

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS  
TO THE  
GENERAL BOARD  
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

February 2006

*“A DISCIPLING CHURCH”*

Brothers and sisters, General Board members, International Headquarters team, and special guests:

We begin the Eighty-third General Board celebrating what God is doing through the Church of the Nazarene around the world.

2005 brought—catastrophic weather—natural disasters—Nazarene compassion in action—1,009 new congregations worldwide—100,000 new Nazarenes—record increases. ¡Gloria a Dios! Praise the Lord!

The Board of General Superintendents salutes valiant pastors, laity, evangelists, missionaries, district superintendents, regional directors, field strategy coordinators, educators, chaplains, and compassionate ministry directors for their missional labor of love on the front line of Kingdom ministry.

The dedication and sacrifice of the people called Nazarenes is awesome and inspiring. Our Board is committed to praying daily on your behalf.

Our Global Mission Team and the Church of the Nazarene Foundation at International Headquarters serve with passion and effectiveness. We want to recognize these individuals. Please stand and remain standing until all have been introduced; then we will show our appreciation for these tireless and hardworking friends:

Officers

- Dr. Jack Stone, General Secretary and Headquarters Operations Officer
- Dr. Marilyn McCool, General Treasurer and Headquarters Financial Officer

### Directors

- Dr. Louie Bustle, World Mission Department Director
- Dr. David Graves, Sunday School Ministries Department Director
- Rev. Gary Hartke, Nazarene Youth International Director
- Dr. Daniel Ketchum, General Director, Nazarene Missions International
- Dr. Tom Nees, USA/Canada Mission/Evangelism Department Director

### Education

- Dr. Jerry Lambert, Education Commissioner

### Editorial

- Dr. David Felter, General Editor
- Dr. Hardy Weathers, Nazarene Publishing House President

### Foundation

- Dr. Melvin McCullough, Church of the Nazarene Foundation President

These dedicated leaders are supported by outstanding administrative directors, staff, and specialists providing expertise in service to the church. Please join me in expressing appreciation for all these fine leaders!

We want to formally welcome Nina Gunter and J. K. Warrick to the Board of General Superintendents. They add wonderful enthusiasm and fresh new perspectives as we develop and implement our collective leadership agenda.

Everything we do as a Board needs the context of mission.

### **Our Mission**

To make Christlike disciples in all nations!

### **Our Core Values**

The Church of the Nazarene identifies three core values:

- We are Christian
- We are Holiness
- We are Missional

## Our Hope

A hurting world desperately needs hope. What is the response? You offer not yourself to the needy but “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Col. 1:27b, NIV). **Jesus . . . the Hope!**

## Centennial Goals Update

Our focus for the 2006 General Board report is the *Centennial Faith Initiative*. At the General Board in 2000, the Board of General Superintendents prayerfully launched the Centennial Faith Projections. This initiative represents a passionate desire to evangelize, assimilate, and disciple new people for Christ.

As part of the Centennial celebration, our Board envisioned:

- 2 million members
- 2 million in weekly worship attendance
- 1 million new Nazarenes in ten years
- 18,000 Nazarene congregations
- 1 million in Sunday School attendance

## Where We Are Today\*

At the close of the 2005 district assembly year, the denomination reported:

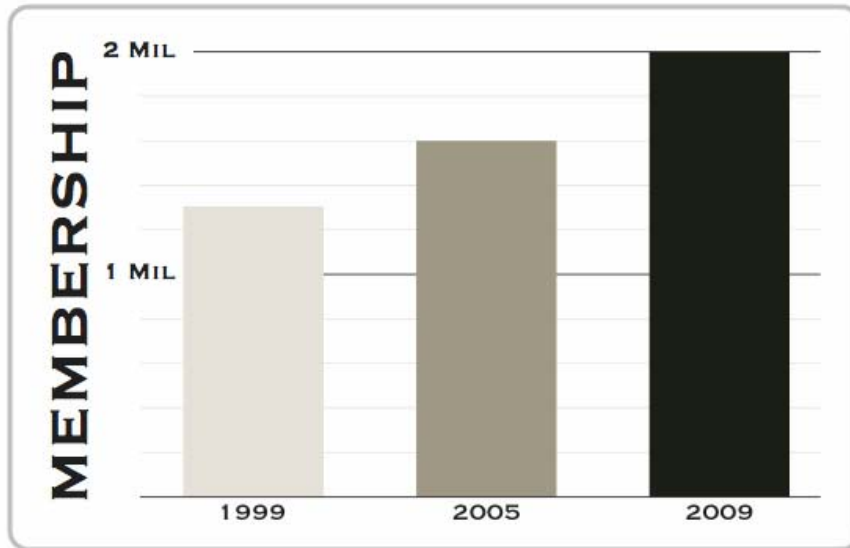
- 1.6 million total members (an increase of 4.7% over 2004)
- 1.1 million average in worship (an increase of 3.6% over last year)
- 18,000 Nazarene congregations (an increase of 3.9% this year)
- 685,300 new Nazarenes since 1999 (27% ahead of the previous decade)
- 830,000 Sunday School average attendance (an increase of 4%)

## Where We Hope To Be\*

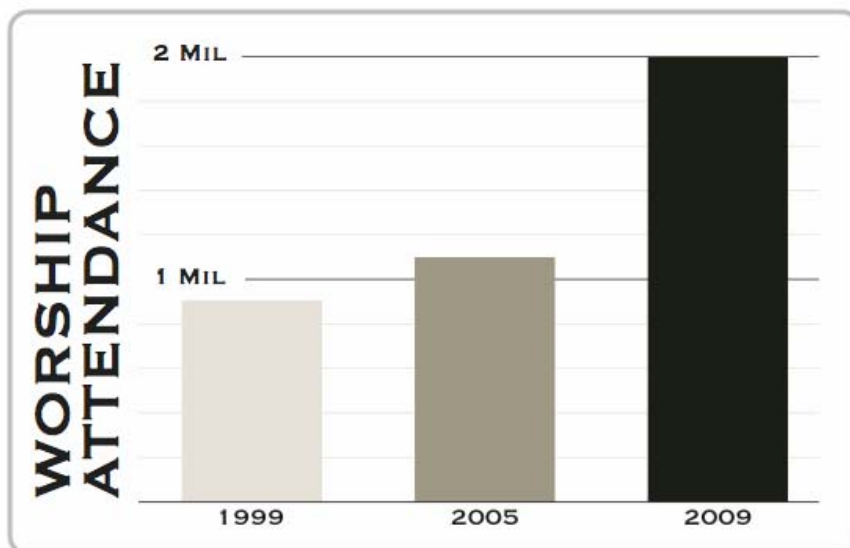
Using the 1999 baseline, we are prayerfully setting our sights on the Kingdom gains we yearn to report to the 2009 General Assembly in Orlando, Florida:

\* All figures rounded. “New Nazarenes” is a decadal goal.

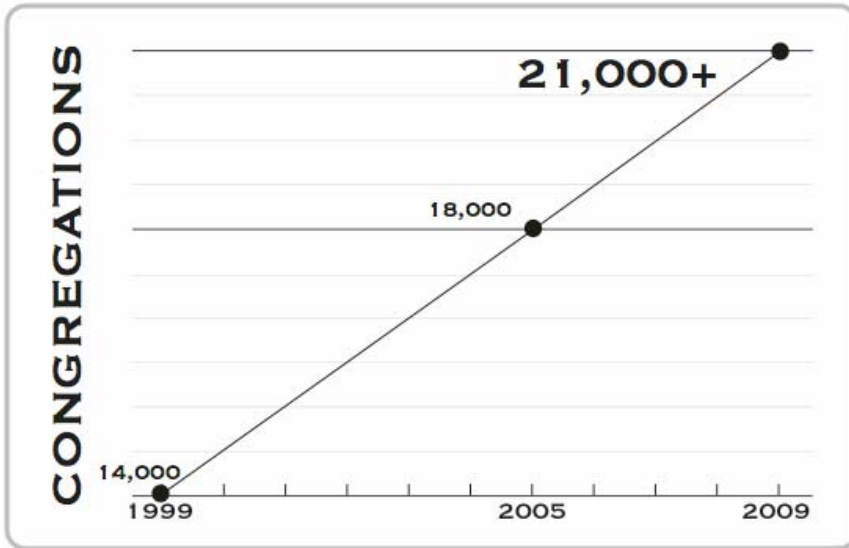
- In six years we showed a net gain of 300,000 members. We will want to increase 400,000 in four years to report 2 million Nazarenes worldwide.



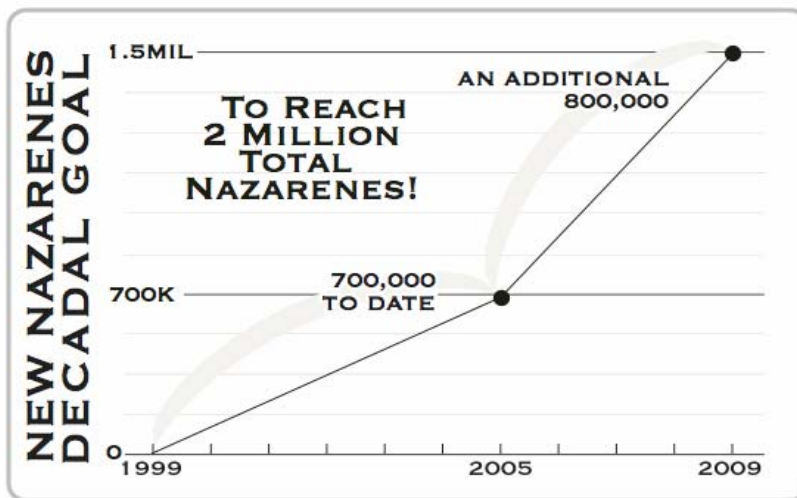
- We increased 200,000 in worship attendance since 1999. We will need to increase 900,000 by 2009 to be able to report 2 million in weekly Nazarene worship attendance. This “impossible” task will be accomplished as **every Nazarene attends church faithfully!**



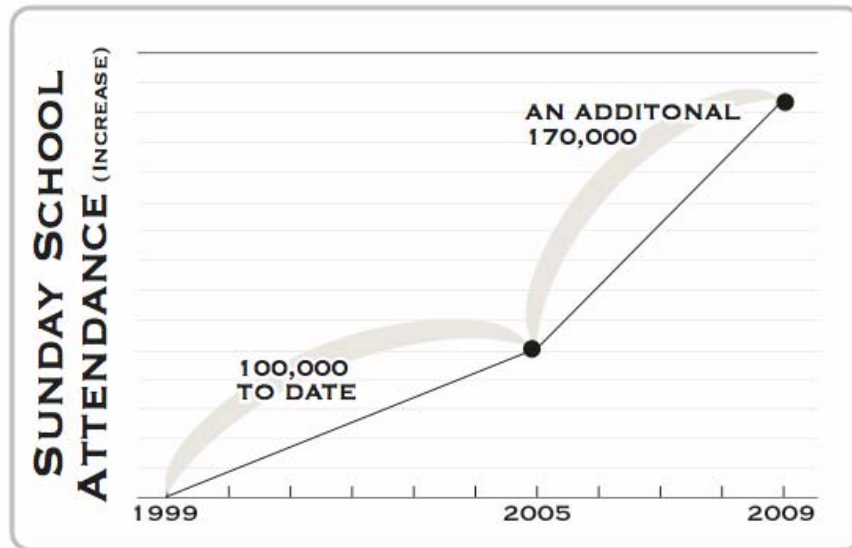
- With the net increase of 4,000 new congregations during these six years, we have already reached our centennial goal! We may well report more than 21,000 Nazarene congregations by 2009. Praise the Lord!



- We celebrate the nearly 700,000 new Nazarenes who have joined our church since 1999. Unfortunately, due to death or removal, during these six years we lost two of every three who joined our denominational family. To report 2 million Nazarenes in 2009 we will want to welcome 800,000 new Nazarenes during the next four years. At the same time, we need to “close the back door” and decrease our losses due to removal from membership by at least 30 percent. We will reach our goal as **each two Nazarenes reach one in four years!** What is impossible with man is possible with God! We will talk more about this mountain-moving challenge.



- We rejoice to report an increase of over 100,000 in Sunday School attendance since 1999. By 2009 we want to increase by 170,000 the new weekly students of the Word in Sunday School and discipleship classes. Again, this can be accomplished if **every Nazarene attends a Sunday School or discipleship class each week.**



By God's grace, we will reach the Centennial Faith Projections as we embrace two commitments:

1. **Every two Nazarenes reach one person in four years, and**
2. **Every Nazarene attends weekly worship and Sunday School or discipleship classes!**

How should we think about the Centennial Faith Projections? What does this mean to the church and to our Lord?

There are several things to keep in mind:

1. Numbers for numbers sake is idolatry and is condemned in scripture. However, a census was requested by Jehovah and recorded in the book of Numbers! In terms of a healthy body, it is important to know our vital signs. The same is true of the church body. Humbly studying gains or losses enables us to evaluate the best methods for fruitfulness. Each number represents an immensely-valuable person, and we rejoice over each man, woman, student, boy, and girl who is reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. God gives dreams to ordinary people such as you and me. This initiative is being accomplished through tens of thousands of contagious individuals who are salt and light where they live and work. The Lord is doing extraordinary things through humble, radically-available people.

3. Spiritual goals are the beginning of something, not the end. With increases in converts and new Nazarenes comes significant responsibility. The real work lies ahead.

What's on the other side of the *Centennial Faith Initiative*?

Going forward, the **Main Message** of the Board of General Superintendents underscores the following:

**New  
Strong  
Nazarene**

### **New Disciples**

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”*  
(Matt. 28:20, NIV).

The multidimensional mission of the Church of the Nazarene is:

- “To make known to all peoples the transforming grace of God through the forgiveness of sins and heart cleansing in Jesus Christ”
- “To ‘make disciples’”
- “To incorporate believers into fellowship and membership,” and
- “To equip . . . for ministry all who respond in faith”

(2005-2009 *Manual, Preamble*, page 62)

Three often-overlooked components of our mission are “making disciples,” “incorporation,” and “equipping.”

We celebrate the transforming grace of God that makes **all things new** in the person who embraces saving and sanctifying grace in Jesus Christ. But that is only the beginning.

We must give more attention to **discipleship**. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? It is to be a continual student of Jesus—guided, instructed, and helped by the Lord through fellow believers in every aspect of our life; reproducing other disciples as a natural part of our total devotion to Christ.

### **A missional church is a discipling church.**

The Church of the Nazarene believes in membership. We value not only the need to believe but also the call to belong to the visible body of Christ.

However, the time has come to move beyond membership to discipleship. The goal is not to make believers, or even members, but to **make disciples**. That was the mission of Jesus, and it is our declared mission as well.

Who disciplined you? Who prayed over your life and provided encouragement when you needed it most? Who trusted you and gave you opportunity for service when you were yet immature in your walk with the Lord?

There are three individuals who greatly impacted my life: my father, the late C. William Porter; my college professor, Donald Owens; and the late missionary evangelist, E. Stanley Jones. These people loved, encouraged, and empowered me!

Who are you discipling? Who is discipling you? Would to God that the Nazarene DNA included these questions as normative for every believer!

Author and Wesley scholar Mike Henderson insists that we have things turned around. *“Jesus said, ‘I will build my church. You make disciples.’ Instead, we try to build the church; and who is making disciples?”*

Programs do not make disciples. Disciples make disciples. It does not take money, buildings, or property to disciple. It does not require that the church be small or large. Congregations of all sizes are embracing the call to **make disciples**.

The real cost of discipling is investing time in someone’s life—giving ourselves away. It means spending more time with fewer people, the basic principle taught by Christ.

These new disciples are nurtured into mentoring relationships that lead to spiritually-disciplined lives. If these **new disciples** do not become **strong disciples**, much of the increase will dissipate.

### **Strong Disciples**

*“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”* (Eph. 3:16-17, NIV).

Let me illustrate. As we mentioned earlier, during the past six years we lost two of every three who joined our denominational family. This does not include new converts who were never incorporated into a local community of faith.

Evangelize we must. But these dramatic losses clearly show us the urgency of assimilation and making strong disciples.

In an editorial I have prepared for the April 2006 web edition of *Holiness Today*, I highlight two Nazarene congregations—one in Cali, Colombia, and one in Anaheim, California. Both are passionately embracing the call to make disciples.

The title of the editorial is “Please Close the Back Door.” These churches are moving from retention rates of 5 percent or less to nearly 50 percent. Retention rate is the percentage of new converts who are incorporated and still active in the local church one year after conversion.

Every quadrennium we receive record numbers of new Nazarenes. This quadrennium the call is to **multiply disciples**.



As young missionaries, Louie Bustle and I taught “each one win one” and “each one disciple one” each year. I now prefer the vision of these two congregations: “each one disciple twelve” for a lifetime!

No wonder the Cali House of Prayer Church of the Nazarene recorded a record Sunday worship attendance of 12,000 on December 11, 2005, with over 500 new converts. By the grace of God, thanks to a tried-and-tested assimilation strategy, from that one service over 200 new disciples will be incorporated into discipleship cell groups throughout the city.

Jesus said, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last*” (John 15:16, NIV).

We can no longer justify carelessness in assimilating new believers. New Methodist converts were immediately assimilated into small groups where they were discipled and taught the way of Christian perfection. This is our Wesleyan heritage.

We may have become careless as we focused on an instantaneous, sanctifying work of transforming grace as the only goal. Our calling must also include the disciplines of the holy life as we continue to be transformed into the very image and character of our Lord.

The apostle Paul underscored this when he wrote that we “*have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator*” (Col. 3:10, NIV).

Imagine 20,000 congregations worldwide where there are increasing numbers of disciples—enrolled in the school of Christlikeness—whose hearts, minds, and spirits are becoming ever more like our Lord!

We need disciples who are strong in faith, strong in belief, strong in service.

### **Disciples Called Nazarenes**

Discipleship has a body-life dimension. The church is not optional to God’s plan of salvation. There is no such thing as a “solo disciple.”

The most common image for the Church in Paul’s writing is that of the Body of Christ. He makes the point that the Church is not *like* the Body of Christ. Rather, the Church *is* the Body of Christ. We are called to incorporate these new, strong disciples into this visible Christian, Holiness, and Missional body of Christ.

Disciples exercise their spiritual gifts in the community of faith. We all need a place of service and a system of support. The Church of the Nazarene is just such a place.

Who are the Nazarenes?

- A Praying Community

Even as we gather for the General Board meeting there are intercessors around the world who have committed to seven days of 24-hour prayer support for you and for these sessions. Daniel Ketchum, Nazarene Missions International general director, has helped mobilize these prayer partners who love their church and believe in you. An Internet General Board prayer forum has been activated as well! We invite you to link into the prayer forum to share your requests and pray for others. We also encourage you to continue using the General Board prayer room here in the hotel. Intercede with us for a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit on the church. Prayer is the key in our hand. Nazarenes are a praying people.

- A Holy Community

We are a people seeking after the righteousness of God—embracing the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives—living in “*entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect*” (*Manual*, paragraph 13). We are Nazarenes—called for God's purpose—abandoned to our Lord's will and way in radical transparency. We are people of prayer and students of the Word.

- A Sent Community

Being missional includes an encounter with culture. Some will be missionaries. Some pastors. Some evangelists. Some teachers. All are witnesses on a mission.

We celebrate those who respond to God's call. But how are these Christian servants and missionaries sent? How are churches started? How are medical clinics staffed? Through our prayer and generous contributions. World Evangelism Fund giving rose to \$47 million in 2005 with nearly 96 percent of churches paying this fund in full. This represents an increase of 2.3 percent over 2004.

Mission Specials totaled \$32.5 million in 2005, for which we praise the Lord!

- An Inclusive Community

Every local Church of the Nazarene is called to be an inclusive community, embracing any and every person who may seek love, grace, and hope among us. It is possible, as a denomination, to be international and not be inclusive. Our Board would like to see an international and inclusive church. This means incorporating the rich variety of cultures of Nazarenes into all aspects of denominational life in the unity of the Spirit.

- A Caring Community of Faith and Hope

This past year saw an incredible loss of life and destruction of property. An estimated 87,000 were killed and 3.5 million left homeless by earthquakes in Pakistan alone. Over 1,400 people died in seven U.S.A. Gulf Coast states. Entire communities were destroyed from hurricanes in the summer of 2005. The Caribbean, Yucatan Peninsula, South Asia,

and parts of Europe also witnessed terrific destruction and loss of life from severe weather.

What was the Nazarene response? Once again the church rose to the occasion as congregations, college students, and others gave an amazing \$6 million to disaster relief.

Not only did we give money; we also gave ourselves, working on-site in these locations: serving meals—rebuilding homes and churches—providing medical assistance and supplies—offering shelter and an encouraging word.

We embrace compassionate ministry as a way of life. At the same time, we know that our long-term contribution will be to guide all people to Jesus . . . the Hope!

Thus we celebrate:

- New disciples
- Strong disciples
- Nazarene disciples!

### **Looking Ahead**

The Board of General Superintendents has prayerfully identified four pressing initiatives that we are addressing this quadrennium:

#### Initiative No. 1

- Reaffirm the collective wisdom and conscience of the church regarding the doctrines of entire sanctification and biblical inspiration.

#### Initiative No. 2

- Develop a concise and gripping renewed statement of mission, and continue distributing globally the updated “Core Values” materials.

#### Initiative No. 3

- Prepare for the Centennial Celebrations, the 2009 General Assembly, and the *Centennial Faith Initiative* harvest jubilee.

#### Initiative No. 4

- Implement a global leadership development strategy in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Our goal is to work toward greater inclusiveness within the General Board structure and the Board of General Superintendents. We will lean heavily on our 56 superb educational institutions around the world to assist us.

As my colleague, Paul Cunningham, reported in 2005 to the General Board:

*“...new church leaders—pastors, laity, college administrators, faculty, compassionate ministry workers, Sunday School teachers, and church board members—are not on their way; they are already here.”*

Those needed for mission and ministry are within the sound of our voices. It is our joy and responsibility to disciple, equip, and empower them to be the new generation of spiritual and servant leaders.

### **Thought Partners**

To help us address the complex challenges facing our beloved Zion, our Board appointed seven individuals to serve as Thought Partners through this quadrennium. This group, in tandem with the Global Mission Team, key resource people, and other committees and commissions, is helping us envision a bright and promising future. We appreciate the time and contribution of:

- John Bowling
- David Busic
- Franklin Cook
- Gustavo Crocker
- Brad Moore
- Jossie Owens

And their facilitator, Jim Bond.

### **Relocation Update**

The 2005 General Board voted to relocate International Headquarters from Kansas City, Missouri, to Lenexa, Kansas. The Board of General Superintendents has recommended the name “Global Ministry Center” to the General Board for the new location.

This afternoon the leadership of the Church of the Nazarene broke ground at the future site as we move toward a new century of service to the global church.

We are pleased that Jack Stone and Marilyn McCool are taking lead roles in this project.

There are three committees hard at work:

- Strategic Planning Committee: selecting the architect, builder, and overseeing the project
- Funding Committee: seeking generous donations and commitments equal to half the building cost
- The Paseo Options Committee: studying the best use of our current location

The goal is to occupy this new facility as part of the Centennial Celebration.

## Summary

What lies ahead for the Church of the Nazarene as part of the Church of Jesus Christ? How do we accept personal responsibility for completing the work of Christ?

With God's help, two critically-important underpinnings will shape the future look of the church:

1. **Prayer:** The heartbeat of the church is the personal and collective prayer ministry of its people. Outreach and growth are not sustainable without prayer. The Lord taught His disciples to pray, and Paul urged us to pray without ceasing. We can do nothing without God, and God will do nothing without us. Our feeble, mustard-seed prayer partnership releases the Divine in our homes, churches, and neighborhoods. The hope for our church is that we know how to pray and do so continuously. In that prayer atmosphere we will witness the purifying and empowering work of the Holy Spirit. We celebrate the wonderful privilege of partnering with the Father as we intercede for each other and for the lost.
2. **Multiplying disciples:** In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes: "*Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ.*" Evangelism and making disciples go together. Our future is bright as we develop spiritual leaders who will reproduce themselves and multiply their effectiveness. Whether it's one-on-one or groups of 3, 7, or 12, John Wesley's call for spiritual accountability among believers is relevant and urgently needed for our day! We can and we must close the back door of the Church of the Nazarene. We dare not be careless with the precious new believers. By God's grace we will become churches that learn to multiply disciples through intentional relationships, accountability, and participation in ministry. We will multiply disciples by multiplying leaders, small groups, and new congregations. With the Lord's help we will judge our personal and collective fruitfulness by how effectively we **make disciples**.

Paul wrote to Timothy: "*Pass on what you heard from me—the whole congregation saying Amen!— to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others*" (2 Tim. 2:2, MSG).

During the first days of 2006, my wife and I were reading Jehovah's instruction to Gideon to send home any soldiers who were frightened or lapped water like dogs. The army was reduced from 32,000 to a mere 300 men! Why?

*"The LORD said to Gideon, 'You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel **may not boast** against me that her own strength has saved her'"* (Judges 7:2, NIV).

- As we embrace Centennial Faith Projections attempting to fulfill our Lord's Great Commission . . .
- As we fall on our faces before God in prayer, seeking to make Christlike disciples in all nations . . .

- We know that we have NOTHING to boast about. All our righteousness is but filthy rags.
- By God's merciful grace we have been saved, sanctified, and commissioned. We have NO resource other than the Holy Spirit! All the glory, honor, and praise go to the Lamb who is seated on the eternal throne!

We are the General Board and general leaders of the Church of the Nazarene. The Lord did not want the Israelites to boast about their strategy or their strength, but God did expect Gideon to lead.

*"Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do"* (Judges 7:17, NIV).

Are we—the general superintendents, the General Board, and the International Headquarters personnel—modeling the prayer life we yearn to see globally? What if our brothers and sisters were as committed to making disciples as we are personally? God alone is worthy of the glory . . . but we are in providential leadership assignments, and the Father calls us to lead by example.

We close this report by inviting the general superintendents, the General Board members, and Headquarters personnel to prayerfully sign a simple commitment card to prayer and discipleship. We want to tell the church at large, "Watch me. Follow my lead. Do exactly as I do." We are humbly making a new commitment to intercessory prayer and to discipleship. We will disciple, be disciplined, and help our church to be a discipling church! Please leave a signed commitment card at your place and keep one for yourself.

We now invite everyone in this hotel ballroom "sanctuary" to stand and gather in groups of three for a time of prayer to close this report. We want to join those worldwide who are praying for us and for this meeting at this very hour. Let us launch this new General Board and the remainder of this quadrennium, seeking the Lord's face, repenting for any prayerlessness or disciple-making carelessness. We are asking for divine direction and, above all, for the Holy Spirit to cleanse, empower, and commission us again!

Respectfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents

James H. Diehl  
Paul G. Cunningham  
Jerry D. Porter

Jesse C. Middendorf  
Nina G. Gunter  
J. K. Warrick

Prepared and presented by Jerry D. Porter