



ANNUAL REPORT
of the
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS
to the
GENERAL BOARD
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

February 2007

“ONE CHURCH—MANY MEMBERS”

Mr. Chairman, General Board Members, Officers, Department and Ministry Directors, Regional Directors, staff from International Headquarters, and special guests:

We begin this report of accountability to the General Board by quoting the words of the Psalmist:

Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord or fully declare his praise? (Psalm 106:1-2, NIV).

How else can we begin? We have so much for which to be thankful.

The Board of General Superintendents expresses its gratitude to everyone for laboring faithfully where they are around the world.

People at the grass roots are supported by dedicated individuals working through the General Board departments and ministries, the Church of the Nazarene Foundation, and Nazarene Publishing House. Our appreciation extends to them as well.

In 2006 our Board accepted the resignation of Dr. David Graves as director of Sunday School Ministries. Dr. Graves is now the senior pastor of College Church of the Nazarene, Olathe, Kansas, U.S.A. Thank you, Dr. Graves, for your time and service to the church through Sunday School Ministries.

We offer an official welcome to Dr. Woodie Stevens, who was elected to this position by the General Board and Board of General Superintendents. Dr. Stevens will be giving leadership to a renewed emphasis on prayer, the study of Scripture, and disciple-making.

All good things must come to an end. So it is that we bid farewell to Dr. Jack Stone, general secretary and headquarters operations officer for the past 17 years. Dr. Stone has carried a large responsibility on behalf of our Board and within the church, including four General Assemblies.

For his dedication and service we extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Stone.

His shoes cannot be filled so we are creating new shoes.

Global Ministry Center

As plans materialize for the new Global Ministry Center, we see opportunities for improved service to the local church through creative resources, technology, and face-to-face interaction on site. The center, scheduled for completion in the fall of 2008, is not just another building. It will be a new way of working together.

Nazarene Vision

The direction of the Church of the Nazarene was established in its earliest days from a variety of people. Born with an anointing of God's Spirit, we were not to be a mission church but a church with a mission—proclaiming the message of transforming grace and heart cleansing.

This biblical message of the holy life was not to be confined to one particular geographical area. It was to be taken "*to the ends of the earth*" (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Thus the Church of the Nazarene began as a "sending" church with a strong missionary effort.

What has resulted from this vision nearly 100 years later?

A holiness and "Great Commission" church in 151 world areas.

Total membership in the Church of the Nazarene at the end of 2006 is 1.6 million, a 4 percent increase over 2005.

There were 111,700 new Nazarenes in 2006. Sunday School average weekly attendance rose to 804,000.

There are now 18,690 congregations worldwide with 14,500 organized. This total achieves one of the four major goals of the Centennial Initiative.

Just under 700 churches were organized in 2006, one of the largest gains in the past ten years.

Giving to World Evangelism Fund totaled \$47.8 million in 2006, a nearly 3 percent increase from the prior year. Income for mission specials was \$30 million.

Total giving to WEF and mission specials in 2006 was \$77.8 million.

Thank you, Nazarenes, for your generosity, often sacrificial, to fund missionaries, church planting, compassion, education, and much more.

Despite the challenges, and there are many, we are becoming:

- An international community of faith
- One church—many members

Nazarene Mission

Making vision reality does not come about by waiting to see if something will happen. While not getting ahead of God, we must, by His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, intend the vision to be realized.

A decision is made by each generation to fulfill or carry through with the original purpose of the church. Each generation places its own imprint on the founding vision and mission.

With some of the biggest changes in 60 years facing the church, our Board believes it is time to update language used to define its mission.

The prior statement of purpose and mission was written nearly 30 years ago. There has been little reference to this statement, although a portion can be found in the *Manual* introduction.

Since this statement was drafted, thousands of “mission statements” have been created by Nazarene churches, districts, regions, and educational institutions. This process has been helpful to many.

Our Board believes now, more than ever, there is reason to have a clear, overarching statement of mission—a phrase that is succinct and translatable for our work in these 151 world areas. Something that reminds all who are part of the Church of the Nazarene that this is what we believe, this is what we stand for, and this is what we are all about.

After 10 years of review by three different Boards, a decision was made in our December 2006 meeting to try to capture what is now taking place in the church—a renewed desire to lift up Christ and be more like the Savior. This is especially so among the church’s youth and young adults.

With this in mind, the Board unanimously adopted the following:

***Statement of Mission
Church of the Nazarene***

“To make Christlike disciples in the nations.”

While the primary motive of the church is to glorify God, we also are called to actively participate in His mission—reconciling the world to himself.

The seven words of the new statement contain the historical essentials of our mission: evangelism, sanctification, discipleship, compassion. The essence of holiness is Christlikeness.

It is our role to equip all who respond in faith.

Nazarenes are becoming a sent people—into homes, work places, communities, and villages as well as other cities and countries. Missionaries are now sent from all regions of the world.

As someone observed, the mission field is the ground beneath our two feet in the “everydayness” of our lives. God continues calling ordinary people to do extraordinary things made possible by the person of the Holy Spirit.

Why did the Board act now?

There are three reasons for this decision:

- Timing: While going through major generational and cultural change, that is the time to clarify, renew, and revitalize something, including the mission.
- Simplification: In a 24/7, overcommunicated society, it is an oversimplified (but not simplistic) message that has the best chance of getting through.
- Stewardship: The church, and especially the General Board, cannot attempt everything and remain viable. There need to be focus and priority of mission in order to properly allocate limited financial and human resources.

Any congregation anywhere can use the new statement of mission as a guide for ministry. How and where the statement is used is a local decision. It is intended to be complimentary and compatible with what has already been developed in many churches. It can be especially helpful to new congregations and those that have not thought through this process.

The statement underscores the common ground shared by Nazarenes everywhere.

But a note of caution is in order. It is possible to have a written statement and never fulfill the mission. Ideas become reality only when they are embodied and acted upon. The love of Christ and His mission must reside in our very being for this to happen.

We are blessed with some of the most dedicated disciples of any denomination. Our goal is to build on this strength.

This will be our Board's main emphasis leading up to the 2009 General Assembly. With our Centennial Celebration around the corner, this is an appropriate time to remind the church of its unique sense of calling.

Our mission is to make disciples in and through the local church.

"... the local church, the Body of Christ, is the representation of our faith and mission" (*Manual* preamble). "Church"—it is the first word in our name.

Nazarene Core Values

The Church of the Nazarene's vision and mission are based on its Core Values:

- We are Christian
- We are holiness
- We are missional

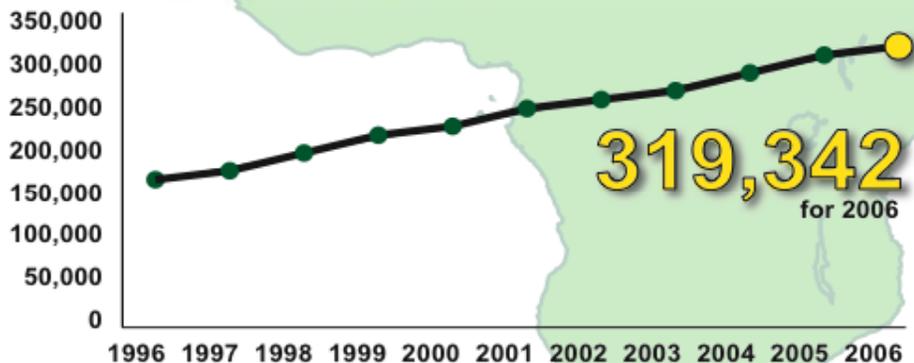
One Church—Many Members

Who are the people called Nazarenes? What does the church look like around the world? Here are some highlights:

africa

church of the nazarene

total members



overview

- 40 world areas
- 2,938 new churches (since 1996)
- 43 average worship attendance
- \$16 average giving per member
- \$131,068 for WEF in 2006

asia pacific

church of the nazarene



overview

- 29 world areas
- 702 new churches [since 1996]
- 51 average worship attendance
- \$305 average giving per member
- \$199,964 for WEF in 2006

canada

church of the nazarene



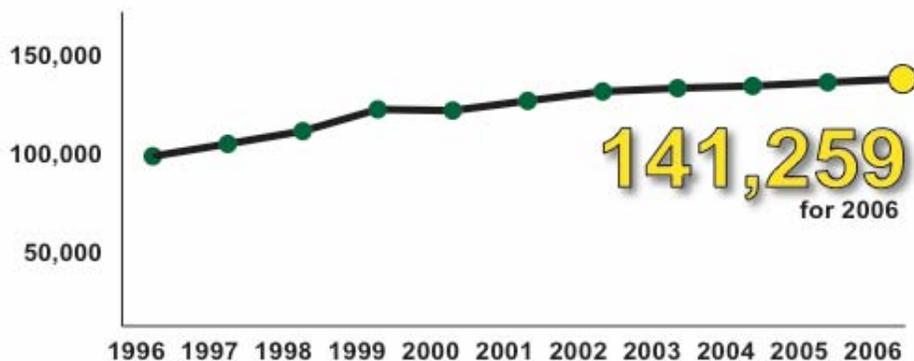
overview

- 10 identified cultural groups
- 26 new churches [since 1996]
- 79 average worship attendance
- \$1,160 average giving per member
- \$856,146 for WEF in 2006

caribbean

church of the nazarene

totalmembers



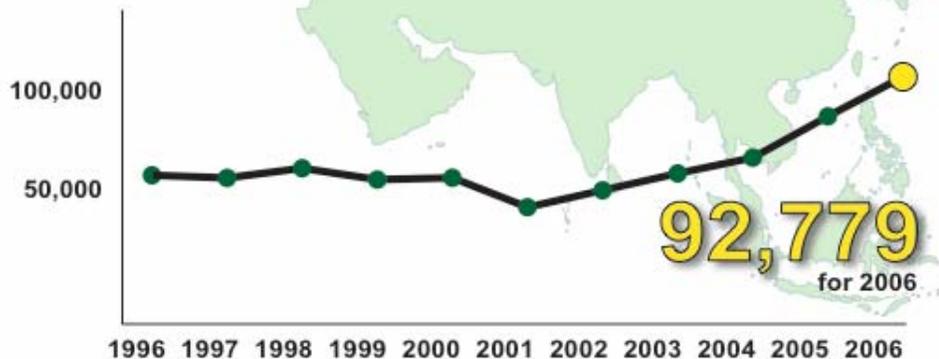
overview

- 23 world areas
- 245 new churches [since 1996]
- 93 average worship attendance
- \$49 average giving per member
- \$113,119 for WEF in 2006

eurasia

church of the nazarene

totalmembers

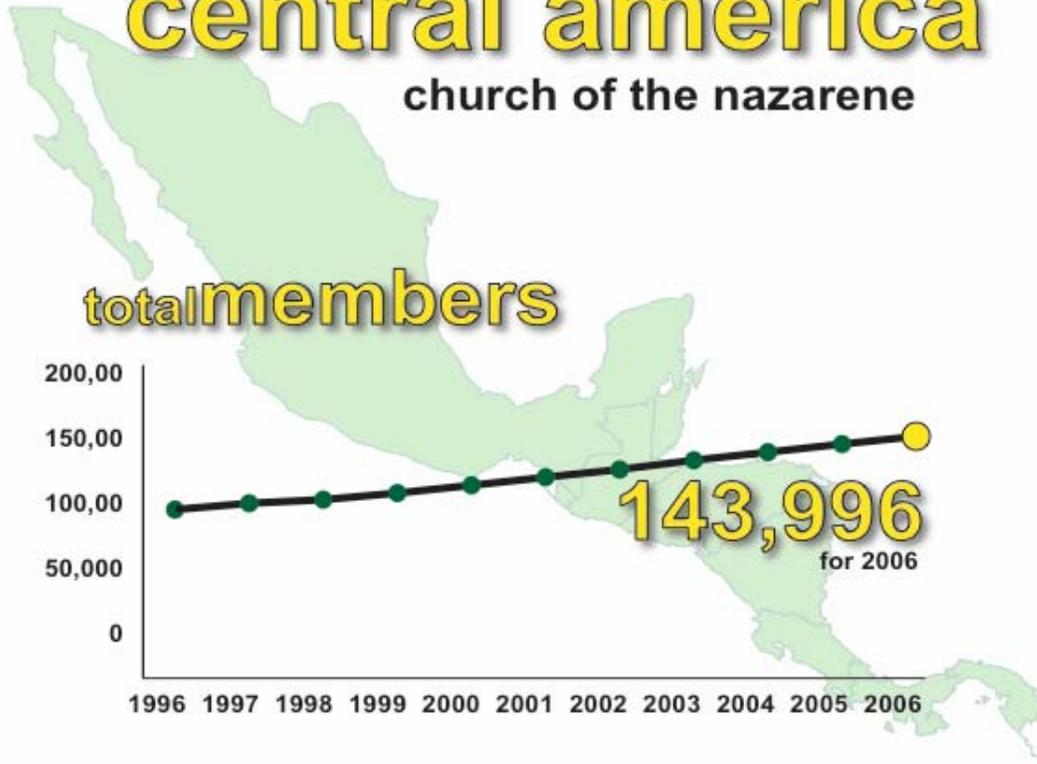


overview

- 39 world areas
- 1,630 new churches [since 1996]
- 31 average worship attendance
- \$98 average giving per member
- \$303,872 for WEF in 2006

mexico and central america

church of the nazarene



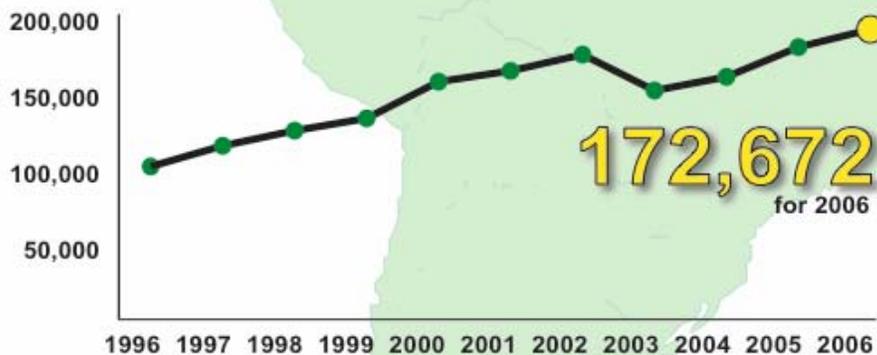
overview

- 7 world areas
- 500 new churches [since 1996]
- 58 average worship attendance
- \$96 average giving per member
- \$89,206 for WEF in 2006

south america

church of the nazarene

total members



overview

- 10 world areas
- 715 new churches [since 1996]
- 57 average worship attendance
- \$91 average giving per member
- \$60,125 for WEF in 2006

USA

church of the nazarene



overview

- 32 identified cultural groups
- 683 new churches [since 1996]
- 104 average worship attendance
- \$1,247 average giving per member
- \$46,016,956 for WEF in 2006

Where do general superintendents receive a good measure of inspiration for our work?
It comes from committed and compassionate individuals on the front lines of ministry.

One such story is that of Nathan. Growing up poor in rural southwestern Bangladesh and living in an occupied country, Nathan and his family wondered if there was any hope. A war of liberation cost the life of Nathan's brother. He would always remember the price that was paid for his country's freedom.

Through the work of missionaries, God touched Nathan's life. His spiritual strength and administrative capabilities began to grow and develop. From circumstances that one can only conclude are the "mysteries of God," Nathan met Dr. Franklin Cook and Dr. Steve Weber. In 1992 they asked if he would be willing to begin the work of the church in Bangladesh through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

After much prayer and struggle, Nathan said, yes.

Fewer than 15 years after starting this new work—after Nathan's wife had battled cancer, after coworkers were beaten and imprisoned—there are now 318 organized churches and nearly 11,000 members in Bangladesh.

The district no longer receives money from the World Evangelism Fund, having achieved self support in 2004.

Where does our Board receive encouragement?

From Nazarenes, such as Nathan, who are giving their lives to a cause greater than themselves. Some of them serve in situations most would find extremely difficult if not unbearable.

We know that when salt is doing its work, it is scattered and unseen. Likewise, when the church is doing its work, it is not visible. These statistics are a result of things we cannot see.

To God be the glory for obedient people who answer the call of Jesus to "follow me." Their faithfulness and fruitfulness are inspiring.

Some Observations

Two significant things in the general secretary's report are worth noting:

- We have increased the number of organized churches by 23 percent in the past decade (1996-2006).
- Better reporting procedures indicate our Nazarene Youth International is 40,000 members larger than previously thought.

There are areas of concern:

1. While “church membership” grew nearly 4 percent worldwide, rising 6 percent in World Mission areas and 4 percent in Canada, U.S.A. membership increased only 0.6 percent last year.
2. New Nazarenes for all areas declined 26,000 or 19 percent. Most of this drop was in “professions of faith.”
3. Offsetting almost 700 newly-organized churches is the continued closing and merging of churches. World Mission regions organized 648 churches, closing 100. The U.S.A., while organizing 39 congregations, closed 59. Canada closed 4 churches and did not report any newly-organized congregations.

Starting congregations, a proven way of reaching people for Christ, must continue as a priority for the Church of the Nazarene. We must nurture them to organization as well.

4. “A.M. worship” in the U.S.A. and Canada decreased 0.6 percent last year to 525,100.

Nonetheless, the Church of the Nazarene is blessed with “many members”—just over 1.6 million. It is another of our strengths. This is also a great spiritual and humanitarian responsibility.

And this fits the pattern Christ intends for His Church.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 Paul refers to the following:

- Unity in the diversity of gifts in the Body of Christ.
- The necessity of having diversity for the Body to operate as one.
- The inconspicuous members (those who pray, work with their hands, give meager tithes) are essential and deserve respect.
- The poor and despised are to be cherished and nurtured—they, too, are disciples in the making.

Review the past. Understand the present. Imagine the future. One church—with different people, different gifts, different cultures—all serving the same Christ. And it is “... *in him all things hold together*” (Col. 1:17, NIV).

Managing Transition and Change

International Headquarters is undergoing significant change. It is not just relocating to the new Global Ministry Center; there is also change and transition in the General Board departments and ministries.

This same generational change is happening within local congregations and districts, among missionaries, and in Nazarene colleges and universities.

The Board is working with our Thought Partners and Global Mission Team to make sure we have the right people in place along with an appropriate organizational structure for the General Board.

The Future

It is not uncommon for a faith group nearing its centennial to do one of two things: Either recapture the simplicity and spirit of its original movement or steadily march in a different direction. There is seldom any middle ground at a critical juncture such as this.

What will the Church of the Nazarene do? What kind of church will it be?

What priorities keep the church moving in the right direction?

- **(The) Preeminence of Jesus Christ.** Our true identity, our present and future, are found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He must come before all things and remain there. Our only hope is in the Lord.
- **People becoming Christlike disciples.** Enrolled in the school of obedience, disciples keep learning from the Master, doing all that He commands. A critical mass is the smallest number it takes to effect change. Jesus started with 12. Multiplication is the key.
- **Power in the Word.** *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path”* (Psalm 119:105, NIV). Let it be said of Nazarenes that we are people of the Word, not people of our own words.
- **Prayer as a way of life.** As Andrew Murray wrote, *“Prayer is the very pulse of spiritual life. Everything depends on prayer.”*
- **Passion for those without Christ.** Passion and personal responsibility go together. Think about being a witness to family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Take responsibility for someone’s spiritual life in the coming year and see what a difference it makes in your own.

- **Plant something.** A church. A Bible study. A Sunday School class. A compassionate ministry center. A new relationship. The growth, Jesus said, is in the seed. He depends on us to put the seed in the ground.

A Fresh Anointing

In the busyness of life it is too easy to take our focus off the things of God. The calendar, travel, well-intentioned activities, and problems begin ruling our lives. But as the late E. Stanley Jones noted, *“What gets your attention, gets you.”*

Spiritual leaders face this reality as much as anyone, maybe more.

The Church of the Nazarene began with an anointing from God. Are we at a place where we need a fresh anointing? *“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty”* (Zechariah 4:6, NIV).

What could a fresh anointing do for our church?

- Focus worship to glorify God
- Expand our horizons of opportunity
- Help us see the harvest more clearly
- Revitalize our ministries
- Add fervency to our preaching and teaching
- Ignite the holy fire of God to burn in our souls

As a Board we confess to being needy people.

We close this General Board report with each general superintendent desiring a fresh anointing. Dr. John Bowling, president of the General Board, will lead us as our Board gathers together.

We ask that you join with us in a time of prayer that God's will may be done in each of us and in the life of the Church of the Nazarene.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents

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