

THE CORPS OF PASTORS OF THE  
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE  
2006

SUMMARY

This continues a series of studies of the corps of pastors in the Church of the Nazarene. In 1988 the Research Center, responding to a request from the Board of General Superintendents, conducted an analysis of the corps of pastors of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada. In the fall of 1996 a second study was conducted at the request of the Pastoral Ministries Director. This 2006 report describes the corps now and makes some comparisons with the patterns observed in 1988 and 1996. The primary source of data for the series has been the ministerial records maintained by the General Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene. In the report the terms “pastor” and “pastoral” are used to distinguish these from other ministerial assignments. When the terms “minister” or “ministerial” are used, they refer to all ministerial roles.

**Tenure:** The average length of time pastors in the Church of the Nazarene have served in the churches they have pastored is now 4 years and 5 months. This increase from 3 years and 3 months in 1988 and 1996 may be a result of 1989 General Assembly changes in procedures for calling pastors as well as part of a national trend in protestant churches. *(See tables 1-4 on pages 3-4)*

**Experience:** Half of the current corps of pastors has less than 12 years of experience as a pastor. The median is now 11 years and 10 months compared to 10 years and 8 months in 1996. Some of the current pastors have served as an associate or in some other ministry role in addition to their experience as a pastor. Therefore, their years of ministry experience is greater than their years of experience as a pastor. Nearly half (47%) of the current pastors took their first ministry assignment since 1990. *(see tables 5-6 on page 5)*

**Persistence:** The annual attrition rate of new ministers in the Church of the Nazarene is relatively constant at around 3% during the first 15 years of ministry. Those who earn a degree from any of the Nazarene colleges or Nazarene Theological Seminary are more likely to persist than those who earn their degrees from other institutions or who withdraw before completing their degrees. *(see figure 1 on page 6)*

**Age:** There are more Nazarene pastors from the “Baby Boom” generation than from any other age group. The “Baby Bust” (Generation X) generation is now in their thirties and as might have been expected are a smaller proportion of the corps of current pastors. The “Shadow Boom” (Millennials) does not yet appear to have significantly affected the corps of Nazarene pastors. *(see tables 7-8 on page 7)*

**Education:** The most common reported path to the senior pastor role is through a liberal arts college to seminary and then an assignment as senior pastor. There appears to have been a declining influence of formal education at Nazarene institutions among ordinands over the last twenty years – from 76% in 1985 to 61% in 2004. On average pastors have more education than lay members. *(see tables 9-12 on pages 8-10)*

**Context of Ministry:** The congregations served by most Nazarene pastors are small. The most often found worship attendance size is from 26 to 50. This pattern is similar to other protestant denominations. About 30% of Nazarene pastors are bivocational. *(see figure 2 and tables 13-15 on pages 11-13)*

**Corps Adequate for the Opportunities:** During the last ten years 2,701 Nazarene elders and 321 deacons have been ordained in the United States and Canada. 5,872 newly licensed ministers have been added to the corps. During these ten years 4,030 ministers have been lost to the corps – 1,594 died and 1,403 retired. *(see table 16 on page 14)*

The largest change in the positions filled over the last decade was an increase of 918 in the role of associate minister. There has also been a significant increase (110) in the number of ministers serving as chaplains. The number of positions to be filled by pastors has decreased slightly (-78) over the last ten years. *(see table 17 on page 15)*

On any given day about 10% of the Nazarene congregations in the United States are without a pastor. Many of these are in the relatively short time period between the leaving of one pastor and the calling and arrival of a new one. Longer-term vacancies tend to be in the smaller churches. In comparison to the Presbyterian Church (USA) a smaller proportion of Nazarene congregations are without a pastor. *(see figure 3 on page 16)*

The corps of pastors in the Church of the Nazarene appears generally to be relatively strong. Average tenures are longer than they have been. Pastors tend to have more experience in their role than was true in 1988 and 1996. However, there are some areas of potential concern. The long-term impact of recent innovations in ministerial education is not yet known. Pastors of our many small churches may have needs which are not particularly well addressed in current strategies of recruiting, preparing, and resourcing ministers. And, the relative sizes of the “Boomer,” “Buster,” and “Shadow Boomer” cohorts may present challenges for maintaining a corps of pastors adequate for the ministry opportunities to which God is calling the Church of the Nazarene.

## TENURE IN PASTORAL ROLES

The length of time a pastor gives in leadership to a congregation, his tenure, undoubtedly influences the health of the church. John Wesley evidently thought short tenures were better. However, most leaders now believe longer tenures tend to result in healthier churches.

There are several relevant questions regarding trends in tenures. It might be asked whether the average tenure throughout pastors' careers is growing longer, or whether pastors are staying longer, on the average, in their current assignments. The question might also be whether a larger proportion of pastors are averaging longer than some number of years.

- There was a significant increase in the average tenure of pastors during the ten years from 1996 through 2005. Correspondence with other denominational researchers suggests that this lengthening of tenures is being experienced by other protestant denominations in the United States (RRX, February, 2006). In the Church of the Nazarene it also appears to be one of the long term results of the 1989 General Assembly changes in procedures for calling pastors.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Nazarene Pastors' Tenure\* in 1988, 1996 and 2005

Measure of Tenure	1988	1996	2005
Tenure in all Pastoral Assignments	3 yrs., 3 mos.	3 yrs., 3 mos.	4 yrs., 5 mos.
Tenure in Current Assignment	3 yrs., 1 mo.	2 yrs., 8 mos.	4 yrs., 0 mos.

*\*Median tenure; half of the pastors averaged a longer period and half averaged a shorter one.*

- While pastors of larger churches have longer average tenures, average tenures longer than four years were found in all sizes of churches.

TABLE 2

Pastors' Tenure\* by Size of Current Church

Worship Attendance	Tenure*
1 – 49	4 yrs., 1 mo.
50 – 99	4 yrs., 6 mos.
100 – 249	5 yrs., 2 mos.
250 – 499	5 yrs., 9 mos.
500 or more	5 yrs., 5 mos.

*\*Median tenure; half of the pastors averaged a longer period and half averaged a shorter one.*

## TENURE IN PASTORAL ROLES - Average Longer than Four Years

Table 3 presents a comparison of the proportions of pastors with tenures longer than four years in 1988, 1996, and 2005.

- While the percentage serving longer than four years in career averages was quite stable between 1988 and 1996, it increased significantly by 2005. Fifty-seven percent of the active pastors in 2005 averaged more than four years in their pastoral assignments throughout their careers.
- There was a similar sharp increase in the proportion who have been in their current assignment longer than four years. This suggests significantly less turnover among pastoral assignments than was experienced prior to the measurements in 1988 and 1996.

TABLE 3  
Proportion of Nazarene Pastors  
Serving Churches Longer than Four Years

Measure of Tenure	1988	1996	2005
Average of all Pastoral Assignments	36.0%	36.0%	57.4%
Current Assignment	38.3%	37.0%	53.9%

- In 2005 the proportion of pastors who have averaged more than ten years in their pastoral assignments was about four times larger than it was in 1988 and 1996.

TABLE 4  
Numbers and Percentages of Nazarene Pastors  
with Average\* Ministerial Tenures of Various Lengths

Average Tenure in Pastor Roles	1988	1996	2005
Less than two years	19.0%	21.3%	13.3%
Two to three years	23.1%	22.5%	13.9%
Three to four years	21.9%	20.1%	15.4%
Four to five years	15.9%	12.8%	14.3%
Five to Ten years	17.6%	20.2%	31.2%
Over ten years	2.6%	3.0%	11.9%

*Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding*

*\*Median tenures; half of the pastors had a longer period and half had a shorter one.*

## EXPERIENCE IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

It is not uncommon for pastors to leave local church ministry. A recent study, *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*, identified seven major reasons for leaving, including calls to other forms of ministry and family needs, but also including conflict, burnout, and misconduct (Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005). The median years of experience in pastoral ministry gives some indication of typical lengths of ministry careers. Persistence in ministry is another indication.

Table 5 presents a comparison of total pastoral experience in 1988, 1996, and 2005.

- Total pastoral experience has increased over the last decade. Half of the pastors have at least eleven years and ten months experience as pastors. On the other hand, half have less than that amount of experience.

TABLE 5  
Comparison of Pastoral Experience\* in 1988, 1996 and 2005

Median Experience as Pastor	1988	1996	2005
All Pastoral Assignments	10 yrs., 6 mos.	10 yrs., 8 mos.	11 yrs., 10 mos.

\*Median experience in the role of pastor; half had a longer period and half had a shorter one.

- One in four (27%) of the currently active pastors took their first ministerial assignment prior to 1981 – twenty-five years ago.
- For some of the current pastors, ministry in roles other than pastor makes their years of ministry experience greater than their years of experience as a pastor.
- Nearly half (47%) started their Nazarene ministry since 1990.

TABLE 6  
Numbers and Percentages of Nazarene Pastors  
By the Time of Their Beginning Their Ministry

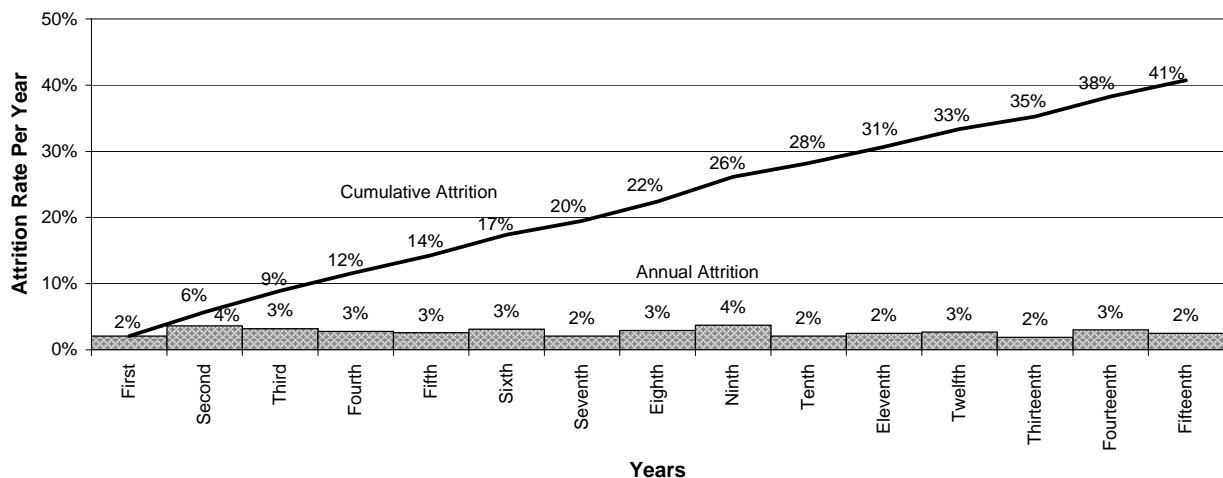
Time of Beginning	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Before 1960	87	1.8%	1.8%
1961 through 1970	365	7.6%	9.5%
1971 through 1980	850	17.8%	27.2%
1981 through 1990	1233	25.8%	53.0%
1991 through 2000	1452	30.4%	83.4%
2001 through 2005	795	16.6%	100.0%
Totals	4,782	100.0%	

## PERSISTENCE IN MINISTRY

Figure 1 summarizes patterns of attrition among ministers. Between 1980 and 1982 nearly 1,000 Nazarene ministers accepted their first ministry assignment according to a study of attrition conducted in 2000 by Greg Crow of Point Loma Nazarene University. The study was limited to ministers who served as pastors or associate pastors at some time in their career, although their first and most recent ministry assignments may have been in some other role.

- The annual attrition rate of new ministers in the Church of the Nazarene is relatively constant at around 3% during the first 15 years of ministry.
- At five years the total attrition is 14%, at ten years 28%, and at fifteen years it totals 41%. This is somewhat lower than attrition among new teachers, according to a report of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities task force on professional development for teachers. “In their first five years of teaching, 30 percent of new teachers will leave the profession, and those most quickly prepared and least well supported will leave in even larger numbers” (*To Create A Profession*, page 8).
- Attrition is less likely for Nazarene ministers who seek and are approved for ordination.
- Those who earn a degree from any of the Nazarene colleges or Nazarene Theological Seminary are more likely to persist than those who earn their degrees from other institutions or who withdraw before completing their degrees.
- Ministers who serve most of their career as a pastor are more likely to persist than associates, however making a transition from associate to senior pastor makes attrition less likely.

FIGURE 1  
Rate of Attrition by Years of Service



## AGE

As with most other groups in American society, “Boomers” are the largest age cohort in the Nazarene ministerial corps. Tables 7 and 8 summarize information regarding the ages of the active pastors in 2005.

- Two-thirds (66.7%) are in their forties and fifties, the age of most of the “Baby Boom” cohort. The aging of this large cohort can be seen in the difference between proportions in 1996 and 2005.
- The “Shadow Boom” (Millennials) does not yet appear to have significantly affected the corps of Nazarene pastors.

TABLE 7  
Age Distribution of Nazarene Pastors in 1996

Age Category	1996	2005
30 years old or less ( <i>Millennials*</i> )	3.4%	2.7%
31 through 40 years old ( <i>Busters*</i> )	24.9%	14.7%
41 through 50 years old ( <i>Late Boomers*</i> )	34.5%	33.3%
51 through 60 years old ( <i>Early Boomers*</i> )	24.0%	33.4%
Over 60 years old ( <i>Veterans*</i> )	13.2%	15.9%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%

*\*Labels used here are among the popular labels used for these generational cohorts based on their age in 2005.*

- The role of the minister affects the age distribution. Associate ministers tend to be younger than any of the other roles shown in table 8. Evangelists and chaplains tend to be older.
- The larger proportions of older ministers in the roles of evangelist and chaplain might be an adjustment of older ministers to age discrimination. Or it might be some indication of less attrition from these roles.

TABLE 8  
Comparison of Pastors’ Ages with Ages in Other Ministerial Roles

Age Category	Pastors	Associate Pastors	Evangelists	Chaplains	Minister Educators
21 to 30 years old	2.7%	18.6%	0.7%	1.8%	1.3%
31 to 40 years old	14.7%	25.7%	12.3%	6.7%	11.3%
41 to 50 years old	33.3%	26.6%	27.9%	19.7%	24.3%
51 to 60 years old	33.4%	18.7%	37.0%	34.1%	41.9%
Over 60 years old	15.9%	10.4%	22.1%	37.7%	21.2%
Overall	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## EDUCATION – Paths to the Role of Senior Pastor

Educational preparation of ministers is very important for the Church of the Nazarene. The church is concerned both that there will be enough ministers to accomplish the mission and that new ministers will be appropriately educated and otherwise prepared for their assignments. Table 9 summarizes the educational and experience paths taken by pastors.

- The most common reported path to the senior pastor role is through a liberal arts college/university to seminary and then an assignment as senior pastor.
- Among current senior pastors, 16% report going from directly from Bible College to the senior pastor role.
- 14% report going from a liberal arts college/university to senior pastor.
- 7% went from the directed study program to senior pastor. Another 6% report going from a district center educational preparation to the senior pastor role. Many pastors who chose these paths may have completed their educational requirements for ordination while pastoring.

TABLE 9  
Senior Pastors' Educational and Career Paths

Career Path	Percent
Liberal Arts College → Seminary → Senior Pastor	21.5%
Bible College → Senior Pastor	15.8%
Liberal Arts College → Senior Pastor	14.1%
Liberal Arts College → Youth Minister → Senior Pastor	8.2%
Directed Study → Senior Pastor	6.9%
District Center → Senior Pastor	6.4%
Liberal Arts College → Seminary → Associate → Senior Pastor	5.7%
Liberal Arts College → Associate → Senior Pastor	5.0%
Bible College → Associate → Senior Pastor	2.2%
Liberal Arts College → Associate → Seminary → Senior Pastor	2.0%
Directed Study → Associate → Senior Pastor	1.7%
Bible College → Seminary → Senior Pastor	1.0%
District Center → Associate → Senior Pastor	.5%
Other	8.9%

*Source: The fall 2001 ANSR Poll. Of the 800 senior, or solo, pastors in the United States and Canada who were mailed surveys, 414 (52%) responded. This table summarizes responses to the question, "What was your path to your current role as a senior pastor?"*

## EDUCATION – Ordinands

- Ordinands who report attending at least one of the Nazarene colleges and/or Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS) declined from 76% in 1985 to 61% in 2004. Educational preparation in one or more of these institutions remains the path most often chosen.
- During the twenty years reported in table 10 many ministers have completed their educational preparation for ordination at a district center. Much of this education may not have been reported as received at a Nazarene school.

TABLE 10  
Ordinands<sup>1</sup> Choices of  
Traditional or Alternative Options for Ministerial Education

Year	Nazarene College &/ or Seminary <sup>2</sup>	Nazarene Alternative <sup>3</sup>	No Nazarene School Reported <sup>4</sup>
1985	76.3%	1.9%	21.8%
1986	78.7%	2.1%	19.2%
1987	76.0%	0.4%	23.7%
1988	77.9%	2.3%	19.8%
1989	77.7%	0.4%	21.9%
1990	79.4%	2.3%	18.3%
1991	77.6%	2.0%	20.4%
1992	70.0%	4.4%	25.6%
1993	68.7%	5.5%	25.8%
1994	72.2%	5.3%	22.5%
1995	67.3%	5.1%	27.6%
1996	63.7%	4.7%	31.6%
1997	65.3%	7.1%	27.6%
1998	64.9%	10.4%	24.7%
1999	64.3%	7.9%	27.8%
2000	62.7%	12.7%	24.6%
2001	60.5%	8.4%	31.2%
2002	61.1%	8.3%	30.6%
2003	57.4%	8.5%	34.0%
2004	61.4%	7.8%	30.8%

*Percentages add across in each cohort. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.*

<sup>1</sup>Newly ordained elders and deacons who reported some post secondary education; <sup>2</sup>Nazarene College &/or Seminary = At least one of the following: NBC, NIBC, USA or Canadian Liberal Arts College/University or NTS;

<sup>3</sup>Nazarene Alternative = Reported International Schools, Extensions, District Centers, and Directed/Home Study; <sup>4</sup>No Nazarene School Reported = No reported Nazarene educational preparation for ministry

## EDUCATION – Laity and Clergy

Tables 11 and 12 summarize ANSR Poll responses regarding educational experiences of laity and pastors in the Church of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada. The questionnaire items and the laity sample selection methods differed somewhat. Still, the responses allow at least some tentative basis for comparison of educational patterns among laity and pastors over an 18 year period.

- In a 2004 ANSR Poll 39% of the pastors and 13% of the lay members indicated that they had earned a graduate degree.
- Almost two-thirds (64%) of the lay members who were older than 25 years had not completed a college degree. More than three-fourths (79%) of the pastors had completed at least a two year college degree.

TABLE 11

Comparison of Lay Members and Pastors' Education in 2004

Level	Lay Members*	Pastors
Less than high school graduate	4.6%	0.5%
High school graduate	23.8%	2.4%
Some college	29.3%	15.0%
Vocational school	6.3%	3.6%
Two year college degree	5.0%	8.5%
Four year college degree	18.0%	31.2%
Graduate degree or more	13.0%	38.9%

*Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding*

*\*Lay members who said they were older than 25 years of age*

- The first ANSR Poll (then called the *Listening Post*) found a similar pattern. 78% of the pastors indicated that they had earned a college degree or more while almost two-thirds (64%) of the lay leaders had not completed a college degree.

TABLE 12

Comparison of Lay Leaders' and Pastors' Education in 1986

Level	Lay Leaders*	Pastors
Not a High School graduate	6.6%	1.7%
High School Graduate, no college	28.8%	3.0%
Some College, not a graduate	28.8%	17.7%
College graduate, no post-graduate	14.3%	27.7%
Post-graduate work, no degree	7.4%	23.7%
Post-graduate degree	14.0%	26.3%

*Notes: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.*

*In 1986 the laity sample for what was then called the "Listening Post" was selected from the local lay leaders listed in district journals*

## CONTEXT OF PASTORAL MINISTRY

Reporting on research conducted as part of the *Pulpit and Pew* study of pastoral leadership, Patricia M. Y. Chang stimulated some discussion and controversy when she asserted that, “Most denominations are pyramid shaped. At the apex of the pyramid are senior pastor positions of large churches. Below these are associate pastors and sole pastors of medium sized churches. Below these are sole pastors of small churches ...” (*Factors Shaping Clergy Careers*, [www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu/clergycareers.html](http://www.pulpitandpew.duke.edu/clergycareers.html), page 5). Some objected to the idea of describing ministry as a career rather than a calling. Others objected to the idea that ministers would evaluate themselves or others in terms of their location in the pyramid she described. Chang’s description does not reflect the ideals of ministers in the Church of the Nazarene. However, the pyramid she describes may function both as pastors evaluate their own ministry and in the practices of the denomination.

Table 13 summarizes the distribution of Churches of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada that reported any worship attendance in 2005. As indicated in the table, the congregations served by most Nazarene pastors are small.

- Seven out of ten churches (70.1%) have 100 or fewer in worship on an average Sunday. While ministerial preparation often seems to focus on churches larger than 200, only 580 Nazarene congregations in the U.S. and Canada are that large.
- In 2005 there were 300 Nazarene churches with at least 300 worshippers on an average Sunday.

TABLE 13

Worship Size Distribution of Congregations of  
the Church of the Nazarene in the United States & Canada

Worship Average	Number*	Percent
1 – 100	3,425	70.1%
101 – 200	883	18.1%
201 – 300	280	5.7%
301 – 500	187	3.8%
Over 500	113	2.3%

*Source: Pastors’ Annual Reports – 2005.*

*\*Includes all churches and NewStarts in the United States and Canada that reported any Sunday morning worship attendance. Since definitions of membership vary, Sunday morning worship participation has been used.*

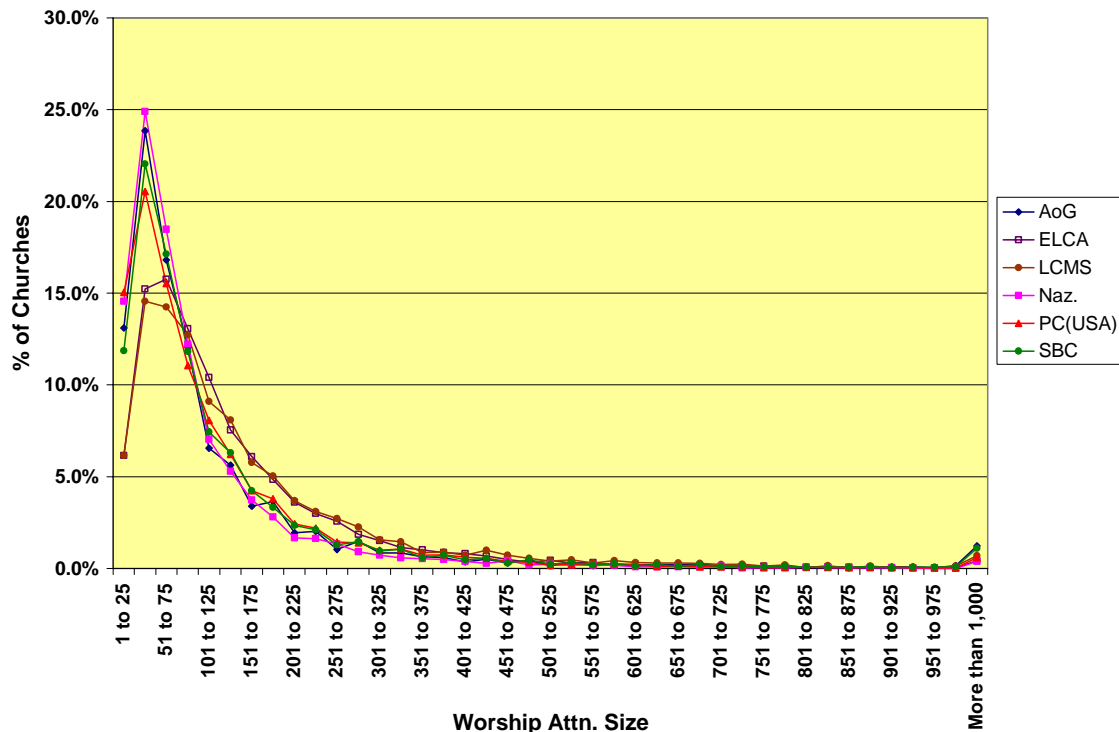
## CONTEXT OF PASTORAL MINISTRY – Size in Protestant Denominations

This Nazarene size distribution is not unique among protestant denominations. Richard Houseal compared the year 2000 distributions of churches in six protestant denominations. While the resulting graph, below, shows some interesting differences, the most remarkable aspect of the comparison is the similarity in the distributions of congregation worship size among these denominations.

- In five of these six denominations the largest proportion of churches was in the size range of 26 to 50 worshipers.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was the exception. It had a slightly larger proportion in the 51 to 75 range than in the 26 to 50 range.

FIGURE 2

Comparison of Church Worship Attendance Sizes  
by Denomination: USA 2000



AoG – Assemblies of God  
ELCA – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
LCMS – Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Naz. – Church of the Nazarene  
PC(USA) – Presbyterian Church (USA)  
SBC – Southern Baptist Convention

## CONTEXT OF PASTORAL MINISTRY – Bivocational Ministry

The concept of bivocational ministry is difficult to measure, perhaps partly because there is some stigma attached to this approach to ministry, but also because the variety of vocational combinations is apparently great.

- Table 14 summarizes responses to a 1993 Quadrennial Church Census of Nazarene congregations in the USA and Canada in which pastors were asked, “Are you bivocational?” No definition was provided. The question was asked in the context of a question about the cost of living in their community and a question about their spouse’s outside employment. For 58% of the pastors, the cost of living in their community for a family of four was felt to be higher than the pastors’ salary paid. Most pastors’ spouses (60%) were employed outside the home.
- More than two-thirds (69%) said “No” to the bivocational question. On the other hand, 31% chose one of the “Yes” responses, which would be consistent with bivocational ministry.
- This is similar to the 30% of Southern Baptist Convention churches who in a study released in 1993 were reported to be bivocational (Stephen P. Whitten, *An Analysis of Churches with Bivocational Pastors, 1991*, Atlanta: Research Division, Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1993, pages 11-13.).

TABLE 14  
Bivocational Ministry  
Responses to the Question, “Are you bivocational?”\*

2,342	68.9%	No
777	22.9%	Yes, it is necessary to supplement our family income.
46	1.4%	Yes, the extra income is not necessary, but my second career makes my ministry more effective.
<u>233</u>	<u>6.9%</u>	Yes, other
3,398	100%	

\**Quadrennial Church Census, 1993*

- More recently, the 2005 Faith Communities Today study of Churches of the Nazarene in the United States found 28% of respondents choosing a status consistent with bivocational ministry.

TABLE 15  
Faith Communities Today (FACT) 2005 Survey

Full time pastor, without other employment	71%
Full time pastor, with other employment	23%
Part time pastor, without other employment	1%
Part time pastor, with other employment	5%

*The full report of the FACT 2005 study is available on the Nazarene Research website ([nazareneresearch.org](http://nazareneresearch.org)) under “Occasional Papers”.*

## CORPS ADEQUATE FOR OPPORTUNITIES - Additions vs. Attritions

One of the reasons for this series of reports is to facilitate monitoring the size and characteristics of the corps of pastors. Are a sufficient number of Nazarene Christians responding in obedience to God's call to ministry? Will we be able to replace aging "boomers" as the oldest of them begin to approach retirement age? Are we preparing those who are responding to God's call in ways appropriate to the places God is calling the church to serve? Table 16 summarizes additions to, and attritions from, the corps of ministers in the last ten years. As explained in the table footnote, the annual addition totals attempt to avoid counting any addition twice.

- During the last ten years 2,701 Nazarene elders and 321 deacons have been ordained in the United States and Canada.
- During this decade 5,872 newly licensed ministers have been added to the corps.
- During these ten years 4,030 ministers have been lost to the corps. 1,594 died. 1,403 have retired.

TABLE 16  
Patterns in the Corps of Nazarene  
Ministers in the United States and Canada

Type	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Newly Licensed	550	499	533	556	619	574	582	645	642	672
New Ordained Elders	240	282	245	260	253	270	283	276	277	315
New Deacons	19	32	28	35	37	33	26	42	33	36
Recognized	29	17	21	30	26	34	38	35	38	31
Restored	19	13	12	17	16	19	16	21	21	21
Deceased	161	103	148	160	184	151	179	194	150	164
Retired	143	110	137	150	170	145	142	145	137	124
Removed	95	145	117	92	79	89	102	115	97	102
Totals:										
Licensed Ministers	2,557	2,565	2,516	2,530	2,632	2,631	2,654	2,813	2,774	2,940
Deacons	244	276	300	319	346	357	379	404	432	468
Elders	9,781	9,907	9,973	10,012	10,166	10,191	10,206	10,271	10,348	10,492
Totals	12,582	12,748	12,789	12,861	13,144	13,179	13,239	13,488	13,554	13,900

Source: General Secretary's annual summary

## CORPS ADEQUATE FOR OPPORTUNITIES - Ministry Roles

Table 17 summarizes the distribution of Nazarene ministers in various roles. The General Secretary's annual statistical report includes a report on the ministerial corps. The number of ministers serving as pastors on the day of the report each year is not precisely the same as the number of opportunities, or pastoral positions, available. In any given year there may be slightly more, or fewer, congregations in the process of calling a new pastor. However, the variation from year to year is probably not large.

- The increase of 918 in the role of associate minister is the largest change.
- There has also been a significant increase in the number of ministers serving as chaplains.
- The number of positions to be filled by pastors has decreased slightly (-78) over the last ten years.
- There has also been a decline in the number of evangelists (-65) and ministers serving as missionaries (-21).
- A comparison of the increase in ministers available to serve, in table 16 above, and the increase of 945 in ministers in these major roles suggests a surplus, rather than a shortage, of Nazarene ministers.

TABLE 17  
Numbers of Ministers in Various Roles in the United States and Canada

Year	Pastor	Associate	Evangelist	Chaplain	Administrator	Educator	Missionary	Total: in these Roles
1996	4,486	1,341	293	191	245	213	174	6,943
1997	4,453	1,429	290	197	253	213	172	7,007
1998	4,456	1,487	284	214	262	214	184	7,101
1999	4,455	1,537	273	221	264	228	167	7,145
2000	4,476	1,722	275	231	263	224	172	7,363
2001	4,415	1,826	272	241	275	220	174	7,423
2002	4,368	1,888	252	275	290	224	196	7,493
2003	4,406	1,991	243	262	299	222	175	7,598
2004	4,410	2,095	248	280	321	215	146	7,715
2005	4,408	2,259	228	301	316	223	153	7,888
Change Over 10 Years	-78	918	-65	110	71	10	-21	945

Source: General Secretary's annual summary.

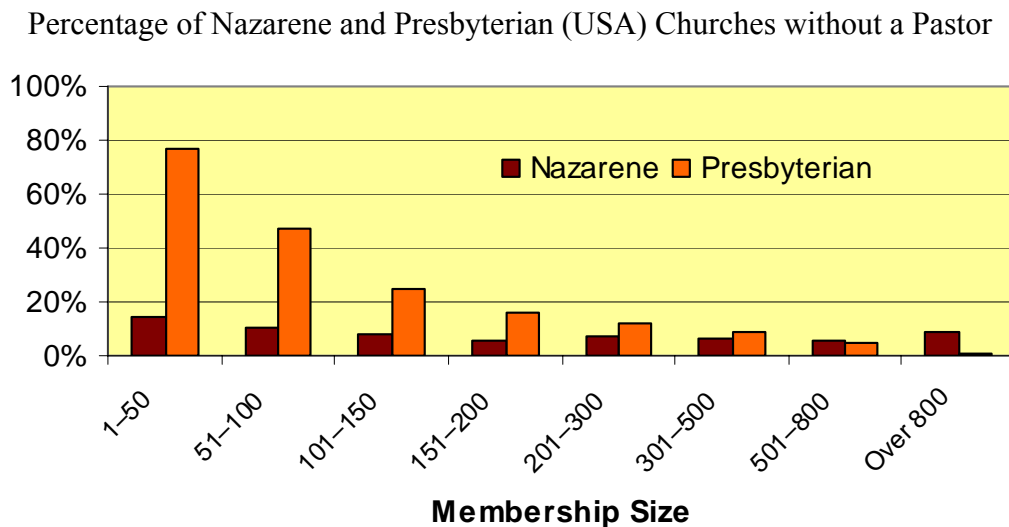
## CORPS ADEQUATE FOR OPPORTUNITIES – Churches without a Pastor

One of the significant questions about the adequacy of the corps of pastors is whether there are enough pastors for each of the kinds of positions which need to be filled. Using data from 2000 Jack Marcum, Presbyterian Church (USA), examined the question of whether there was a literal shortage of ministers or a shortage of ministers willing to accept calls to the increasing number of small churches. His analysis found pastoral vacancies in more than three-fourths of the churches with fewer than fifty members. (*Parsing the pastor “shortage”*, [www.pcusa.org/research/monday/shortg.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/research/monday/shortg.htm)).

Figure 3 compares the reported pastor vacancies in the Presbyterian Church (USA) with vacancies in the Church of the Nazarene at about the same time.

- On any given day about 10% of the Nazarene congregations in the United States are without a pastor. Many of these are in the relatively short time period between the leaving of one pastor and the calling and arrival of a new one. However, some vacancies are longer term.
- Longer-term vacancies tend to be in the smaller churches. In comparison to the Presbyterian Church (USA) a smaller proportion of Nazarene congregations are without a pastor. However, the Nazarene “shortage” of pastors also appears to be focused in the smaller churches.

FIGURE 3



## CONCLUSIONS

The most surprising finding of this study may be the increase in the average tenure of pastors. After remaining remarkably stable from 1988 to 1996 at three years and three months, it increased to 4 years and 5 months in 2005. The amount of experience in pastoral service has also improved. The median is now eleven years and ten months.

Over the last twenty years we have implemented some new approaches to ministerial education. One result appears to be that a smaller proportion of our pastors have experienced the influence of a Nazarene college/university or Seminary campus. It will probably be important to continue to monitor the impact these innovations may have both on the ministry of individual pastors and on denominational identity since clergy are significant carriers of identity.

Almost one-third of the corps of pastors are bi-vocational. It may be that bivocationalism is more often by default than by intention; the second vocation is a necessity rather than purposeful. Perhaps we should do better at recognizing the strategic necessity and possibilities for this significant segment of the corps. Perhaps we should also do better in preparing and encouraging pastors who will serve in this way.

It seems reasonable to assume that there will continue to be a pastoral vacancy of something around 10% in our churches. Smaller, more rural, more difficult churches will probably continue to have a somewhat higher level. The approximately 10% level of vacancies found in large, thriving churches is probably not the result of a shortage of ministers willing to fill those positions, but rather that on any particular day about that level are between pastors. We should probably continue to monitor the vacancy level as a possible early indicator of shortages that might develop.

The "Baby Boom" appears to have a continuing effect on the corps. About two-thirds of the pastors are in that age range. As the leading edge of this large cohort turns sixty years old, there is considerable speculation about the impact of their retirement on society and the church. Some have speculated that obviously the large number of "Boomers" retiring will leave a major clergy shortage. One theologian asserted that "... in the next decade there are likely to be almost five times as many experienced leaders retiring as there will be young leaders to take their place" (A response comment to the *Pulpit and Pew* report, *Assessing the Clergy Supply in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Patricia M.Y. Chang, page 32)

Actually, the oldest "Boomers" are now 60 and the youngest in their early 40s, so the increasing levels of retirements should start in about five years and then continue for an extended period of about 20 years. The "Baby Boom" was followed by a "Baby Bust;" from around 1965 through about 1980 there were far fewer births in American society. This combination of an unusually large cohort followed by an unusually small cohort causes our special concern.

The concern that the combination of boom followed by bust will cause a severe shortage may be eased somewhat by the fact that following the bust there has been another large cohort as the "Boomers" have had children. The oldest members of this "Shadow Boom" are now graduate school and college age. While those of us who are older are inclined to speculate that younger

generations are not as committed and obedient to God as we were, it may be that God will be able to work among them as he did among us. So, it is at least possible to speculate that the larger than usual number of retirees will be offset by a larger than usual number of ministers entering the corps. Speculation, of course, will not be enough. It will continue to be important to monitor the levels at which new ministers are entering and older ministers are leaving the ministerial corps.

The corps of pastors in the Church of the Nazarene appears generally to be relatively strong. Average tenures are longer than they have been. Pastors tend to have more experience in their role than was true in 1988 and 1996. However, there are some areas of potential concern. The long-term impact of recent innovations in ministerial education is not yet known. Pastors of our many small churches may have needs which are not particularly well addressed in current strategies of recruiting, preparing, and resourcing ministers. And, the relative sizes of the “Boomer,” “Buster,” and “Shadow Boomer” cohorts may present challenges for maintaining a corps of pastors adequate for the ministry opportunities to which God is calling the Church of the Nazarene.