



**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS
TO THE
94th GENERAL BOARD
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

**26 February 2017
Overland Park, Kansas, USA**

“The Mission of the Holiness Message”



INTRODUCTION

The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy’” (Leviticus 19:1-2 NIV).

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and on behalf of the Board of General Superintendents (BGS), I welcome you to the 94th General Board of the Church of the Nazarene and the presentation of this General Board Report.

It is hard to believe, but this is the fourth and final General Board Session of the 2013-2017 quadrennium.

Alice Walker says that “Time moves slowly but passes quickly.”

So,

Where has the time gone?
The years have slipped away.
Every time you look around,
There is a brand “new” day.

The old passes on—
Making way for the new.
The new becomes many,
And the old becomes few. ¹

One year ago this week, the denomination made way for the new, doing something it has never done before—that is convene a General Board outside the USA. Nearly all of the previous 92 General Board Sessions took place in and around Kansas City, Missouri, USA.

Locating General Board in Ede, Netherlands, on the Eurasia Region, at the invitation of General Board member Robert Kegel was a historic experience. Perhaps it was a glimpse of the future?

The future to which I am referring is not just about location, although several Global Mission regions have now expressed interest in hosting a General Board. I am speaking about the way in which church leadership, General Board members, staff, and guests experience their time together.

A worthy goal: finding the right mix of prayer, general church business, discussion, fellowship, and cultural context in order to grow and develop as spiritual leaders of an international community of faith—all of this while convened for such short periods of time.

The presence of the Holy Spirit made it possible for participants in Ede to draw closer to the Lord in a tranquil environment. The Belmont Hotel became a brief respite from the responsibilities of assignments back home.

Nazarenes do like to “break bread” together. Perhaps the meal times were the best opportunities to become better acquainted, laugh, share life and ministry stories, as well as offer prayers of hope, blessing, and thanksgiving.

Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness are foundational for making Christlike disciples in the nations. Let us never forget that this is why we meet—to focus on our reason to be: finding ways to be more fruitful in ministry and service to others. “Give of your best to the Master,” the song goes.

For nearly 11 decades, the church has held these values dearly. What Nazarenes believe is clarified and strengthened in community. Diminish or lose those values and we will not be the same church. While technology is helping us in many ways, General Board in Ede makes a case for something more than facetimeing our way into the future.

As someone said, “A significant value of the Internet is a way to share information, but it is not a substitute for relational structure and accountability.”

As you might imagine, it was no small task to move General Board so far from the support provided by the Global Ministry Center. However, with God’s help, General Secretary David P. Wilson and his staff of Susan Metcalf, Elizabeth Kuhns, Diane Miller, and Shirley Marvin, in partnership with IT and others, made it happen.

We give thanks to God for traveling mercies and want to express our deep appreciation to this team for an outstanding effort on the General Board’s behalf.

It was, in my opinion, one of the best General Board sessions in my nearly 12 years in this office.

Appreciation

As we gather once again in Overland Park, Kansas, USA, we find the same quality of support from our general secretary, David Wilson, and staff.

We welcome Joy Hartke to the BGS office as administrative director and extend our thanks to her and the office staff for their diligent service to the general superintendents.

Special Note

There is one absent from General Board this year who was with us in the Netherlands—Michigan District Superintendent John Seaman. Within six months after General Board, Dr. Seaman was diagnosed with a brain tumor. He had surgery, followed by treatments from which he responded well under the conditions.

Please keep John and Linda Seaman, and their family, in your prayers for God’s complete healing.

NEW GENERAL TREASURER

In 2016 we welcomed Keith Cox as the denomination’s general treasurer. The General Board elected Keith on 30 June to serve as general treasurer and chief financial officer. That role is principally defined as “having custody of all funds belonging to the general interests of the Church of the Nazarene” (*Manual* 330.1).

The general treasurer is a member of the General Board and its Executive Committee.

Keith comes to this assignment with broad experience in banking in the USA. These experiences will serve the denomination well as he leads the Office of the General Treasurer.

He is a graduate of MidAmerica Nazarene University (B.A.) and Rockhurst University (M.B.A.).

While enjoying success in his chosen field, Keith and his wife, Julie, have faithfully engaged in ministry and service through their local church, Kansas City Nall Avenue, as well as JESUS Film Harvest Partners and Work & Witness. Keith has also served as a member of the Board of Trustees at MNU.

NEW CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CAO)

The Board of General Superintendents announced that William Sawyer, vice president for Financial Services at TransUnion and senior pastor of Santa Ana, California, First Church of the Nazarene, would serve as chief administrative officer of the Global Ministry Center.

The CAO position, which is not a General Board office, was created in response to recommendations from the Nazarene Future Study Group and the Best Christian Workplaces Institute.

As CAO, Bill Sawyer provides on-site leadership, establishing direction for the Global Ministry Center in addition to overseeing various non-ecclesiastical, administrative tasks currently assigned to the BGS.

THE PURSUIT OF MISSION

If Dr. Phineas F. Bresee, the first general superintendent of the “united church” (1908), were present this evening, he might remind us that “Denominational success is not our aim, but that souls may be saved and sanctified.”

However, as you read about Dr. Bresee, you find that he had great interest in knowing how the church was moving forward as an organized holiness movement, conserving and multiplying the fruits of evangelism.

A General Board preceding a General Assembly gives us the ability to examine not only the past year, but the 2013-2017 quadrennium as well. Here is an update on efforts by dedicated Nazarene pastors, laity, missionaries, Sunday school teachers, and others—some serving in daunting circumstances—to conserve and multiply those being saved and sanctified!

Annual Statistics

The 2016 report from the Office of the General Secretary shows the following: 2

- 213,331 decisions for Christ (+1.95%) and 87,384 baptisms (-2.03%)
- 691 churches organized
- 30,574 churches worldwide (+2.10%), with 22,392 organized (+2.19%)
- 139,560 new Nazarenes (-2.46%)
- 1,245,818 in discipleship attendance (+2.89%)
- 1,503,872 (flat at 0.36%) average worship attendance
- 2,471,553 (+1.24%) members in 159 world areas

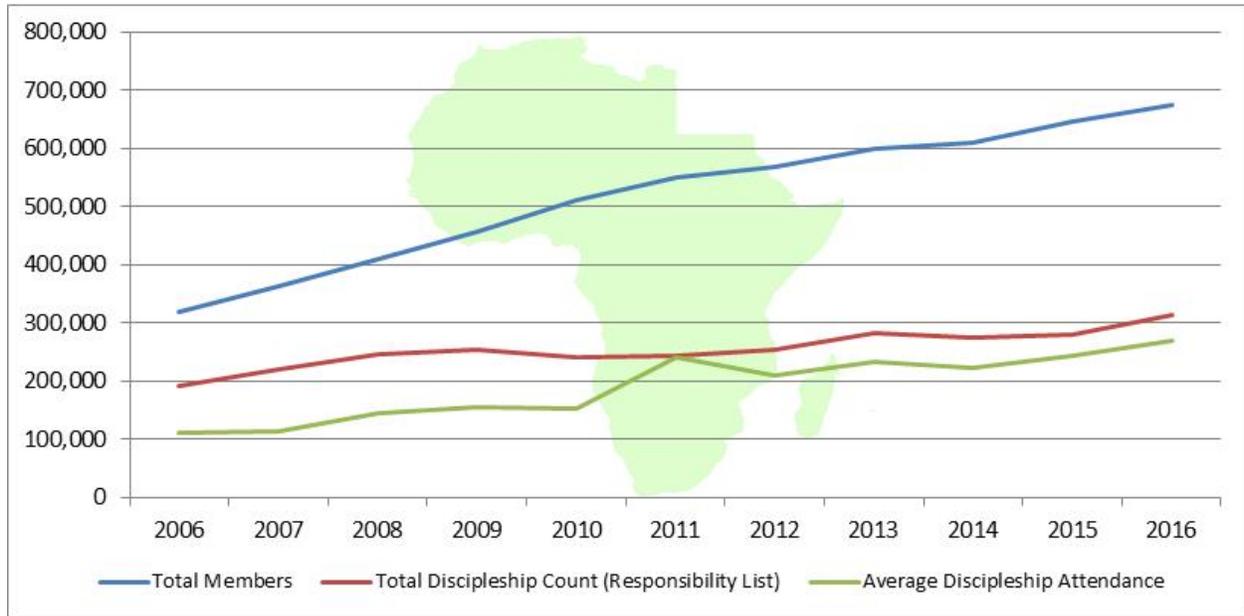
- The International Board of Education reports 52 schools with a total enrollment of 51,555 students, providing education in more than 120 nations

Global Mission Regions

Our Nazarene Research Services provides the following synopsis of Global Mission regions:

1. 2006-2016 trend lines
2. Languages used in primary worship services
3. Totals for the 2013-2017 quadrennium
4. A brief analysis of each region

Africa Region



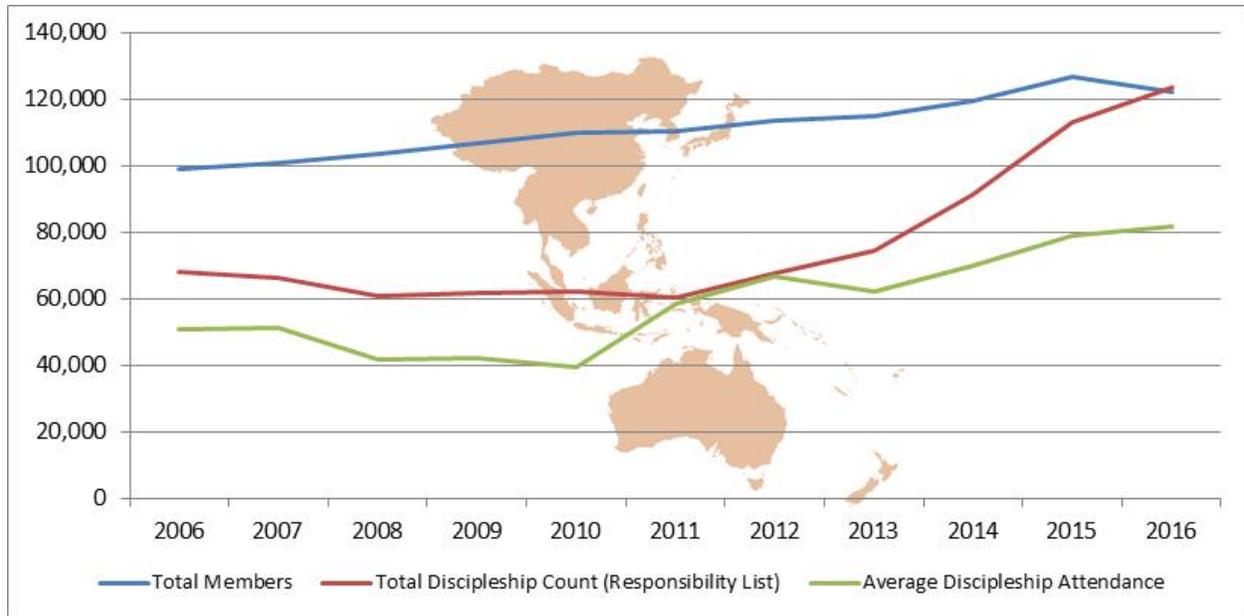
The Africa Region reports 82 different languages are used in its primary worship services.

QUADRENNIAL OVERVIEW:

- 705 new churches
- 147,062 new Nazarenes
- US\$916,951 given to WEF
- 170,768 profession of faith reported
- 76,842 baptisms

Analysis: Nazarene membership growth is widespread in Africa, including new areas such as Benin and Togo, as well as established areas like Mozambique and South Africa.

Asia-Pacific Region



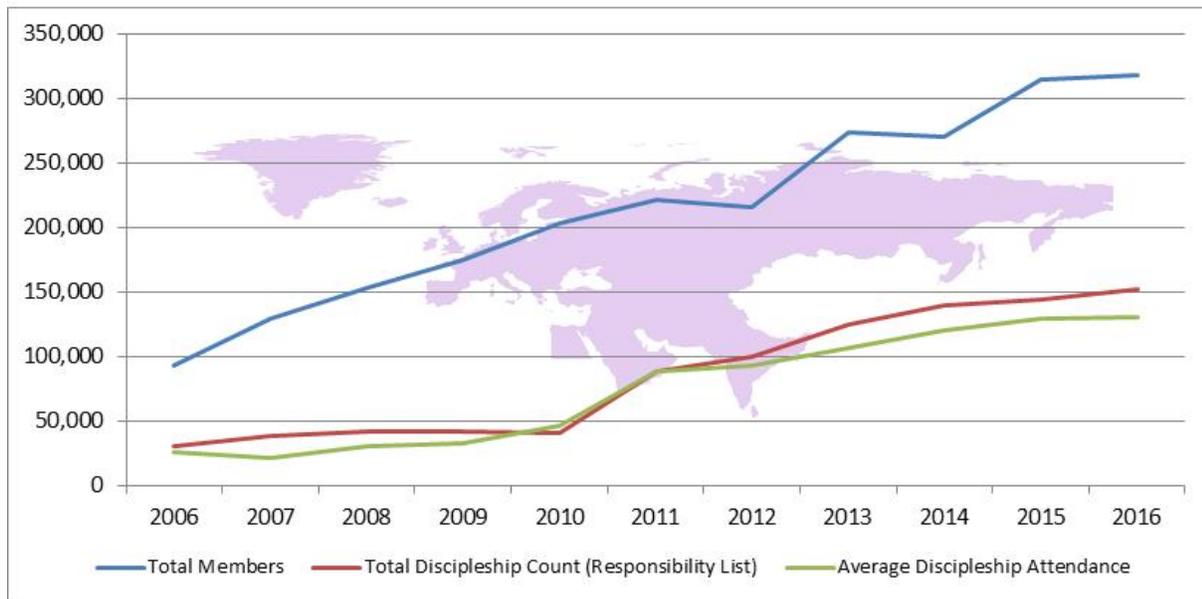
The Asia-Pacific Region reports 28 different languages are used in its primary worship services.

QUADRENNIAL OVERVIEW:

- 144 new churches
- 27,241 new Nazarenes
- US\$1,360,477 given to WEF
- 37,357 professions of faith reported
- 12,039 baptisms

Analysis: Asia-Pacific's largest increases are concentrated in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines, though several smaller areas are also doing well. As discipleship enrollment has been emphasized, attendance has also increased.

Eurasia Region



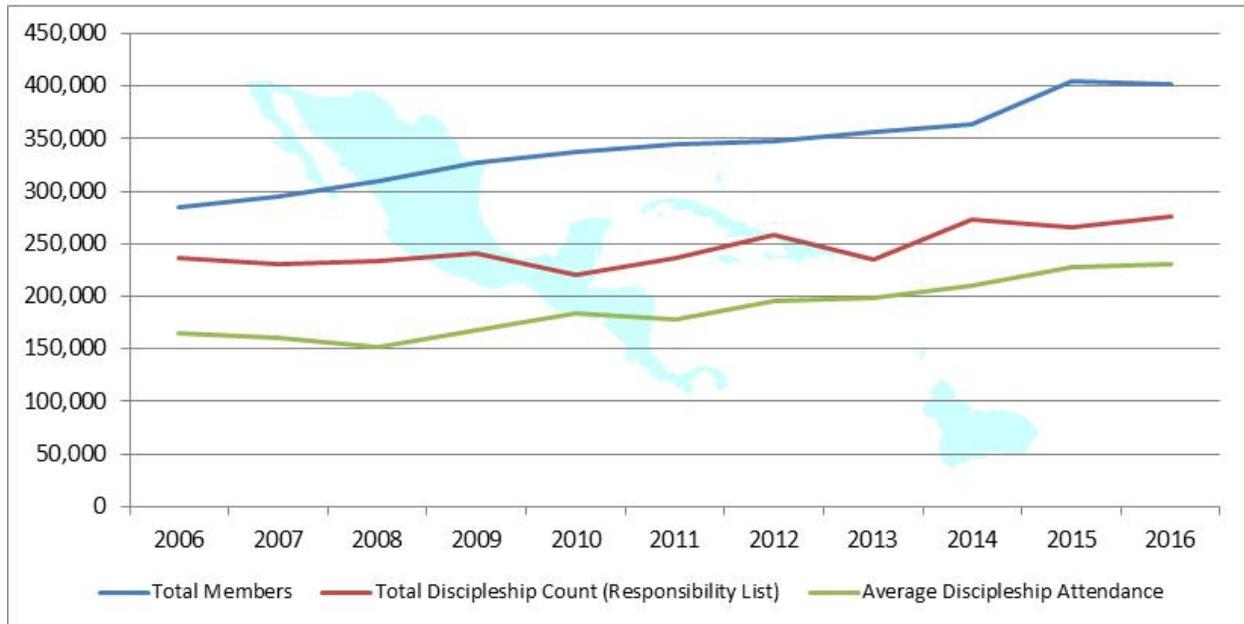
The Eurasia Region reports 46 different languages are used in its primary worship services.

QUADRENNIAL OVERVIEW:

- 2,286 new churches
- 107,194 new Nazarenes
- US\$1,366,992 given to WEF
- 179,275 professions of faith reported
- 96,761 baptisms

Analysis: Eurasia's membership growth has been concentrated in Bangladesh, India, and the rest of the Indian subcontinent. Discipleship is growing, while membership gains are being consolidated.

Mesoamerica Region



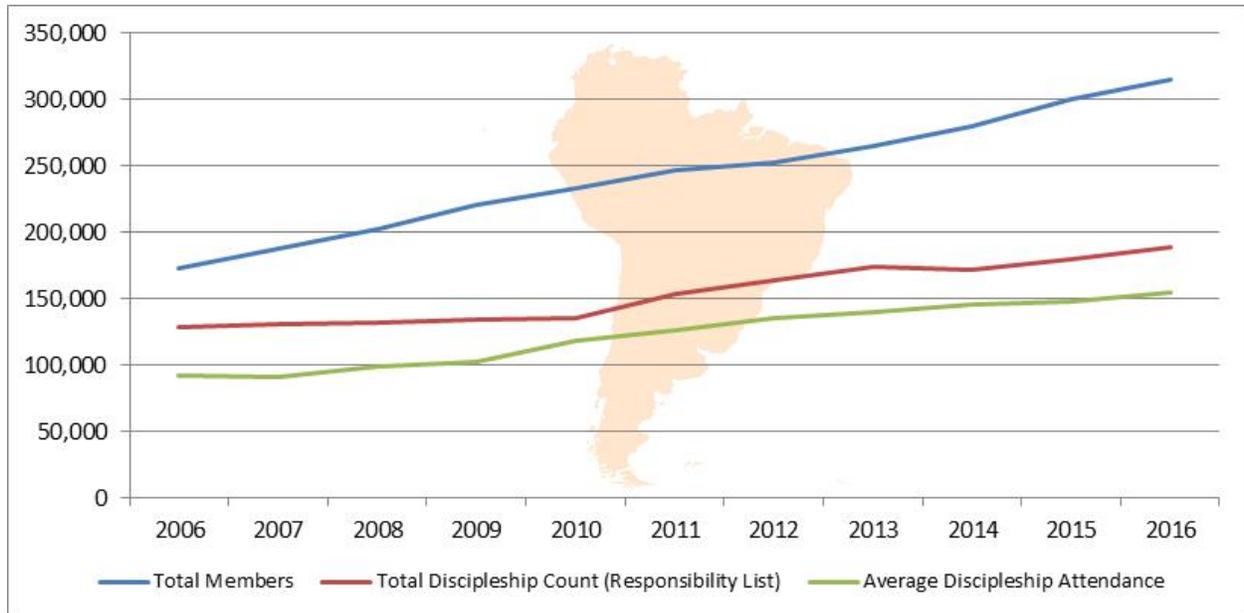
The Mesoamerica Region reports 13 different languages are used in its primary worship services.

QUADRENNIAL OVERVIEW:

- 305 new churches
- 93,189 new Nazarenes
- US\$1,710,337 given to WEF
- 110,369 professions of faith reported
- 52,132 baptisms

Analysis: Mesoamerica membership growth is largest in the established areas of Haiti, Guatemala, and Mexico, with good percentage gains in newer areas like Suriname and Aruba. Discipleship attendance is growing.

South America Region



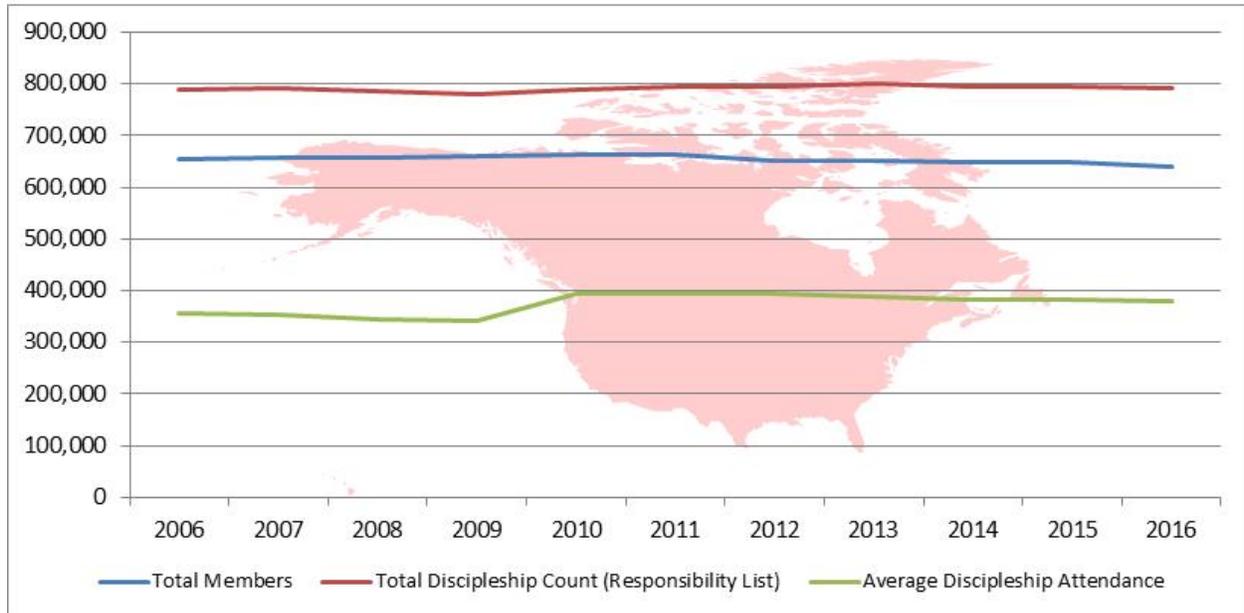
The South America Region reports six different languages are used in its primary worship services.

QUADRENNIAL OVERVIEW:

- 201 new churches
- 80,712 new Nazarenes
- US\$1,041,951 given to WEF
- 139,254 professions of faith reported
- 45,592 baptisms

Analysis: South America has seen decadal membership growth in every country, doubling in Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador. Discipleship participation continues to grow.

USA/Canada Region



The USA/Canada Region reports 33 different languages are used in its primary worship services.

QUADRENNIAL OVERVIEW:

- 543 new churches
- 104,217 new Nazarenes
- US\$146,573,497 given to WEF
- 203,379 professions of faith reported
- 78,253 baptisms

Analysis: The USA/Canada membership growth has been most pronounced in cross-cultural efforts. Hispanic, multicultural, and Haitian groups have all grown by thousands of members this decade. Discipleship efforts mirror the declining membership numbers.

Vision 2020

At General Board in Ede, the Board of General Superintendents humbly restated global Vision 2020 Faith Projections. With God’s help, we yearn to see global membership and attendance increase by one million with 20,000 new churches by 2020, to the glory of God.

- 3.5 million Nazarenes
- 2.5 million in worship and discipleship attendance
- 50,000 churches

Reaching new people for Christ must be both deep—seeing lives and communities transformed by the grace of God—and wide—going where the church is not yet.

Jesus said, “Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35 NIV).

The Board of General Superintendents celebrates the goals from pastors and congregations—but more importantly the souls they represent.

For the sake of the Kingdom, Christlike disciples can do no less than to “seek and save that which is lost.”

Missionaries

The denomination reported 700 missionaries and their 364 children were deployed from 50 world areas, including 253 Global Serve/Mission Corps volunteers. There were also 285 short-term volunteers and 9,208 Work & Witness team members. All categories of missionaries receive some level of support from the World Evangelism Fund (WEF) through the Church of the Nazarene. Work & Witness teams benefit from the global system of mission and structure in place, also made possible by WEF.



Fifteen candidates will be presented for missionary appointment on Monday evening, and two couples, George and Nancy Miller along with Kent and Kathleen Pelton, will be honored for their many years of service as they move into retirement.

FUNDING THE MISSION

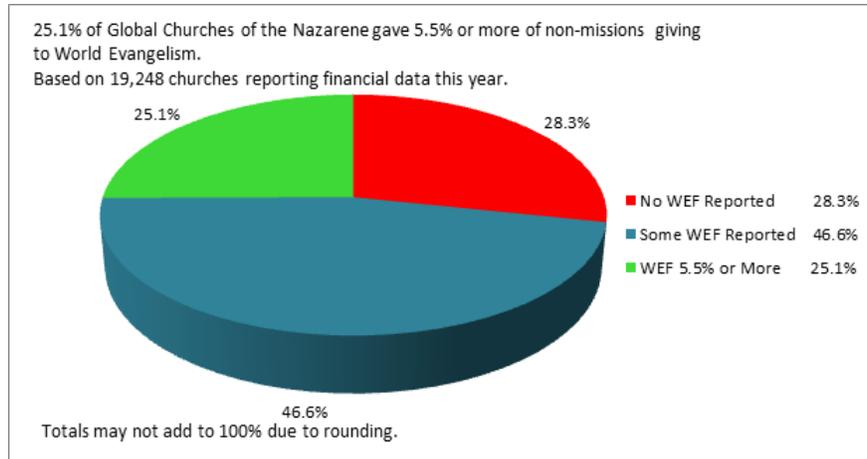
Nazarenes have always believed in the mission to make Christlike disciples in the nations and have supported that mission with their prayers, engagement, and giving.

In 2016:

- \$38.2 million was given to the World Evangelism Fund
- \$31.2 million was given for Approved Mission Specials.

This is a total of \$69.4 million! 3

On behalf of those whose lives have been transformed by the gospel, the Board of General Superintendents expresses appreciation to all who give—many sacrificially—making it possible to share the gospel and spread scriptural holiness throughout the nations.



It is troubling, however, that approximately 75% of churches worldwide report only “some” or “no” WEF giving—leaving one-quarter of churches with 5.5% or more giving to WEF.

If the church is to “go where it is not yet,” our local churches around the world must be committed to the financial support of that mission. Every people group that has been blessed by the gospel is called by God to make certain that all other people groups will hear the gospel as well.

We call upon our local pastors to enlist the lay leaders in their respective congregations to lead those congregations to become generous, not only in prayer and participation, but also in the grace of giving to God’s mission as expressed in the Church of the Nazarene. 2 Corinthians 8:7:

But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Use of Mission Gifts

In fulfilling the mission, it is not just raising funds, but accounting for where they go and how they are used. In 2016, 85.5% of mission gifts went to five categories of “field ministries” and 14.5% were allocated over two categories of “support and delivery.” The distributions are shown on the screen and will be included in the General Board Report when it is posted online.



Nazarene Foundation

The Church of the Nazarene Foundation, established in 2004, had its best year ever in 2016. Funds under management grew by an astounding 75%.

At the end of the year, the Foundation facilitated what is believed to be the largest single gift in the church’s history—\$43 million. In the month of December alone, the Foundation experienced a total increase in funds under management of nearly \$50 million. The church's global ministries will benefit from this God-inspired generosity in the days ahead.

Thanks to those Nazarenes who have a long-term vision of their stewardship, and to Foundation President Ken Roney and his outstanding staff.

2017 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, USA

In 119 days, David A. Busic, as chair of the Board of General Superintendents, will officially open the 29th General Assembly for the Church of the Nazarene in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. The date is Sunday, 25 June 2017 and the place is the Indiana Convention Center. General Conventions and other programs begin 21 June.

Permit me to brief you on some important agenda items:

Delegate Orientation

A delegate orientation will be held Saturday, 24 June. This one-hour session is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in Halls A-B-C. A separate commissioning of delegates will take place on Monday, 26 June.

This mid-morning timeframe allows delegates to attend college/university breakfasts and luncheons that day. A program schedule will be posted on all Nazarene media outlets 1 March.

Future of the General Superintendency

At the 2013 General Assembly, the BGS committed to further examining the office of the general superintendency. Much time and effort has gone into this extended study during the past four years. The BGS will present findings and recommendations in the delegate orientation for further consideration.

Mission Funding

Time was blocked on Monday morning of General Board in 2015 and 2016 to discuss Funding the Mission and to hear from representatives across the church. Feedback from the breakout groups provided insights in understanding the context and complexities surrounding the church's current funding model.

The caution from the study is not to look for a final solution when it comes to funding the mission. In fact, the World Evangelism Fund has evolved over more than 10 decades and will

likely continue doing so. As giving patterns and trends continue to change, the church must be willing to adapt to these realities and, perhaps, to give consideration to cultural adaptations around the world.

The BGS will present a Mission Funding Report to General Board on Monday on what was learned and where we go next. Delegates to General Assembly will also be informed of the next steps.

Clergy Restoration (JUD-818)

For many years, the BGS and others have been concerned about our processes regarding clergy restoration. To that end Stan Rodes, administrative director of Clergy Development, has worked to reframe our response to the needs of clergy who find themselves under discipline, to the needs of their families, and to the needs of the congregations impacted.

There are several legislative proposals that will be presented to the General Assembly. Our thanks to Stan for his heart of compassion for Nazarene clergy and the outstanding, comprehensive work on this monumental project.

The Covenant of Christian Conduct—Human Sexuality and Marriage (CA-703)

The call of God in Romans 12:2 is that we would no longer be conformed to the pattern of the world culture, but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind by the Holy Spirit. We find ourselves living with new cultural realities that challenge our thinking and our behavior regarding human sexuality.

As a result, a Covenant of Christian Conduct Study Group was appointed by the BGS.

The study group's report was received with a final version unanimously approved by the BGS. It is an outstanding work by a global committee with representatives from every region. We are indebted to them for this report that embodies the very best of who we are in light of the Word of God. It is clear, concise, and comprehensive.

I am of the opinion that the report will take its place alongside the "Pastoral Perspective on Homosexuality," which the BGS commissioned in 2011, in its usefulness to our local churches and other institutions. It is important that we be clear about where God's Word calls us to stand on these issues. There can be no ambiguity as to who we are. This document will enable us to clearly delineate our position according to the Word of God as we lovingly and redemptively engage the cultures in which we live.

This document will be presented to General Assembly delegates as follows:

1. The 2017 General Assembly Reference Committee met to work on all regular resolutions on 31 January. The General Secretary's Office is now reorganizing the documents (as per the committee's actions) with the intent to release those resolution documents electronically—in all five of our official languages—by the end of April.
2. Workshops will be offered at General Assembly on the topic of human sexuality from a biblical perspective.
3. The topic will also be addressed at the delegate orientation on Saturday, 24 June to prepare delegates in advance of the voting.
4. A position paper, developed by a specially assigned global committee and unanimously approved by the current BGS, will be read prior to the presentation of the legislation on the General Assembly floor.
5. In the judgment of the Board of General Superintendents, it would be best if the General Assembly agrees to an up or down vote on this work. To edit the document in its first reading does not do justice to the careful work of this committee. If, after four years, the General Assembly should desire further editing, that would always be the prerogative of such a gathering.

It is the opinion of the Board of General Superintendents that the Articles of Faith Committee and Covenant of Christian Conduct Study Group have fulfilled the requirements of *Manual* paragraph 27.

SUMMARY

We give thanks to God for His blessings over the past four years. They have not been without their challenges, but He has faithfully led us through the difficult times. The church has celebrated many wonderful moments of spiritual victory by being His “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NIV).

HOLINESS FOREVERMORE

I began this report with a word from Leviticus . . .

“Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.”

This verse and a host of others in Scripture make it clear that God has called us to be a holy people. That suggests there is a message of holiness that must be preached and a life of holiness that must be lived.

Phineas Bresee pled for “a holiness worthy of our religion.” That plea burns in my heart today.

Signs of Life

I like signs. I look for signs everywhere.

A few of my favorites:

- *When was the last time you did something for the first time?*

That one inspired me to buy a pair of roller blades. I have had them on a few times (first time), stood up in them (first time), and even spun the wheels with my hand (first time) . . . but have not yet taken my first skate! Patty insists on additional life insurance before I take that *first* skate!

Here is another:

- *Don't put the key to your happiness in someone else's pocket.*

That's really good advice . . . makes me check my pockets every now and then.

Recently I found one that continues to speak to me:

- *When you feel like giving up, think about why you started!*

It is the last few words that stay with me:

“. . . *think about why you started.*”

In this 94th General Board of the Church of the Nazarene, I suggest that we “think about why we started.”

Remembering and reflecting is an important part of the spiritual journey. It is only as we understand the passion and purpose of those who have gone before us that we can go forward with that same passion and purpose.

Remembering and reflecting is a biblical practice.

In Leviticus 23, God called His people to set aside and celebrate certain feasts, or sacred assemblies, in which they would celebrate the “why they started” of their existence:

- The Passover
- The Feast of Unleavened Bread
- The Feast of First Fruits
- The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
- The Feast of Trumpets
- The Day of Atonement
- The Feast of Tabernacles

These “sacred assemblies” gave pause for remembering and reflecting on the birth of a people whose calling was to be holy and to bless the nations of the world.

In the *Manual*, we say of ourselves: 4

“The Church of the Nazarene, from its beginnings, has confessed itself to be a branch of the ‘one, holy, universal, and apostolic’ church and has sought to be faithful to it. It confesses as its own the history of the people of God recorded in the Old and New Testaments, and that same history as it has extended from the days of the apostles to our own.

“This Christian faith has been mediated to Nazarenes through historical religious currents and particularly through the Wesleyan revival of the 18th century.

“In the 19th century a renewed emphasis on Christian holiness began in the Eastern United States and spread throughout the nation . . . The central figure of the movement was Phoebe Palmer of New York City, leader of the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness, at which Methodist bishops, educators, and other clergy joined the original group of women in seeking holiness.

“In the 1890s a new wave of independent holiness entities came into being. These included independent churches, urban missions, rescue homes, and missionary and evangelistic associations. Some of the people involved in these organizations yearned for union into a national holiness church. Out of that impulse the present-day Church of the Nazarene was born.”

Dr. Bresee wrote:

“On the third Sabbath of October, 1895, the work of organization was begun. At the morning service eighty-six men and women stood together and plighted to God and each other their fidelity in the organization and carrying on of the work of the Church of the Nazarene, with the declared purpose of preaching holiness, and carrying the gospel to the poor.

“. . . there is a very great need everywhere of this church—not narrow, nor partisan, nor sectarian, but in a spirit of love as broad as the gospel—to preach holiness, and organize the results of our ministry for aggressive and continuous work.

“No mission work at this time is so essential for the redemption of this world from sin, as the preaching and establishing of holiness in America. Every holiness center established, is the springing forth from the skies of rivers of life to men.”

Think about why we started.

. . . the declared purpose of preaching holiness, and carrying the gospel to the poor.

. . . to preach holiness, and organize the results of our ministry for aggressive and continuous work.

. . . No mission work at this time is so essential for the redemption of this world from sin, as the preaching and establishing of holiness . . .

For several quadrennia, the foreword to our *Manual* has stated:

“The primary objective of the Church of the Nazarene is to advance God’s kingdom by the preservation and propagation of Christian holiness as set forth in the Scriptures.”

The Church of the Nazarene was birthed as a holiness movement. God’s message of holiness and God’s mission to make Christlike disciples is embraced by more than 30,000 churches in 159 world areas.

We are, to quote Tom Nees, former director of the USA/Canada Mission Office, a uniquely message-driven church—the message of scriptural holiness. Our mandate to make Christlike disciples flows naturally from the fullness of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We are a holiness church with the message of life transformation entrusted to us.

Our second core value is “We are holiness.”

At the recent district assembly in Botswana, our good people were joyfully singing:

There’s a blessed and triumphant song;
Holiness forevermore!
It is sung by the mighty, blood-washed throng:
Holiness forevermore!

From this standard we will not depart:
Holiness forevermore!
‘Tis the song of the purified in heart:
Holiness forevermore!

Holiness forevermore! Holiness forevermore!
We will sing it, shout it, preach it, and live it:
Holiness forevermore!”

Oh, how they sang! Exuberantly! Joyfully!

As I wiped tears from my eyes, I found myself praying that we would continue to be a people who celebrate this call to scriptural holiness.

To that end, we plead, that with renewed passion, we will

- Sing it! May our music be that of victory and conquest. May our songs testify of such victory in Jesus Christ. Let ours be the songs of the blood-washed; those delivered from the power of sin and death!
- Shout it! Let our churches once again ring out with the amens of the redeemed and transformed . . . the joyful shouts of those whose hearts have been cleansed from all sin!
(1 John 1:7)

- Preach it! With conviction, with clarity, with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Let the word go forth from our pulpits that there is a cleansing of the heart from all sin that empowers one to love God with all one's heart, mind, soul, and spirit, and to love one's neighbor as we love ourselves! It is not simply a theological tradition that we embrace and preach—it is the message of Scripture.
- Live it! While in the Netherlands for a global theology conference a few years ago, I was in a small group that included Dr. Paul Bassett, retired professor at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

In our conversations, he lamented that today we often speak about the doctrine of entire sanctification, while in our early years as a movement we spoke of the doctrine *and* experience of entire sanctification. My prayer is that we will have a revival of holiness preaching that will result in many entering into the *experience* of holiness and bearing witness to this experience by the way they live and order their lives.

Holiness is not just a *work* of grace; it is the indwelling presence of the Living God through His Holy Spirit. It is His presence that constitutes our holiness. It is, as Scripture says it in Colossians 1:27, “. . . Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Holiness is the result of both crisis and process.

John Oswald declares that “we are made holy just as we are converted: by grace through faith. But in order for that grace to become operative, there must come a moment when we surrender to God in faith for the crucifixion of our self-centered will.

“John Wesley labeled the result of this moment ‘entire sanctification’ in order to distinguish it from the progressive sanctification which continues both before and after this moment.”⁵

Think about why we started.

Dr. Bresee responded to criticism of the early Nazarenes:

“It is an accusation that with us every meeting is a holiness meeting. We do not deny it.”

Think about why we started.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7; 5:23-24, we learn that holiness . . .

- is the will of God.

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified . . .”

- is the call of God.

“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”

- is the provision of God.

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”

Think about why we started.

It is a generally accepted principle that every organization faces the challenge of organizational and missional drift.

Alister McGrath observed: “The price of expansion is an increasing diffuseness, and potentially a loss of identity and vision.”⁶ However, the cost of standing still is slow death.

Our challenge is ever to make the main thing the main thing—that the message of life transformation—holiness and Christlikeness—remains the message!

This is not a plea for “the good old days,” but it is a plea that we will inspire and equip a new generation to take up the mantle to live and preach the message of heart holiness and life transformation!

We plead for the Church of the Nazarene to lift up Jesus Christ and make the message of scriptural holiness—life transformation—our watchword and song for this and future generations!

The world is changed by Spirit-filled men and women; their legacies never die.

More than 100 years ago there was a young man fully surrendered to God and filled with the Holy Spirit. He enrolled in a holiness college in Peniel, Texas, USA. He often found refuge in a small study room—really a closet—where he studied and prayed by the light of a small oil lamp.

He studied. He learned. He sought wisdom from godly people and from God himself. One night he “prayed through”—found peace in his mind and spirit before the Lord—about God’s call in his life.

He would leave school. He would leave home—the familiar, the safe, the known, the predictable. Led by the Holy Spirit, he would go to a faraway place to labor for the lost and broken. With no promise of support from any organized religious group, he raised a little money from his fellow students and set sail for that faraway place.

He labored among a people he did not know and who did not know him. They were strange to him; he was equally strange to them! Years passed by. Infant children were born, three of whom died and were buried in that faraway place. It seemed no progress was being made as the years continued to slip away. Finally, friendships were established and doors of ministry opened to that young man and his supportive wife.

The people in his homeland learned of his work and prayed for him. He rallied their hearts for other faraway places as he faithfully followed the call of God in his life. Many others would be inspired by the life of this young couple.

On 26 May 1926, he wrote a letter to General Superintendent H. F. Reynolds.

Piggs Peak, Swaziland

Via Barberton, South Africa
May 26, 1926

Rev. H. F. Reynolds
2923 Troost Ave
Kansas City, MO U. S. A.

Greetings in Jesus’ dear name from Africa.

Just a note to let you know that we have had a King to visit our humble African home. He arrived Sunday morning May the 23rd. We readily recognized that He was not a King of an earthly Kingdom, in that He came through the unopened window and closed door. He came to take a precious little flower that bloomed in our midst; we bowed our heads in submission when Jesus stepped in and took to himself our darling little Charles Kent at ten minutes to two

o'clock A.M. We prayed that he would be taken without a struggle and our prayer was answered as he had a very peaceful passing away. He was born September 19th, 1924 and died May 23rd, 1926. After daybreak we made a little box of sealing boards and Miss Robinson took white cloth and beautified it. Miss Lovelace, Carpenter and Rixsie arrived from the boys school about eleven o'clock just in time for the Sabbath morning service and after this service the remains of our little darling was laid to rest under the Peniel trees to await the resurrection morn. We all dropped a few flowers in the grave and sang the Hymn "Just inside the Eastern gate". We do not say that this is a part of the price we pay for Africa, for death visits every home; however, just after the passing of our precious baby we knelt not far from his little form and there rededicated ourselves for His service and for the healing of the world known as Africa.

Little Charles had never been very strong and suffered very much since about the 5th of January when we was smitten with Pneumonia; it was the Influenza that finally caused his death.

Will close for this time, we know you are praying for us and we thank you for these prayers continually.

Yours in His glad service,

H. F. Schmelzenbach

It is the letter of a man entirely surrendered to the will of God. A holiness man. A sanctified man who, along with his wife, gave his life for the King of Kings.

So why did we start?

Why did Harmon and Lula Schmelzenbach give their lives for Africa?

Why do pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and dedicated laypersons still answer the call to go, to serve?

Why do Nazarenes pray and give generously and sacrificially?

It is because Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith is still raising up a people to proclaim the **message of Scriptural holiness – Christlikeness – life-transformation!**

Let us sing it!

Let us shout it!

Let us preach it!

Let us live it!

Holiness forevermore.

Prayerfully and respectfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents

David A. Basic
Gustavo A. Crocker
Eugénio R. Duarte
David W. Graves
Jerry D. Porter
J. K. Warrick

Prepared and read by J. K. Warrick

bgs@nazarene.org

Footnotes

1. Walterrean Salley
2. Annual Pastor's Report, Office of the General Secretary
3. General Treasurer's Office cash receipts and APR use different methods of data collection.
4. Manual "Historical Statement"
5. "The Dangers of Holiness"—John Oswalt, Francis Asbury Society
6. Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity, Alister McGrath (IVP)