$73 million (WEF and mission specials combined) to reach people for Jesus Christ and to minister in His name.

This generous and sacrificial giving is inspiring. To Nazarenes around the globe we say, "Please accept our deepest gratitude for your investment in world evangelization."

In the 2009 Quadrennial Address, our Board reported to the General Assembly that the Global Ministry Center and regional offices were in the process of making difficult but necessary adjustments to keep income and expenses in balance.

The General Board will also have to take into account further reductions in the standard WEF allocations for 2010–11. The 25 percent decrease in apportionments is \$13 million less than what the previous formula would have requested.

This shortfall can be made up over time through better communication and by expanding the base of WEF support. In the short term, however, it is going to be a challenge, especially in funding the missionary enterprise of the church at its current level.

Our Board is determined to wisely manage the allocation of human and financial resources while trusting God for what is needed to fulfill His mission. Toward this end an intensive stewardship effort will be launched in 2010 with the goal of having the largest missions offering in the history of the Church of the Nazarene.

Details will be forthcoming.

*\* All monetary references in the General Board Report are in USD.*

## **Envisioning the Nazarene Future**

While we recognize that the future is in God's hands, we must realize that to a great extent and within His permissive will, it is in our hands as well. God works through us in shaping the future. The Church of the Nazarene is at a critical juncture, requiring leadership to pay particular attention to people, identity, membership growth, structure, and General Board cash flow.

Everything that is done must be seen through the lens of the church's transforming mission.

Keeping a careful watch on a dynamic situation is another reason for single jurisdiction by the Board chair over the Global Ministry Center and Nazarene Publishing House.

General Superintendent J. K. Warrick, who assumed this responsibility on 1 January 2010, will be in the GMC on a regular basis to help coordinate these efforts and to closely monitor the financial condition of the General Board.

In planning for the future, six issues merit our attention:

### 1. Becoming a "Global" Church

A disciple-making church, an international community of faith, in the Wesleyan-holiness tradition is steadily becoming a reality.

For perspective, one-third of Nazarenes are in the United States. Two-thirds are found in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America, Eurasia, and South America.

What does this mean to the denomination in terms of its theology, identity, leadership, *Manual*, relationships, and funding?

This is why the BGS recommended a Commission on the Nazarene Future. There is a need to have intentional and ongoing dialogue regarding where the denomination is going and how it is going to get there. The future is about making choices as to what to keep, what to add, and what to abandon.

But let me make this abundantly clear: the message will not be altered. We are *Christian*, we are *Holiness*, and we are *Missional*. And the mission will not be abandoned. We will continue “to make Christlike disciples in the nations.”

## 2. The Role of Missionaries

The Church of the Nazarene was born in the flames of fervor for the message of heart holiness and for winning the world to Christ. This was expressed by sending missionaries. Those missionaries were expected to preach, teach, and care for the physical needs around them.

Nazarenes are a “Great Commission” people.

The goal from the early days was to plant churches. These were often the reflection of the understanding and experience of “foreign” missionaries who had been sent by the denomination.

As time progressed, the importance of these churches being an authentic expression of an indigenous body became more and more obvious. The role of the missionary shifted from pioneer preacher to training facilitator.

This changing role for the missionary meant assisting with all facets of a developing church including preparation of clergy, creation of literature, and the placement of Wesleyan/Arminian holiness theology into the DNA of these new indigenous churches.

Sending missionaries is the responsibility of the whole church. Quite literally, every place is a mission field, every nation a sending nation. In this global expansion, the Church of the Nazarene is becoming a multiplying church—it is no longer just adding. In some areas the church is experiencing exponential growth.

Key mission leaders in the enterprise represent a wide range of nations. Our missionaries come from 34 countries—church development at its best.

The aim has always been to plant healthy, holiness churches. Sometimes this necessitates using missionaries, and at other times the church must find a different means to develop the church. We are in a transitional era with new challenges, one of which is economic. The other is legal in nature—the difficulty in obtaining visas.

The goal, however, remains the same—to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and the message of Scriptural holiness through the church—helping to fulfill the Great Commission “by all means.”

Opportunities have never been more abundant. Technology has never been more available. Every barrier to spreading the gospel has either fallen or is permeable. The Word of God is now reaching cultures previously thought unreachable, making it possible for more to be done than ever before. Barely 10 percent of the world population claims an evangelical faith. The fields are still white for harvest.

It is the World Evangelism Fund which makes it possible to continue our historic commitment to missions.

### 3. Globalizing the World Evangelism Fund

It sounds redundant to talk about a “global WEF,” but it may be one of the more important decisions made by the 2009 General Board.

When the idea was introduced last year as part of the recommendations in the funding formula, there was a unanimous response to this direction. A standing ovation punctuated the decision to have the Church of the Nazarene’s World Evangelism Fund be supported more broadly.

A widening of responsibility is intended to create greater ownership, participation, and support for the World Evangelism Fund in addition to giving within the regions for special missional projects. This funding transition will take time, but we have to get started now.

We must emphasize to all that the 5.5 percent is not intended to be the ceiling. Some of our districts and local churches worldwide are routinely giving 10 percent or more of their income to WEF. In 2009 we had 828 local churches who gave at least 10 percent of non-missions income to the World Evangelism Fund. Moscow First Church on the Russia North District has been above 10 percent giving to WEF all fourteen years that it has reported financial statistics. The Sublette church on the Kansas District in the United States has exceeded 10 percent World Evangelism Fund giving for 33 of the last 42 years. Let’s celebrate these generous churches and districts and encourage others to join them!

It is incumbent on the general superintendents, district superintendents, global mission director, regional directors, and field strategy coordinators to communicate to pastors and laity the joy of participating in WEF and making a compelling case for shared responsibility.

Giving to others through the World Evangelism Fund is essential to having a sustainable system of mission. Let me say again that this is the financial lifeline of our Global Mission.

The late general superintendent, John A. Knight, wisely observed that it is about “equal sacrifice, not equal giving.” This is the key principle for a global WEF.

### 4. Becoming Externally Focused

In 2009 the General Board approved a recommendation by the Board of General Superintendents to create a new, single-mission framework centering on developing and equipping *externally-focused* Churches of the Nazarene.

God is externally focused. The ministry of Jesus was externally focused. His self-described purpose is clear: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10, NIV). “Seek” is an active verb and “the mission field is the ground beneath our feet.”

Scores of people, even within the body life of the church, are in need of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They often remain unreached because we choose to stay focused on ourselves.

Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:4 (NRSV) that “each of you should look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”

While not neglecting legitimate internal needs in the life of the church, we encourage more of our pastors and laity to become externally focused, embracing those outside their comfort zone.

This is the Nazarene future.

## 5. Adjusting Regional Structures

Sustainable mission requires some structure. Since the 1980s the Church of the Nazarene has grown and developed around the world through a “regionalization” of mission structure.

When historians look back to this period, they may find the decision to move in this direction to be as important as any made in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

While the current regions have remained in place for some time, the Board of General Superintendents is recommending that these structures be changed when necessary to accommodate growth, management of responsibility, and budgets.

Specifically, the general superintendents are recommending:

- Creating a new region comprised of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. This change is to begin with a period of study identifying the necessary components of a new region. The next step is to make the new region official with the 2011 General Board.
- Transferring four nations of North Africa (unnamed for security reasons) from the Eurasia Region to the Africa Region. For strategic purposes, Egypt will remain a part of the Eurasia Region.
- Transferring Mongolia from the Eurasia Region to the Asia-Pacific Region.

The last two changes will take effect as soon as details can be worked out within the affected regions.

The Board sees these regional reconfigurations as essential to the mission of the Church of the Nazarene.

Global mission strategy is not an open “free-for-all” in which free-lance efforts may be put forth without regard to the wisest use of all our resources and personnel in evangelizing the world. As one mission leader recently said, “Mission strategy *is* rocket science.”

It requires a careful study of the means and methods we utilize as we wisely invest our resources and our organization in the fulfillment of our mission.

We passionately believe in the priesthood of every believer and in the evangelistic responsibility of every Nazarene; but we also believe that we must give careful attention to following the most strategically-developed missiology as we continue “to make Christlike disciples in the nations.”

#### 6. Changing Leadership—from Moses to Joshua

We are in the process of handing over the baton and responsibility for the Church of the Nazarene to a new generation. As Dr. David McKenna noted, “By the very nature of their role, incarnate leaders must plan to make an exit.”

Many of the spiritual leaders coming on the scene will likely be the first Christians in their households, and most will be *first-generation* Nazarenes. Fewer leaders will be long-term, multigenerational Nazarenes.

The practical side of making Christlike disciples in the nations requires each of us to be specific and intentional:

- What are you doing each day to model a life of godliness and transparency?
- How are you shaping those within your circle of influence?
- What experiences are you making possible so that others can develop as Christian leaders?

What must spiritual leaders know when moving from Moses to Joshua? Speaking at a Free Methodist Conference on the subject of developing leaders, Dr. Roger Haskins underscored the importance of asking:

- Who are the emerging leaders?
- Where are they in their spiritual journey?
- What do they need from us?
- How will we prepare them?
- When will we know they are ready?
- Do they understand the “why” of mission?

This last question may be the important one to ask.

The Church of the Nazarene must not become like Joshua, who failed to learn the lessons taught by Moses. When Joshua died there was *no* successor.

“In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25, NIV).

The Church of the Nazarene has been blessed with strong leadership during its first one hundred years. As we move into our second century, the challenge of developing spiritual leaders will be one of the most important issues we will face.

In my responsibilities as chair of our Board, I have served as jurisdictional superintendent for the Global Ministry Center. During these two years we have experienced the most significant global economic crisis since the Great Depression in the 1920s and 1930s.

It has created a crisis for the church as we have faced the reality of declining revenues for the World Evangelism Fund, for Approved World Mission Specials, and in the United States, a significant decline in revenues for the Pensions and Benefits Fund.

During these difficult days, I have witnessed the heroic and sacrificial efforts put forth by the entire team at the Global Ministry Center. These loyal and committed servants of the church made personal suggestions for ways to reduce costs and increase the effectiveness of GMC ministries and services.

Salaries were frozen for everyone, and for some salaries were reduced. Matching Contributions to personal retirement funds were eliminated, and staff reductions were made.

In the midst of the crisis we have seen unprecedented growth in the church around the world. In spite of the reductions in available funds, our people did not reduce their efforts on behalf of the mission. Instead, they poured themselves into their work with dedication and a consecrated zeal that has warmed my heart.

We owe our Global Ministry Center employees a deep debt of gratitude for their amazing tenacity while making very difficult personal sacrifices. Join me in expressing our appreciation for their dedicated service.

We are also facing the necessity of change in some of the leadership at the GMC. At this General Board Session we are acknowledging the retirement of Lynda Boardman, Director of Children’s Ministries.

Lynda has served in Children’s Ministries for nearly 33 years, working as an editor and writer for many years. She was selected for the position of director in 1998 and has served with distinction.

During her tenure she was instrumental in developing the “Decade of the Child,” in producing new curricular pieces, and in helping foster a new global emphasis on children that is unique among all Christian denominations.

We will miss Lynda’s passionate, worldwide engagement. She traveled the globe advocating a strong and consistent ministry to children, and she has been a friend to them, both personally and professionally.

She and her husband, James, plan to remain in the Kansas City area.

Join me in recognizing Lynda Boardman.

Dr. Eugénio Duarte's election to the Board of General Superintendents necessitated the selection of a new director for the Africa Region.

Another son of Africa was chosen for the position.

The General Board elected Dr. Filimao Chambo to that position on 24 August 2009; he was installed two days later on 26 August.

Join me as we welcome Dr. Chambo to the position of director of the Africa Region of the Church of the Nazarene.

### **Looking Ahead**

Our steadfast commitment for the Church of the Nazarene is to remain a holiness and Great Commission church. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will place in the next generation a desire to:

- Continue preaching God's sanctifying grace.
- Continue evangelizing and making Christlike disciples.
- Continue sending missionaries.
- Continue starting churches.
- Continue helping those in need.
- Continue being a connectional church.

Doubters say that hope is not a plan; but neither is despair a way into the future. We will adapt. We will adjust. But the Church of the Nazarene will not abandon its responsibility to take the full gospel of Jesus Christ to the uttermost parts of the world.

### **Closing**

Jesus followed up the first question to His disciples at Caesarea Philippi ("Who do *they* say I am?") with a second, more important question: "But who do *you* say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15, NASB).

Enlightened by the Holy Spirit we echo the apostolic confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16, NASB).

As one writer observed, "The historical and true Jesus, for us, is not hidden behind the Scriptures but revealed in them for the eyes and ears of faith to see and hear. Nor need we

go on a 'quest' to find this Jesus, for He has found us and continues to assure us who He is by offering His crucified and risen flesh and blood for the forgiveness of our sin.”

In a moment the three new general superintendents, Dr. Duarte, Dr. Graves, and Dr. Toler, will gather in front of the platform. Dr. Porter, Dr. Warrick, and I will stand behind them, affirming these good men in their place of service in the Church of the Nazarene.

Next, I want all General Board members to gather around our general superintendents. In this special moment we want to affirm the spiritual leadership of General Board members.

General Board is not just a session; it is a responsibility. May you feel the burden of the wider church mission as you return home.

Finally, we will have the regional directors and the officers and directors of the Global Ministry Center and Nazarene Publishing House gather behind the General Board members as part of our closing prayer led by General Superintendent Emeritus Donald Owens.

The general superintendents have spent a lot of time on infrastructure lately, somewhat out of necessity. Now, we must refocus General Board ministries on God's spiritual priorities.

To this end we publicly confess Jesus as Lord, as head of the Church and the One who makes possible the church's transforming mission of making Christlike disciples in the nations.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents

Jerry D. Porter

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