



**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS
TO THE
95th GENERAL BOARD
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

25 February 2018

Kansas City, Missouri USA

“By His Spirit”

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INTRODUCTION

So, he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

—Zachariah 4:6 (NIV)

Welcome

Grace and peace to you, in the name of God the Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the Board of General Superintendents (BGS), I officially welcome everyone to the 95th General Board, Church of the Nazarene — the first of four Sessions to be held between now and the 2021 General Assembly in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA.

We are thankful for safe travels, and trust you are enjoying the unique fellowship that comes with being part of a global church.

Of 53 General Board members, 35 are new this term. Each member carries a personal responsibility for engaging in the governing process in the following ways:

1. By participating in committees
2. Speaking and voting in plenaries
3. Praying for God's presence among us — that His will be done

As church leaders serving in a governing role, may we fulfill these responsibilities this quadrennium, by first "setting our hearts and minds on things above."

—Colossians 3: 1–4 (paraphrased)

Accountability

The genesis of Nazarene ecclesiastical accountability is in our Wesleyan heritage. Methodist Bishop William McKendree's first formal address at the 1812 General Conference, convened in New York City, USA, set the tone for future leadership by inviting delegates to inspect his administration of the Conference

"I consider myself justly accountable, not for the system of government, but for my administration." ¹

Bishop McKendree's idea of being answerable would find its way into the Church of the Nazarene's General Board Report and Quadrennial Address from the Board of General Superintendents.

History reminds us that all who hold office locally, on districts and regions, in educational institutions, or the general church, are to be "justly accountable."

Appreciation

While 1908 is the Church of the Nazarene's official anniversary date, the General Board was not created until 1923. The first full-time general secretary, E. J. Fleming, was involved with the General Board from its beginning. ²

The administration of the General Board has increased significantly over ten decades. Everything from logistics to transportation to technology has grown in complexity and scope.

It is important that we recognize the following for organizing the 95th General Board:

- General Secretary David P. Wilson; Administrative Director Chris Nelson; Shirley Marvin; and Diane Miller for arrangements. As we learned this evening, this is Diane's last General Board. "Thank you," Diane.

- Interpreters, translators, IT, and communication specialists.
- Joy Hartke and the Board of General Superintendents' office for all they do to make this time possible.

Let us show our “gratitude” for the dedicated labor of these, and others, who serve us well.

CALLED UNTO HOLINESS

The Church of the Nazarene's Wesleyan-Arminian theology and its mission are inseparable. We preach full salvation in Jesus Christ, which means:

- Justification by grace through faith
- Sanctification by grace through faith
- Entire sanctification available to every Christian
- Witness of the Spirit to the divine work in human lives
- God's grace calling sinners to repentance, and believers to a deeper, sanctified life

We are "Called unto Holiness." —1 Thessalonians 4:7 (KJV)

And the key to understanding Christian holiness is love — love of God and love of neighbor.

For decades, the Church of the Nazarene used a mixture of goals ("Five Million for World Evangelism" 1948), programs ("Mid-Century Crusade for Souls" 1952) and themes ("Celebrating Christian Holiness" 1980) to provide a narrative and emphases between general assemblies.

During the 1999 Mid-Quadrennial Evangelism Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, the Board of General Superintendents unveiled three "Core Values."

Those intrinsic values explicitly state that:

- We are a Christian church
- We are a Holiness church
- We are a Missional church

“The Church of God, in its highest forms on earth and in heaven, has its gatherings, teachings, and united worship, but it is all to help the individual into the likeness of His Son.” — Phineas F. Bresee, first general superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene.

In 2007, the general superintendents further clarified the church’s spiritual task with a new statement of mission — “to make Christlike disciples in the nations.”

Since the 2013 General Assembly in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, “Seven Characteristics” are being used to further describe the Church of the Nazarene:

They are:

1. Meaningful Worship
2. Theological Coherence
3. Passionate Evangelism
4. Intentional Discipleship
5. Church Development
6. Transformational Leadership
7. Purposeful Compassion

Nazarene Identity

For some time, the global church has been requesting the basics of our church’s teaching, history, theology, mission, funding, and interdependent connections. They wanted this information in a brief, accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly publication.

In 2014, the Board of General Superintendents introduced “Nazarene Essentials” to help the church understand “who we are” (identity) and “what we do” (mission) as at least one-third (over 800,000) of our membership has joined in the last 10 years.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive from pastors, educators, and laypersons alike. We are pleased to hear that “Nazarene Essentials” is being used in a variety of ways to strengthen our churches. Thanks to the diligence of our translation teams, it is now available in 39 languages with others on the way.

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: Essential Teaching for Faith Formation in the Church of the Nazarene, also sponsored by the BGS, debuted at the 2017 General Assembly. It has been translated into five languages with seven more in progress.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

Whether you were on-site in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, or watching via live stream, God's presence was in our midst during the 29th General Assembly and Conventions.

Upon reflection, here are highlights from June 2017:

1. A good spirit from beginning to end. The Holy Spirit watched over our church making possible a measure of oneness among a diverse group. Prayer was the key to the worship services; fellowship; business sessions; and travel. And raising over \$100,000 for refugees was an act of compassion and generosity.

All to the Glory of God.

2. Elected two new general superintendents. We were pleased to welcome Filimão M. Chambo, who was elected the 42nd general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. General Superintendent Chambo comes to this position from the Africa Region where he served as regional director for eight years.

Our welcome extends to Carla D. Sunberg, elected the 43rd general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. At the time of her election she was president of Nazarene Theological Seminary where she served for nearly four years.

3. Voices heard. The assembly and conventions gave rise to voices from across the international church, in praise and worship, in committees, in plenaries. Contributions were made in the election of new leadership and in deciding on important legislation. We were encouraged by the higher-than-usual number of youth representatives present.
4. Legislative approvals. This included a language update on Articles of Faith; improvements on ministerial rehabilitation while strengthening care for ministers and their families; the completion (for now) on the study of the

general superintendency; and the overwhelming support for a new statement on “Human Sexuality and Marriage.”

5. The Quadrennial Address. The Board of General Superintendents’ opportunity to report on the mission and ministry of the denomination and look positively toward a future where “Jesus is Lord.”
6. Celebration of Service. We said “thank you” to General Superintendents Jerry D. Porter and J. K. Warrick for a combined 32 years of service to the church in its highest office. Their model of Christlikeness, deep knowledge of the church, and vast experience in leadership constitute rich legacy for which we are very grateful.

TRANSITIONS

Leadership changes

The church has a proven system of developing leadership to oversee its polity and system of mission — handing over responsibility when the time has come.

Judge Charles Davis, Jr.

Our Board recognizes the long-term service of Judge Charles Davis, Jr.

In 1993, Judge Davis was elected to the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene where he served as Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Chairman of the Audit Committee, and most recently as President of the General Board for eight years.

He also served on the Board of Trustees for Trevecca Nazarene University from 1979 until 2015 and as chairman of that board for 12 years. In the Florida District, Church of the Nazarene, Judge Davis is a member and secretary of the Advisory Board, and was chair of the District Finance Committee.

Judge Davis is a lifelong member of First Church of the Nazarene, in Winter Haven, Florida, USA.

For 29 years of faithful service to the local, district, and general church, and its educational interests, the Board of General Superintendents expresses its deep appreciation to Judge Charles A. Davis, Jr.

Dwight Gunter

The BGS welcomes Dwight Gunter as the incoming President of the General Board. We pray for a blessed ministry and rewarding experience in his new capacity.

Woodie Stevens

For more than eleven years, Dr. Woodie Stevens has served as the Global Director of Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International (SDMI). Dr. Stevens will conclude his term as SDMI director effective at the end of February 2018.

The Board of General Superintendents joins with others in recognizing Dr. Stevens' forty-plus years of service to the Church of the Nazarene.

Dr. Stevens has served as a pastor, district superintendent, General Nazarene Youth International president, member of the General Board, and as a trustee of Northwest Nazarene University, Point Loma Nazarene University, and Nazarene Theological Seminary.

The BGS chair will be working with the Global SDMI Council to identify Dr. Stevens' successor.

New Regional Director, Africa

Daniel Gomis

Upon a recommendation by the Board of General Superintendents, the General Board elected Senegal-born Daniel Gomis as regional director, Africa, effective 15 October 2017. Rev. Gomis was serving as field strategy coordinator for the Africa West Field.

He replaces Dr. Chambo.

Rev. Gomis pastored for eleven years in his home country of Senegal. Daniel and his wife, Elisabeth Gomis, have served as missionaries for the Church of the Nazarene since 2012.

Ordained in 2011, Daniel Gomis earned a Master of Divinity degree at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, USA. Prior to earning his master's degree, Rev. Gomis completed his Bachelor of Arts in English at the University of Saint Louis and earned a master's certificate in African studies.

Director of Communications

Cort Miller

Dr. Cort Miller will assume responsibilities as our new Director of Communications on 1 March 2018. The Director of Communications will lead an initial team and coordinate the organization's overall communications strategy.

Working collaboratively with the Board of General Superintendents, the Director of Communications, in cooperation with senior leadership, will develop and implement communication strategies to broaden the impact of the Church of the Nazarene's programs and oversee organizational messaging and constituent services.

New Nazarene Theological Seminary President

Jeren Rowell

The trustees of Nazarene Theological Seminary, an educational institution of the general church, elected Jeren Rowell as the seminary's 11th president, filling the position created when Dr. Sunberg was elected to the general superintendency.

Dr. Rowell, who was most recently NTS board chair, has demonstrated a strong passion for the theological education and practical/professional preparation of ministers in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition.

He attended Trinity Evangelical Seminary and NTS. Dr. Rowell earned a Bachelor of Arts from Northwest Nazarene University, and a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Education from Olivet Nazarene University. He has served as an adjunct professor for both NTS and Olivet.

He and his wife, Starla, reside in the Kansas City area.

In Memoriam

Our Board shares in the recent loss of those who were part of the Church of the Nazarene's leadership:

Stan Toler

Stan Toler passed from this earthly life to life eternal with his Lord and Savior, 18 November 2017.

Dr. Toler's call to preach came at an early age. By 17, he was pastor of a local church. Dr. Toler went on to earn multiple degrees in higher education. A best-selling author, he was well-known for his contributions to training Christian leaders.

In 2009, Dr. Toler was elected the 39th General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene and served in that capacity until 2013 when he was honored with General Superintendent Emeritus status.

Four members of the current Board and three emeriti attended Dr. Toler's Celebration of Life service at Bethany First Church of the Nazarene, Bethany, Oklahoma, USA.

Faye Stowe

Faye Stowe, wife of General Superintendent Emeritus Eugene Stowe, passed on 4 December 2017. She was 99 and would have turned 100 in January of this year. Dr. and Mrs. Stowe were married 74 years.

General Superintendent Emeritus James Diehl represented the Board of General Superintendents and Emeriti at the memorial service.

Mashangu Maluleka

It is with great sadness that we add to the memorial roll our brother in Christ, Mashangu Maluleka. Rev. Maluleka's sudden passing on 6 January 2018, is a great loss foremost to his family but also the church, the Africa Region, and the Africa South Field, where he served as Field Strategy Coordinator.

Rev. Maluleka was also pastor of Divine Hope Church of the Nazarene and previously served as President of Nazarene Theological College of South Africa.

To Linda Toler, Eugene Stowe, Remember Maluleka, and their families, we offer our deepest sympathies and prayers.

OUR MISSION TO THE WORLD

We are a holiness church and a Great Commission church.

The command is clear:

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do ...
—1 Peter 1:15 (NIV)

The commission is clear:

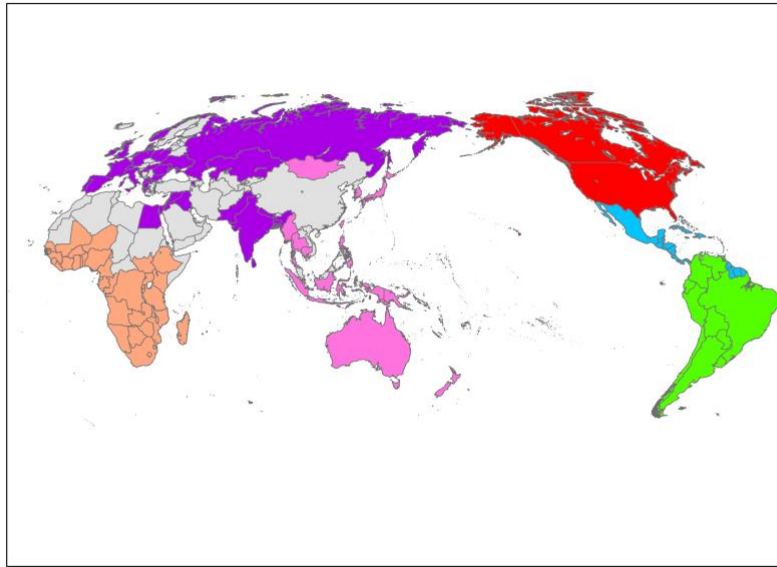
Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. —Matthew 28:19–20 (NIV)

Four critical questions arise from this last passage of Scripture:

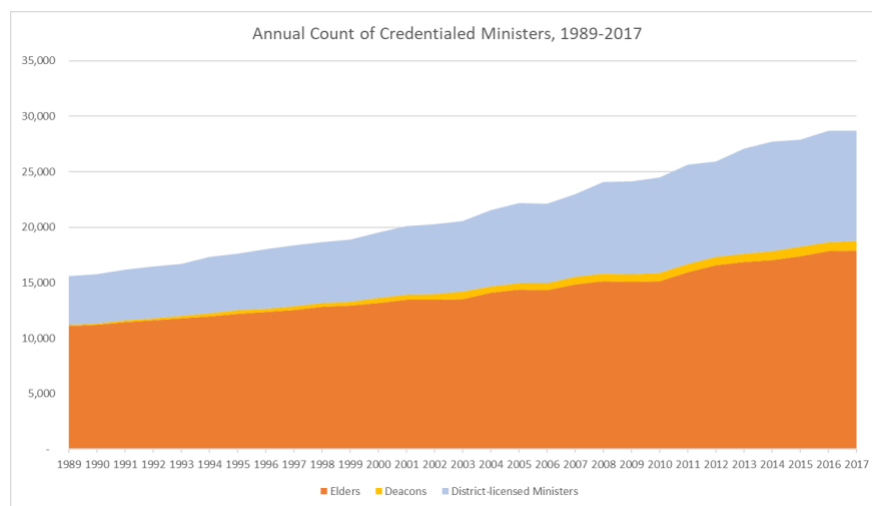
First: Have we been obedient to His Spirit in extending the reach of our ministry?

As of 2017, the church is in:

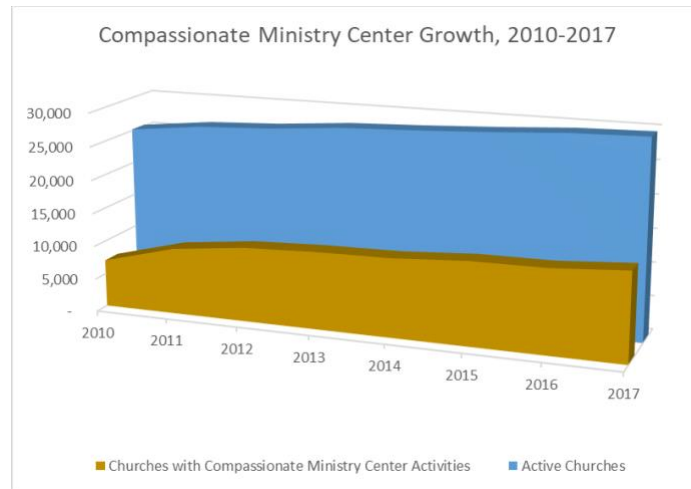
- 162 world areas



- With 28,719 credentialed ministers (elders, deacons, district licensed)



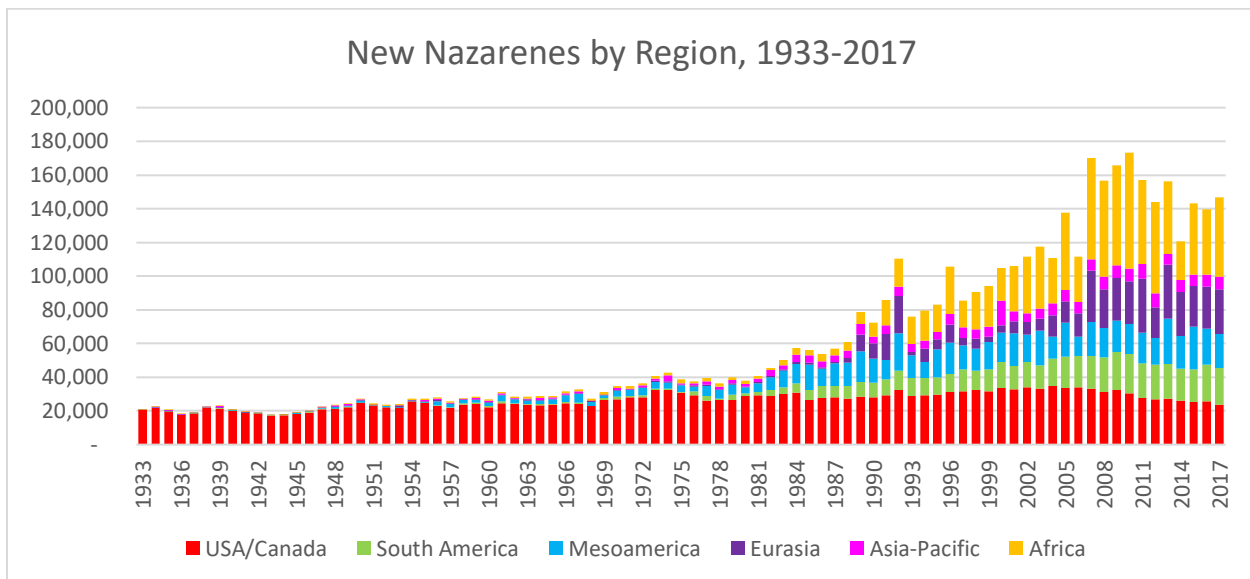
- 13,325 churches report involvement in a compassionate ministry



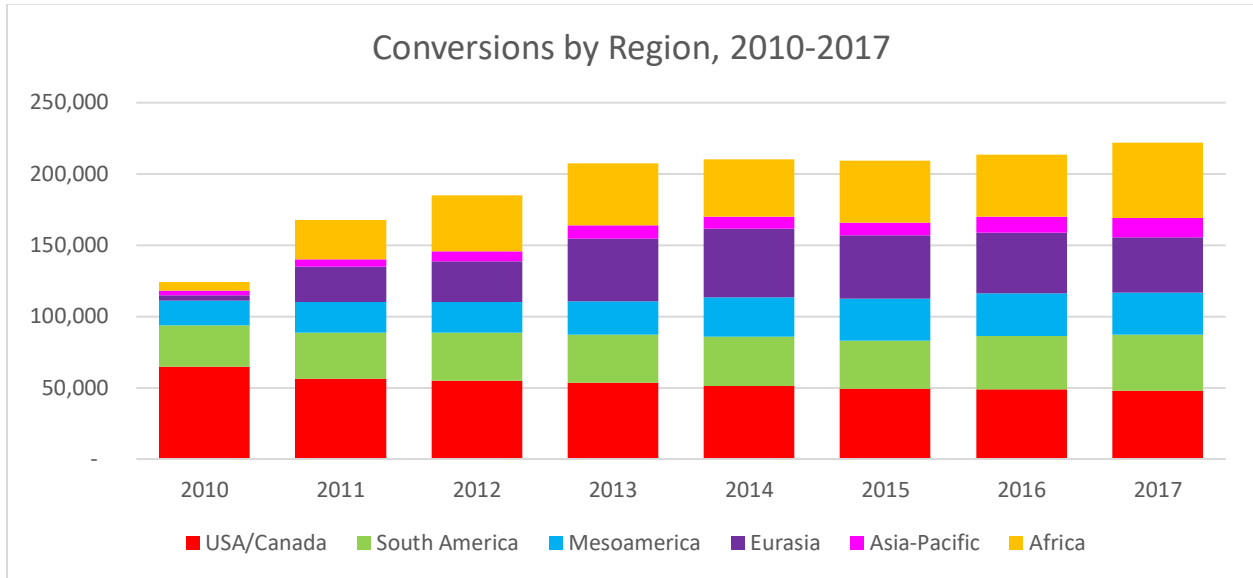
Second: How is the Spirit blessing our evangelistic efforts?

In 2017 we are pleased to report:

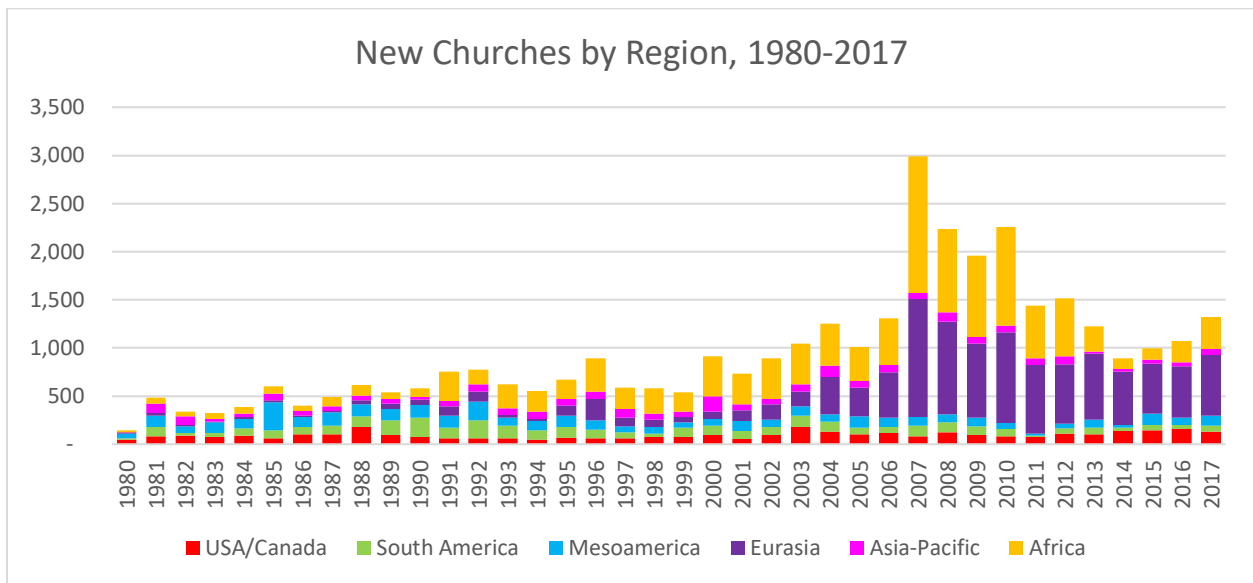
- 146,577 New Nazarenes



- 221,730 Decisions for Christ



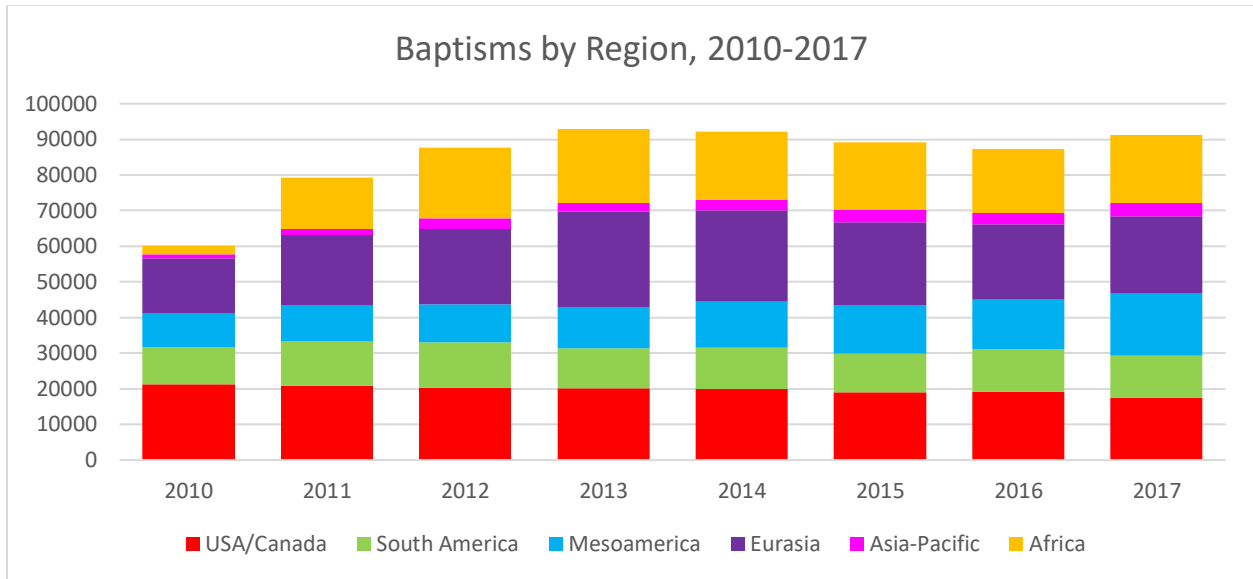
- 1,319 New churches



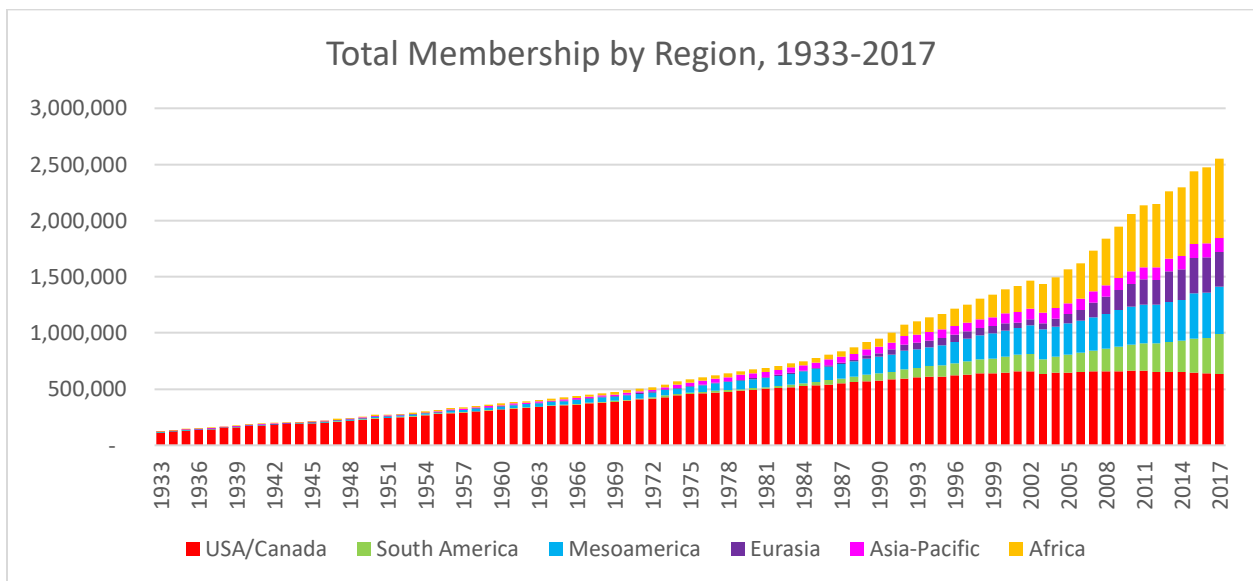
Third: How is the Spirit moving when it comes to incorporating new Christians into the church?

The incorporation or assimilation at the end of last year shows:

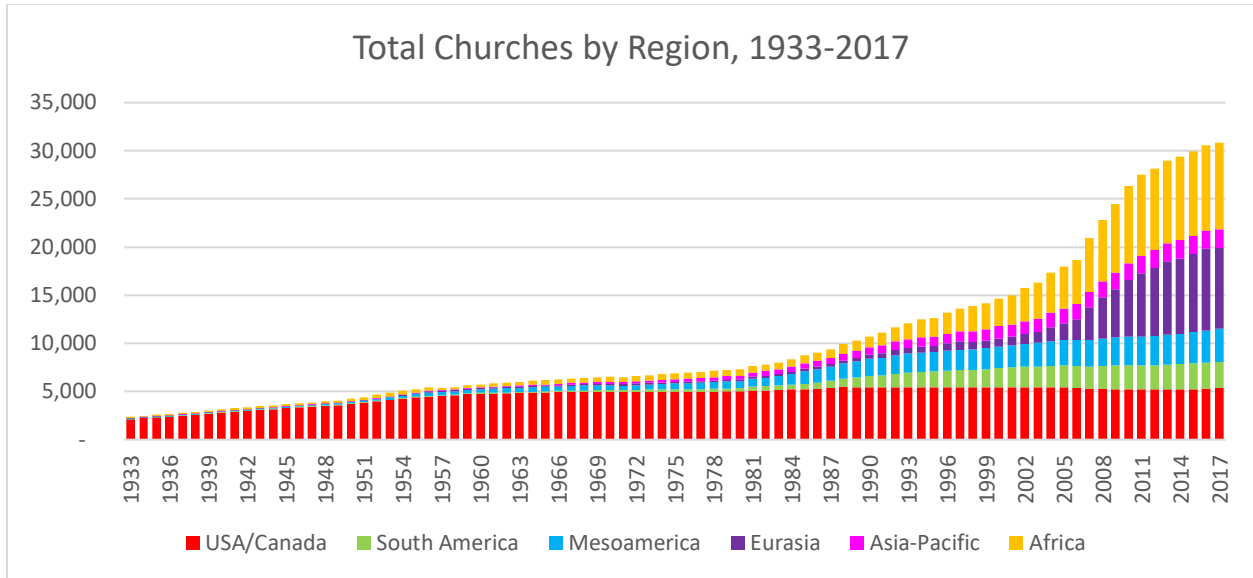
- 91,175 Baptisms



- 2,550,374 Total Members



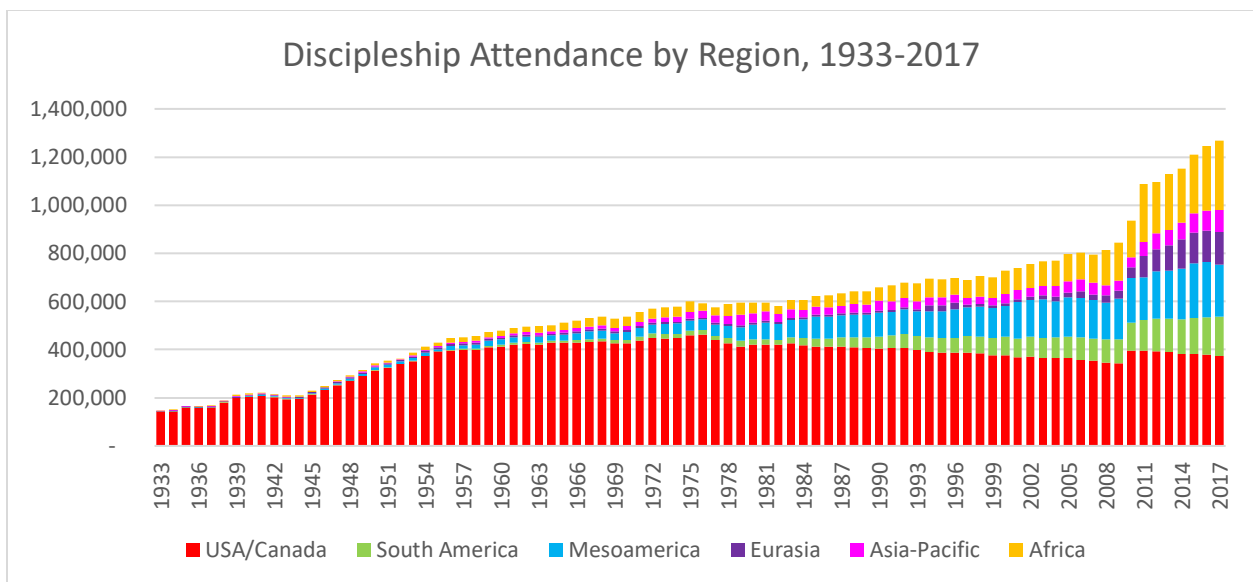
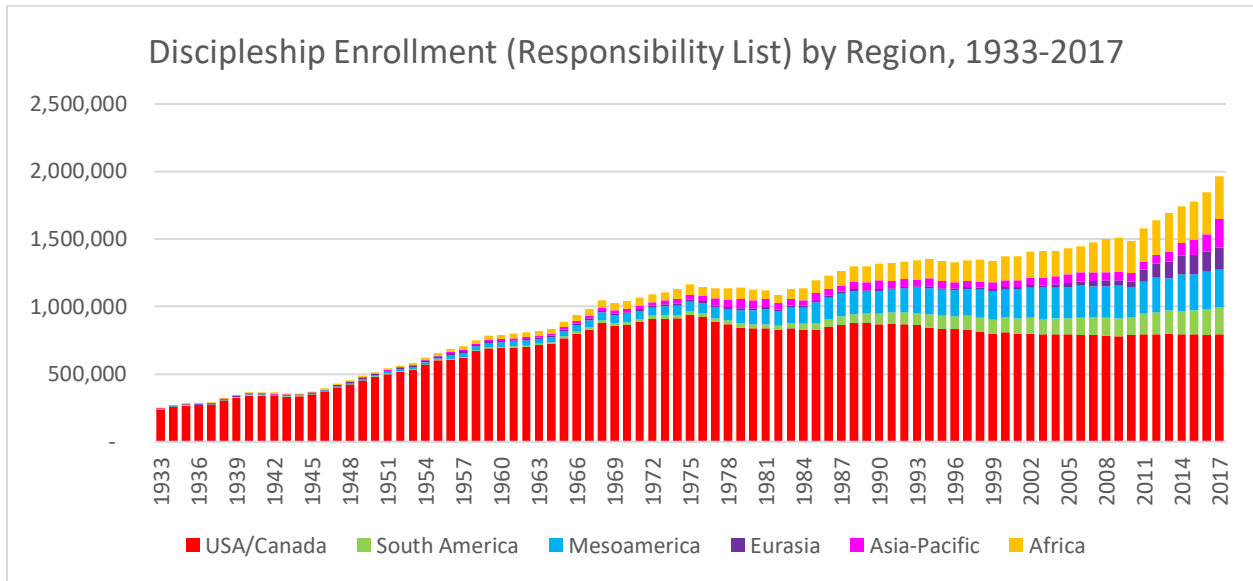
- 30,875 Total Churches

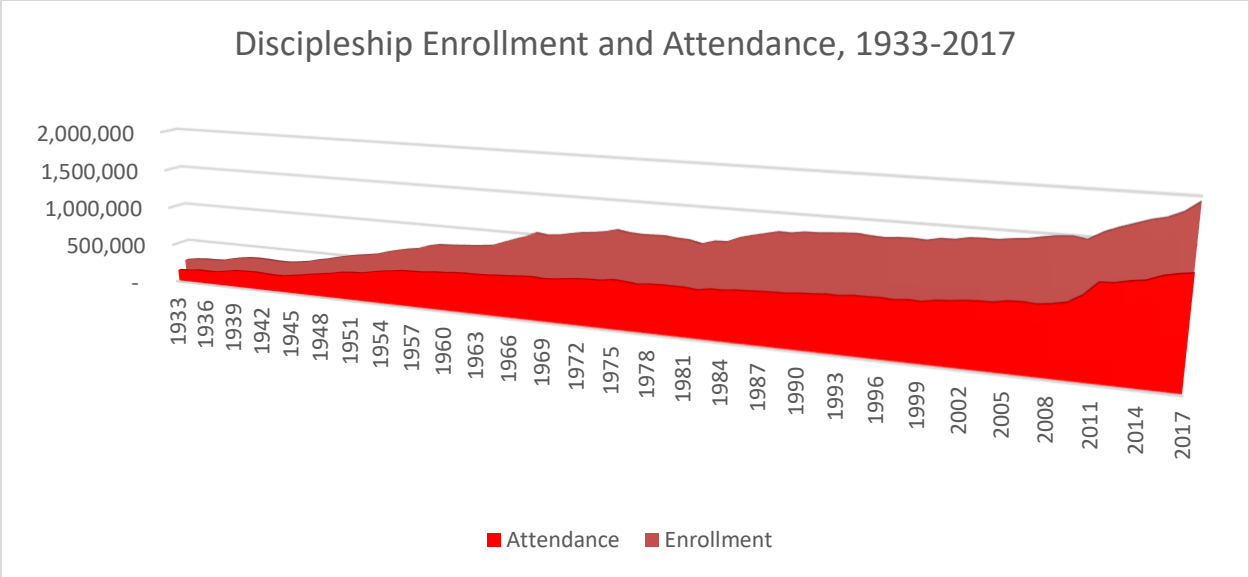


Fourth: How are we allowing the Spirit of God to bless our ministry of teaching our people what it means to be a Christian and mature in their faith?

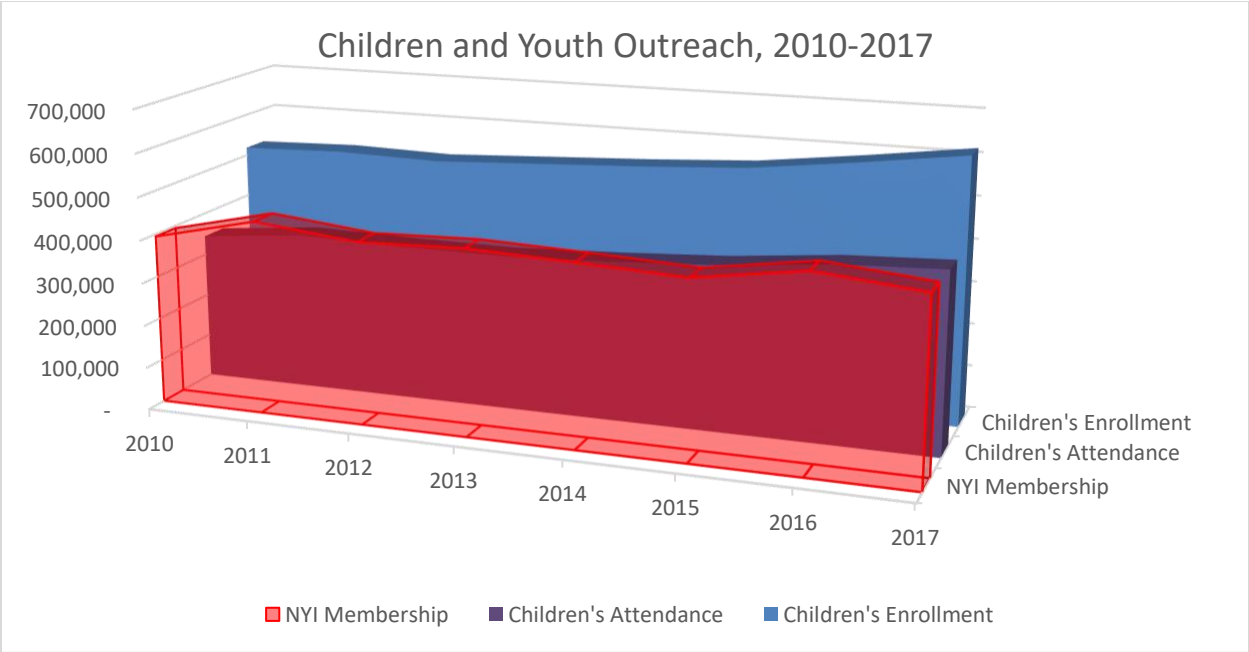
Among all age groups, the opportunities for knowing Him better are as good as they have ever been:

- 1,961,853 total discipleship enrollments; 1,268,470 attendance





- 425,508 NYI membership
- 621,352 Children’s discipleship enrollment; 419,387 attendance



How is the mission fulfilled?

To make Christlike disciples, we must be Christlike disciples: Laity. Pastors. Missionaries. Evangelists. Chaplains. Sunday school teachers. Educators. Compassionate ministry workers. That is how a heavenly vision is reduced to human scale.

The *Manual* says, "It is in the local church that the saving, perfecting, teaching, and commissioning takes place. The local church is the expression of our faith." (Preamble to Church Government)

Who are those 31,000 churches?

- Did you know: On an average Sunday in 2017, about 1.5 million people worshipped in a Church of the Nazarene and did so in 190 different languages? Nearly one-third worshipped in English and about one-sixth in Spanish.
- Did you know: Nearly two-thirds of our churches report fewer than 50 people in worship on an average week? The median attendance is 35.
- Did you know: Even with all those smaller churches, half of Nazarene worshippers attend a church that runs at least 100 in worship? Just over 25 percent of our worshippers are in churches that average at least 250.

As church historian Dr. Philip Jenkins reminds us, it is not numerical success but strength of witness that makes the difference. ³

Vision 2020

Fields are ready to be harvested.

Vision 2020 faith projections call for 3.5 million total members, with 2.5 million in worship attendance, 2.5 million in discipleship attendance, in 50,000 churches.

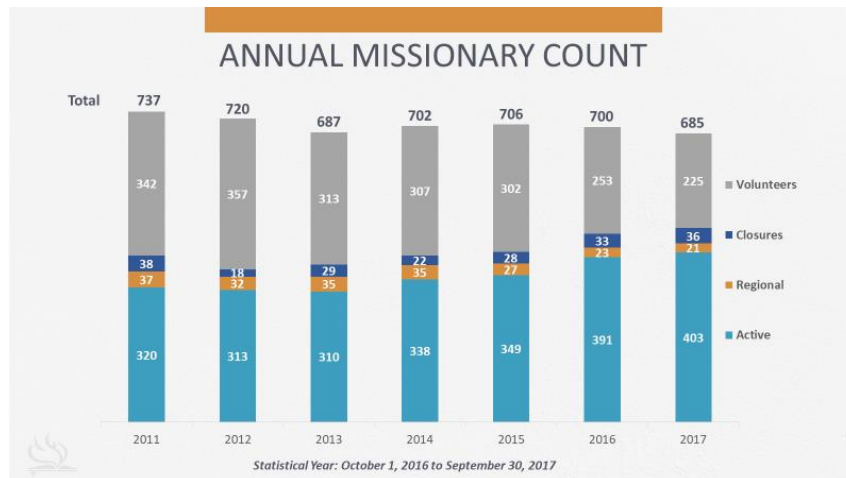
At the core of this Kingdom expansion is a renewed emphasis of intentional holiness evangelism and a renewed heart that integrates both Word and deed – gospel and action.

Habakkuk reminds us to “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time ...”
—Habakkuk 2:2-3 (NIV)

Missionaries

The denomination reported 685 missionaries and their 379 children were deployed from 59 world areas, including 225 volunteers. There were also 314 short-term volunteers and 9,166 Work & Witness team members.

All missionary deployment types 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.



While there are potential candidates for commissioned deployment, interview schedules and visa issues created the necessity of delaying until 2019 our traditional Monday evening General Board “commissioning service.”

Although no missionaries were interviewed for commissioned deployment in this Session, it is worth noting that in 2017, Global Mission deployed 110 missionaries to serve around the world. These missionaries were sent as volunteers, associates, and specialized assignment missionaries.

Six couples — Israel and Martha Acosta, Helmer and Susi Juarez, Alfredo and Rute Mulieri, Daniel and Margarita Pesado, Jim and Kathy Radcliffe, and Daryll and Verna Stanton — will be honored for their many years of service as they move into retirement.

A Compassionate Church

In the last half of 2017 and early into 2018, our world was affected by significant natural disasters. The events were devastating, but during tragedy Nazarene churches mobilized quickly to respond, in part through the support of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries:

- 140,000 people received aid through Nazarene disaster response efforts between July and November 2017

- 1,585 local Nazarene volunteers were mobilized to serve through the disaster operations

South Asia Floods

In response, Nazarenes in Bangladesh provided food aid to approximately 50,000 individuals; the distribution was done by 112 volunteers.

In India, 65 volunteers from 12 Nazarene congregations provided food aid to more than 10,000 individuals.

In Nepal, NCM was able to help several church families who needed immediate aid.

Sierra Leone Mudslides

Five local Nazarene churches mobilized, and 16 volunteers provided food, cooking oil, and soap to more than 3,500 people.

Mexico Earthquakes

On 7 September 2017, a massive 8.2-magnitude earthquake devastated communities in Oaxaca and Chiapas, and 12 days later another major earthquake struck north of Mexico City. There were 60 deaths, including one Nazarene church member.

In the days following the first earthquake, Churches of the Nazarene established 17 feeding points, where they provided meals to 8,000 people every day. Weeks later, there were 26 outdoor church kitchens feeding 5,000 people who were still in need. Six churches also served as water purification sites.

Local medical professionals and volunteers came together to provide medical care for more than 3,000 individuals. Church leaders report that 400 Nazarene members volunteered to make these efforts possible.

Hurricane Harvey (South Texas, USA)

Ten Churches of the Nazarene served as shelters and distribution points, and at least 22,000 people received help. More than 100 volunteer teams from across the U.S. went to south Texas to help with the disaster response efforts, including cleaning out and rebuilding homes and distributing emergency aid to families in need.

Hurricane Irma (Saint Martin)

Approximately 75 percent of Nazarene members lost their homes, and the newest Nazarene church building was destroyed. Nazarenes in Martinique were able to get a shipment of food aid to the island, and NCM has assisted the churches in monthly distributions of food, water, and other necessities to 300 families.

Hurricane Maria (Dominica, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, US Virgin Islands)

In Dominica, one Nazarene church's compassionate ministry center sheltered 50 people, undoubtedly saving lives. Across the island, Nazarene churches provided food, water, and other essentials to hundreds who were in need.

In Puerto Rico, Nazarene churches mobilized approximately 200 volunteers to distribute large cargo shipments containing tens of thousands of pounds of food, water filters, tarps, blankets, Crisis Care Kits, baby formula, power generators, batteries, and other supplies to approximately 4,000 people.

While the damage in the Dominican Republic was less extensive, Nazarene churches cared for 250 affected families through food bags, clothing, water, and Crisis Care Kits.

Dengue Fever Outbreak in Sri Lanka

Nazarenes in Sri Lanka mobilized to create prevention awareness campaigns and clean-up activities to minimize the breeding of mosquitoes. More than 170 volunteers participated to benefit at least 8,325 people.

Famine in East Africa

Local churches distributed hundreds of thousands of pounds of food to more than 5,750 individuals who were most vulnerable to extreme hunger, including both church members and others in their communities.

Wildfires and Mudslides in California, USA

NCM closely monitored the church's response to wildfires and mudslides in different parts of California, offering help where needed.

Local churches in Los Angeles and Northern California assisted with shelter and repairs to damaged homes. Nazarene churches were encouraged to "adopt" 10-12 families in their area who lost property or loved ones, committing to recovery support for at least six months.

Refugees

Nazarenes in the Middle East, Europe, and other parts of the world continue to minister to refugees of war and terrorism in partnership with the greater Body of Christ.

A Generous People

On behalf of the Church of the Nazarene, the Board of General Superintendents extends its appreciation to Nazarenes everywhere for their love, prayers, financial gifts, and acts of kindness to people in need — You are a generous people.

FUNDING THE MISSION

What is the biblical basis for giving to mission?

Using the church at Macedonia as an example of spiritual and financial generosity, here is what Paul says to the church at Corinth:

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. —2 Corinthians 8: 3–5 (NIV)

“According to their power, and beyond their power — THEY GAVE.”

The basis for giving in the Church of the Nazarene is spiritual, first.

Scriptures teach that God is the owner of all persons and all things. We, therefore, are His stewards of both life and possessions. *Manual* par. 32

The funding model for our denomination draws on the scriptural idea of “Storehouse Tithing.”

All who are part of the Church of the Nazarene are urged to contribute faithfully one-tenth of all their increase as a minimum financial obligation to the Lord and freewill offerings in addition as God has prospered them for the support of the whole church — local, district, educational, and general. *Manual* par. 32.1

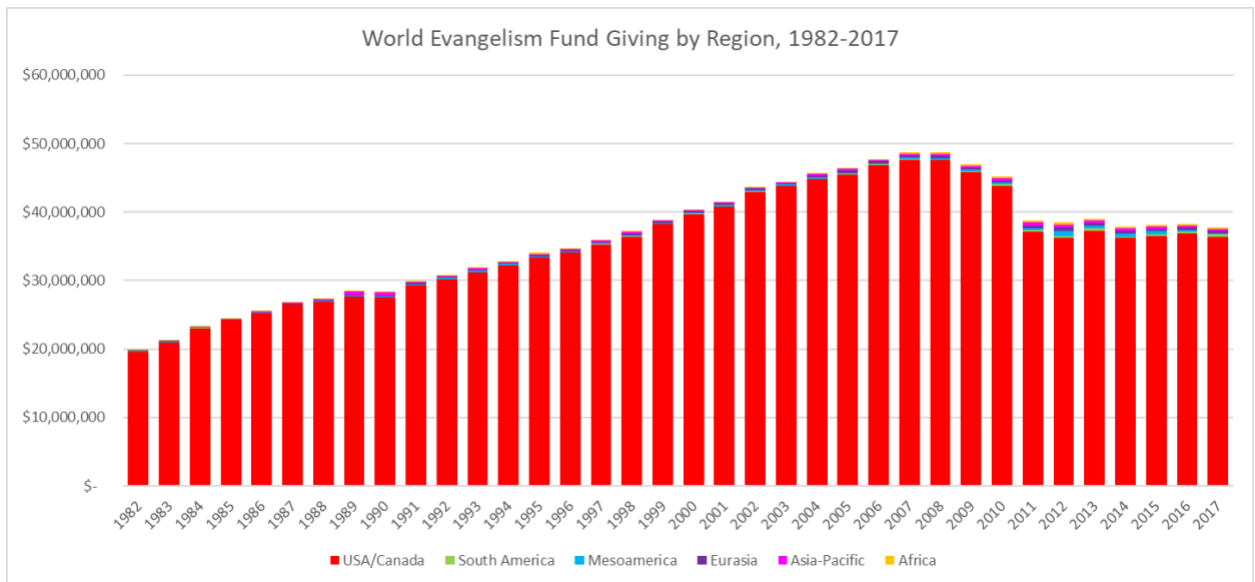
Does the church still believe in storehouse tithing?

Anyone who advocates giving to global mission should also advocate giving to local mission.

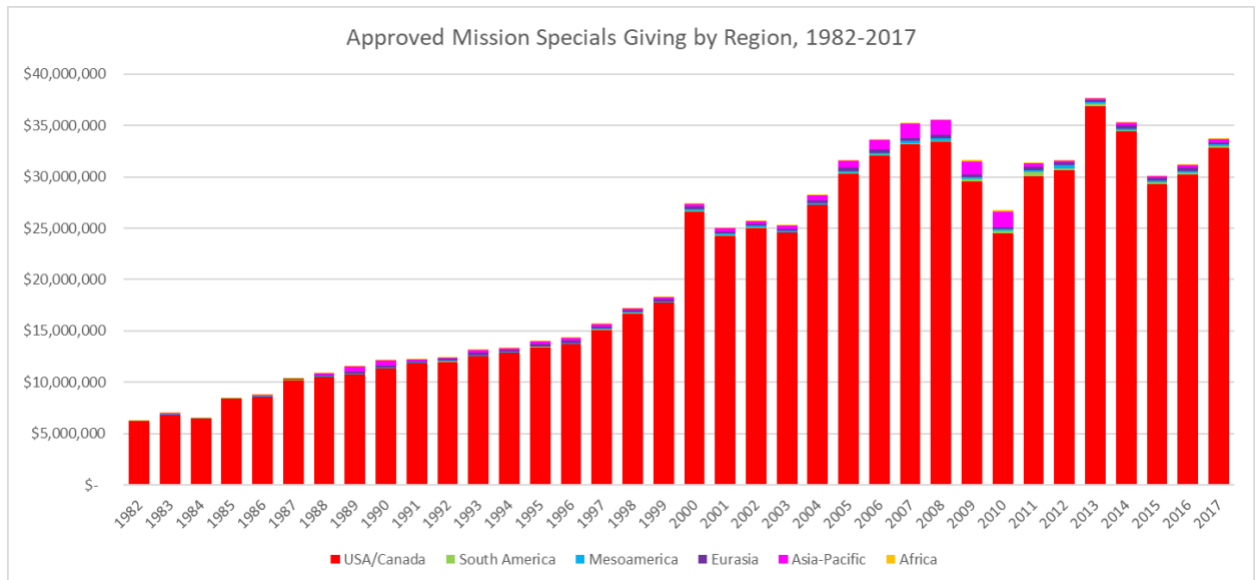
There is an impressive amount of sacrifice and generosity in this report from 71 percent of churches that either gave over 5.5 percent or reported some World Evangelism Fund giving. (29 percent of churches reported nothing given to WEF.)

In the past fiscal year:

- \$37.8 million was reported given to World Evangelism Fund (over \$400,000 less than in 2016)



- And \$33.7 million for Approved Mission Specials (over \$2.5 million more than in 2016)



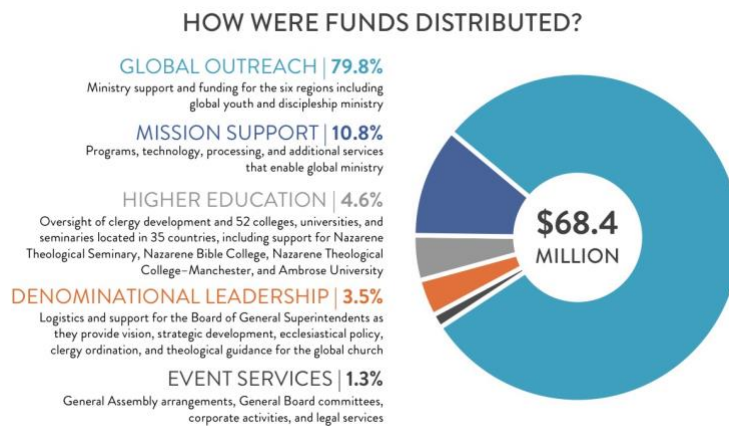
The principle established by the Board of General Superintendents of equal sacrifice – not equal giving – remains a pillar of global stewardship.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge with gratitude the financial responsibilities carried by USA/Canada churches, who gave 96 percent of World Evangelism Fund (WEF) and 97 percent of Approved Mission Specials.

Even as giving to World Evangelism Fund (WEF) is increasing in other parts of the world (nearly 6,000 churches from other global mission regions gave at least 5.5 percent to WEF this year compared to only 2,546 in 2011), funding the mission is largely dependent on laity, pastors, district superintendents, and Nazarene Missions International leadership in USA/Canada.

How were funds distributed? The above figures are those reported by local churches globally. Not all missions giving comes through the Global Ministry Center (GMC) in Lenexa, Kansas, USA, but \$68.4 million for World Evangelism Fund and Approved Missions Specials was entrusted to the general church for disbursement.

The following chart shows the broad categories in which these funds were invested in the mission of making Christlike disciples in the nations.



Church of the Nazarene Foundation

The year 2017 was the Church of the Nazarene Foundation’s best year.

In numerous cases, the Foundation was able to distribute funds for ministry at exactly the time they were needed. In 2017, \$12.7 million was distributed for Kingdom work. This one-year distribution is twice as much as any previous year’s distribution.

Since its founding in 2004, the Foundation has distributed \$67.9 million to more than 538 local churches, districts, schools, missions, and other organizations.

In 2017, \$7,027,378 was distributed from the Foundation to Global Mission and related ministries. In addition, the Foundation distributed \$5,466,797 to Nazarene

educational institutions, districts, local churches, and other Nazarene and non-Nazarene ministries.

After just 13 years of operation, the Church of the Nazarene Foundation distributed to ministries an amount equal to one-third of the 2017 World Evangelism Fund.

The confidence of Nazarenes and friends of the church is evidenced with more than \$123.1 million in assets now under Foundation management.

Summary

What further should be said about our “mission to the world?”

- First, we offer praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His blessings on the Church of the Nazarene. “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.” —Lamentations 3:22 (NIV).

As much as we love the Church of the Nazarene, God loves the church more.

- We know God is doing more than anyone can record. The mission is fulfilled in ways that are often more “spiritual mystery” than human measurement.
- Great are the burdens of a denomination that spans six of seven continents, facing acts of terror, famine, fleeing refugees, natural disasters, and cultural resistance. Yet what at times seems overwhelming to us is *not* overwhelming to God, whose Spirit remains among us. So we do not fear. —Haggai 2:5b (paraphrased)

One writer put it this way: “He doesn’t detour around people or times, He uses them. God’s purposes are worked out in confrontation and revelation, in judgment and salvation, but they are worked out.”

No matter the circumstances, by His Spirit, the mission is being fulfilled.

NEW CALENDAR

New Global English Manual

A “Global English *Manual*” was mandated by the 2017 General Assembly. It is a simplified version of the *Manual* that will be used in a variety of ways, including *Manual* translation for tier-two languages.

1 April 2018 is the deadline for a draft of paragraphs 1–99.

Educational Initiatives

Global Theology Conference — 2018

There are two major educational initiatives scheduled for this quadrennium.

The Church of the Nazarene Global Theology Conference IV is sponsored by the Board of General Superintendents and International Board of Education. The conference, which is by invitation only, is set to convene in Leesburg, Florida, USA, 18–21 March 2018.

The theme of the Global Theology Conference is: Christology — “To Know Christ” (Phil 3:10)

PALCONs

A second initiative is the Pastors and Leaders Conference, commonly known as PALCON. There are six scheduled for 2018:

Africa Region

- Accra, Ghana To be announced
- Ethiopia To be announced

Asia-Pacific

- Philippines-Micronesia
Baguio, Philippines May 15–19

USA/Canada Region

- Eastern Nazarene College
Quincy, Massachusetts June 20–22
- Southern Nazarene University
Bethany, Oklahoma June 25–27
- Point Loma Nazarene University
San Diego, California July 30–August 1

There will be six USA/Canada PALCONs in 2020:

- Ambrose University
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- Trevecca Nazarene University
Nashville, Tennessee
- MidAmerica Nazarene University
Olathe, Kansas
- Mount Vernon Nazarene University
Mount Vernon, Ohio
- Northwest Nazarene University
Nampa, Idaho
- Olivet Nazarene University
Bourbonnais, Illinois

Our churches are encouraged to make it possible for their pastors to attend a PALCON in their region.

SIX QUADRENNIAL PROJECTS

There are six quadrennial projects being undertaken by the Board of General Superintendents:

1. Articles of Faith Project (David A. Busic and Filimão M. Chambo)

The Church of the Nazarene has determined that our Articles of Faith are the centering point of our theology and mission. Therefore, any changes to the Articles of Faith must be done with prayerful and prudent discernment.

The 2017 General Assembly voted for another group to be appointed to continue the study of our Articles of Faith over the next three years.

2. Nazarene Missions Project (Gustavo A. Crocker and Eugénio R. Duarte):

The main purpose of the Nazarene Missions Project is to redefine and realign the missionary arm of the denomination to both update and describe Nazarene Missions for our generation. Of special importance will be a contemporary definition of Nazarene Missions, missionary strategy, and missionary sending.

To accomplish this project, the Board of General Superintendents has finished the strategic design phase, and now we are committed to listening to all the constituencies involved in the missionary enterprise to ensure that if and when the project is fully implemented, we will have the same levels of engagement enjoyed throughout the history of the denomination.

3. Communications Project (Carla D. Sunberg and Gustavo A. Crocker):

The Communications Project is charged with clearly articulating the mission and vision of the Church of the Nazarene, for this is vital to fulfilling the work that God has placed before us. This project is analyzing the status of communications within the GMC and to the broader global church.

The Board of General Superintendents has committed to message development and to study the possibility of new language surrounding the World Evangelism Fund and approved specials. The plan is operationalized through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

4. Covenant of Christian Conduct Project (Filimão M. Chambo and Carla D. Sunberg):

The BGS appointed a global study group, to study and review *Manual* paragraphs on the Christian Life and Sanctity of Human Life, paragraphs: 28, 29 and 30, with all the sub-paragraphs, and 929 and 930. (*Manual* 2017 – 2021).

The study and review of the Covenant of Christian Conduct is an expression of our commitment to holiness of heart and life.

5. Church Administration Project. (Eugénio R. Duarte and David W. Graves)

The following resolutions are related to Church Administration: DA 209 – Renewing District Superintendent Relationship; LA 411 — Electronic and Multimedia Meetings, Local Church; MED-517 — Use of the Title “Pastor; and” MED 517 — Restrictions for Persons Guilty of Sexual Misconduct Involving Children.

These resolutions reflect the church’s continued appreciation of her relationship with both lay and clergy leaders, and her care for their well-being as well as the well-being of others.

The Board of General Superintendents approved the creation of two groups made up of men and women, and clergy and lay members of our global

church to study the above matters and submit a final report back to the Board by December 2020.

6. General Assembly Study (David W. Graves and David A. Basic)

Since 1993, a total of 17 separate resolutions were presented to delegates proposing changes in the number of years between general assemblies. Those resolutions recommended moving the denomination from the current four-year interval to five-, six-, or even eight-year intervals. Each resolution coming to the floor was defeated.*

With this background, the BGS proposes examining how the Church of the Nazarene designs and programs general assemblies — not their frequency. This General Assembly Study Committee will be charged with evaluating travel, locations, venue, housing, conventions, length, and worship services.

A review of how business sessions are organized and scheduled is part of the Study Committee's assignment. The committee will include, but not be limited to, individuals with experience in different aspects of general assemblies. There is also the possibility of an outside firm to help in the study.

The current timeline calls for sending Study Committee findings and recommendations to the Board of General Superintendents within the next twelve months. A final report from the BGS to the General Board, in consultation with the Executive Committee, will be made ahead of the February 2019 Session.

*Office of the General Secretary

BY HIS SPIRIT

Some of the most enticing headlines in today's news include the words "chosen to lead" attached to a name. To get to the heart of the matter, many times we jump to the bios to learn the current job and performance history of the chosen one.

We would not be in this room tonight if we did not believe that the world needs leaders and that we, as a church, have been chosen to lead. But we are not deceived by the foolish thought that our performance and history are the credentials that most powerfully compel the world to believe in and trust the church's leadership.

During and after their return from Babylon (538–516 B.C.), the Jewish people heard from God by the mouth of two prophets: Haggai, whose main interest was to encourage them to rebuild the temple, and Zechariah, whose emphasis was the rebuilding of their spiritual lives. These emphases melded together to give the same message to the people: *The need to rebuild their relationship with God*. Among those chosen by God to serve in making His will known, there was a man called Zerubbabel.

According to the historian Josephus, it is possible that God used a commonplace occurrence to make His choice fall on Zerubbabel. The man was invited to participate in a contest that would give Darius an opportunity to show how good he could be to his people. One question was asked of all participants: "What is the strongest in the world — wine, kings, women, or truth?" Having demonstrated that truth was the mightiest of all, Zerubbabel was given the privilege of choosing whatever he desired. He chose the privilege of leading Judea back home and of building the temple that would replace Solomon's, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians.

If our modern systems and codes of information were available to them, a headline might have read something like “Zerubbabel: Chosen to Lead the Rebuilding of the Temple.”

Chosen not by Darius but by God.

Both his calling and his response are stated in Zechariah 4:6–10 (NIV):

So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.

“What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’”

Then the word of the LORD came to me: “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you.

“Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?”

Zerubbabel did not really know what he was in for, and obviously he missed a few important pieces in the process; but he qualified for the job because he was willing: First, to believe God’s promise and let his soul be fed by the hope that by God’s mercy, mountains can become a plain; second, to depend on God’s ways that gracefully make plains out of mountains; and third, to respond in a way that demonstrated the truth of God’s words that mountains would become a plain.

To find the meaning of the term “mountains” in this passage, some scholars go to the book of Ezra (5:3–5; 6:10–12) to suggest that it refers to Tattenai. Others see the mountains of the Persian Empire or even all the worldly powers aligned against God. Yet others state the most obvious: the ruins of the first temple.

Relevant to us today is the question of what are the mountains that we have been chosen to face because we have decided to believe, to depend, and to respond? Do we believe that we have been chosen to collectively accomplish something of significance in the amazing plot that God is writing, and not just changing to accommodate our preferences? That He is putting it together in such a way that everyone who is willing to obediently find a place of both rest and endeavor will find it.

He calls us:

To Believe

Fitness is a huge modern industry. Globally there are 180,000 known fitness clubs, with estimated earnings of 84 billion dollars, paid by their 145 million members. If we were able to add to that image of fitness lovers, all the unregistered clubs, and all the joggers on the streets, and every single home fitness machine user, and every less-sophisticated means of exercising, we would get a better idea of how much personal fitness the world is convinced it needs to be able to better their living conditions and accomplish their goals and purposes.

Now, if we could imagine it possible to combine all the powers that represent cities, provinces, and states with their paramilitary, military, and other forms of force that humans can use — or just show. And if we could put all those fighting forces together, wouldn't they certainly represent many, many times more the "strength and power" referred in the "word of the Lord to Zerubbabel?"

I am sure that with the words of Zechariah 4, God wanted this man to be reminded of the pharaonic power (Exodus 14:4; Ezekiel 17:17) both physical and spiritual, and the power of Syrians and the Babylonians, and the other powers of the day, and how they were dealt with. Also, He did not want him to ignore the smaller but more tangible powers that were closer to them. What He was saying to His servant was this: *If you seek to know worldly power, you will know it. And if you seek to fight it you may; but if you really want to win, you have only one*

source of power, and that source is my Spirit.

So, believe not so much in your ability to do it because you are fit and strong but because His Spirit is in you and with you. It is His Spirit who sends and guides, asks and empowers, instructs and shows how, and convinces and gives a hope to hold onto.

The church does have powers that are easily liked by the worldly mind and its ways of thinking, planning, and doing. There is power in our systems, and we just reported some incredible results of the wonderful ways we gather and disburse resources.

There is strength and power in the well-trained and equipped leadership that we have.

There is strength and power in our collective wisdom, in our doctrine and in all our potential.

We have numbers that satisfy the scientific minds, we have stories that attest the results we claim, but they do not happen on the back of our good efforts and resources. In fact, if they are to last, to be of eternal value, to transform, to sustain heaven-reaching quality, they must first be the result of our total faith in the planning and doing of the Holy Spirit. They are the work of the Spirit in the church collectively and in each of us individually. We are chosen to believe in the promise of the One who removes mountains.

There is no greater expression of belief in that promise than that of the church gathered where they were told to gather, waiting the way they were told to wait, receiving the way they were told they would receive, and doing what they were told to do. The report is in Acts 2:1–4 (NIV):

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.
Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and

filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

To Depend

Acts 2 is for the church of today. The church today is also chosen to depend on His unfailing and unfading vision, faithful provision, and supervision, in order to get our mountains turned into plains.

Hannah is one of the most powerful Old Testament figures. She is remembered as the mother who gave back to God what she so desperately needed — a son. She is known for her wisdom and closeness to the Spirit of God. She is especially known for her prayer in 1 Samuel 2. That prayer starts by saying: “My heart rejoices (or exults) in the Lord,” which means “My heart succeeds in the Lord.” Learning to rest in the Lord is one of the greatest disciplines in Christian life.

Hannah’s most well-known mountain was infertility; yet when the Lord gave her a child, she did what she had promised she would do — she gave Samuel to the Lord.

We all know how to pray with our lips, pray from the Scriptures, pray in so many good ways; but we fail in praying with our deeds as Hannah did. Not that we do not have some among us who pray with their deeds.

In 2016, I was with the leaders in the South America Region when they launched “The Power of Prayer” initiative. Their objective: to unify the region in prayer for the conversion of lost people in their communities.

The Church of the Nazarene in Manizales Centro, Colombia, a city built on the mountains of religious traditions, exemplifies the impact of persistent prayer and intercession. In January 2017, fifteen of their men and women started a three-month prayer journey.

Their burden was the salvation of Manizales. At the end, they had an evangelistic service for persons they had been praying for. That day, many received Jesus as their Savior, and the impact of those prayers did not stop there. The church continues to pray for the lost, and many new people are being baptized these days. God is answering the prayers of Nazarenes in Manizales.

They now have four home groups, and 56 new disciples actively engaged in ministries. The newly empowered leaders are committed to open new places where the gospel can be shared with the whole city of Manizales.

The Eurasia Region is introduced to the jurisdictional general superintendent by means of a Briefing Book. In it, I found a strategic decision that stresses the importance of prayer. The Eurasia Prayer Coordinator says this about prayer:

“By prayer and fasting, we recognize our dependence upon God, and specifically, our desire to be used by Him as His vessels. We want to empty ourselves from what hinders us to be “full” of God.

“As we submit to our Father in Heaven as obedient and trusting children, we ask Him to bring healing, restoration, and transformation, not only to us but to our families, communities, society, and nations.

“We might face many challenges in the Eurasia Region, challenges of poverty, isolation, injustice, wars, insecurity, pluralism, secularism, materialism, radicalism, fear of the other, and more, but with God’s help we can be salt and light to our communities, as we submit ourselves to the King of Kings, and ask for His kingdom to come and His will to be done in our lives and on earth as it is in heaven.

“Prayer holds us together because if we stay connected and dependent upon God, we will also become an interconnected and interdependent people of God!”

Those in Zerubbabel’s company, coming from the exile, were a small population of just a little over forty thousand people, with no army for defense, and with very little resource of any other kind. No better situation to learn dependence on God.

Vance Havner said, “We say that we depend on the Holy Spirit, but actually we are so wired up with our devices that if the fire does not fall from heaven, we can turn our switch and produce false fire of our own. If there is no sound of a rushing mighty wind, we have the furnace all set to blow hot air instead. God save us from synthetic Pentecost!” ⁵

To Respond

To believe God’s promise and to depend on His Holy Spirit to remove our mountains is to affirm our willingness to accept the help made available to us. In John 14:26 the Holy Spirit is called “advocate” or “helper” whose ministry is to teach us and to “remind” us of all that Jesus said. Memory is one of our most powerful gifts, both individually and collectively. The Word of God is full of remembrance material that the Holy Spirit applies to our lives.

Zerubbabel is described as responding by not giving up his assignment. Zechariah 4:10 pictures the servant of God holding the plumb line, or judging the work according to a pattern. Such a role does not sound desirable, but it is necessary and remains a reminder of the coming of the Ruler of all rulers, Jesus.

The picture also reminds us of a work well done, coming to completion. It reminds us also of the words of Jesus, who said, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” —John 15:11 (NIV). The words of Jesus bring joy when we respond to them. They bring the joy of salvation and

sanctification, the joy of love for Him, for one another, and for the lost; the joy of obedience that results in mountains becoming plains.

A Nazarene missionary shared the following story:

"In 2013 Tanya and I decided to embark on the adoption journey. We had studied the laws of the land, talked to the authorities, and we were pretty sure this was not going to be too difficult a matter. We turned in the paperwork at the end of December and got a positive reply in mid-January. We got a phone call on February 6, became the legal guardians of a two-and-a-half-month-old baby girl, and took her home on February 10. A miracle! We just had to wait for six months before we could adopt our lovely Liliana. In the meantime, a war broke and authorities unofficially decided to stop all adoptions by foreigners. Our adoption applications were rejected.

"At the same time, things at the church Tanya was pastoring were not going well, so we started wondering whether the Lord was trying to say something through all of this. Until one-day Tanya woke me up in the morning in tears and said, "I think God is telling me that my time at this church has come to an end." That came as a shock for both of us (and the church!), but it was also clear that God was leading us to something else. "We thought initially that we would start a church in another area. Then one day our FSC called us on Skype and asked us if we would consider moving to another nation to start the work of the Church of the Nazarene there. So, we all took two months to pray about this and the Lord made it clear that He was behind this.

"There was a slight problem, however. We now were planning on moving to a different country with a baby that was not legally ours and would not be ours as long as I was a foreigner. We had contacted the best adoption lawyer in the country and he had basically told us that our chances of getting this done were very slim, and the process would be extremely

expensive.

“So, we had said ‘yes’ to a new assignment, but there was this huge mountain in front of us and very little we could do to move it. We trusted that the One who called us would also lead us through.

“After considering the options, we decided that I would attempt to obtain a new citizenship, which also is not a journey for the fainthearted. The new citizenship would make the adoption possible and our immigration to the other country a lot easier. So, we decided to take this long and tortuous road, and after a couple of attempts, I turned in the paperwork at the end of February 2016 and we began to prayerfully wait for the mountains to move.

“I was granted citizenship at the end of October. We quickly gathered all the documents and applied for adoption in early December, and were given an adoption court day on THE FOLLOWING WEEK! That day it took TWENTY MINUTES for the judge to rule that Liliana was now legally our daughter.

“The mountains had moved.

“Three months later we were in our new home, ready to start a new adventure. The mountain before us now is establishing the Church of the Nazarene in a country with very strict laws on religious activity. Many have told us that what we are trying to do is extremely difficult. We know it is. But we also know that the God who moves mountains is on our side.”

Someone said: “There are three ways we can attempt to do the work of God: We can trust our own strength and wisdom, we can borrow the resources of the world, or we can depend on the power of God. The first two approaches may appear to succeed, but they will fail in the end. Only work done through the power of the Spirit will glorify God and endure the fires of His judgment.”

Nazarene brothers and sisters, we have been called to believe, to depend, and to respond. We will believe, we will depend, and we will respond; for it is not by our might nor by our power but by His Spirit that our mountains – whatever they are – will become plains.

Zerubbabel should not have chosen a time of clear and strong opposition to lead a discouraged and disobedient population with poor crops and an unstable economy to build the temple. But he did it — because God had chosen him to lead by His Spirit. Notwithstanding the challenges that we face today, we know that we have been chosen to lead, and we will lead in faith, dependence, and readiness to respond.

Please stand and remain standing as together we pray the prayer on the screen that was prayed by John Wesley many years ago, yet is so relevant, as our current challenges resemble those of Wesley's day:

John Wesley's Covenant Prayer ⁶

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine,
and I am thine.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

Prayerfully and respectfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents

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Footnotes

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