

Nazarene Ministerial Education Personal and Denominational Strategies for Ministerial Education

Kenneth E. Crow, Ph.D.

Nazarene ministers have used a variety of strategies for educational preparation. Our individual circumstances, the subcultures we serve, our differing abilities, and the opportunities accessible to us influence the choices we make among the educational options.

The Church of the Nazarene in the United States provides four educational tracks for ministerial preparation: Directed Study, Nazarene Bible College, Liberal Arts Colleges, and Nazarene Theological Seminary. This combination of educational options form a comprehensive denominational strategy designed to prepare a corps of ministers appropriately prepared for the varied assignments of the church.

The educational institutions of the church play a major role in formulating the denominational strategy for ministerial education. There is a great deal of cooperation and coordination between the denomination and its schools. However, each institution has its own heritage, culture, mandate, and needs which influence strategic decisions regarding their participation in ministerial preparation.

As we approach a new century with considerable change occurring in American higher education, it seems appropriate to review the ministerial preparation strategies of individual ministers, educational institutions, and the denomination. The ideal approach from the viewpoint of the denomination may not be accessible to, or appropriate for, some individuals. Both individual and denominational strategies may prepare ministers more appropriately for some assignments than for others. Therefore, this review considers three questions: What educational strategies have the current ministers used in their preparation for ministry? What are the contexts in which Nazarene pastors serve? Is the denominational strategy for the educational preparation of ministers adequate and appropriate?

Individual Strategies

The primary source of data for this study of individual strategies is the educational data maintained by the General Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene. These data are somewhat problematic. Individual ministers report schools and degrees without supplying formal transcripts. While an effort has been made to confirm the accuracy of the data over the last few years, the considerable investment it would take to verify and systemize these data has not been made. Therefore, the more than 6,750 institutions reported include multiple names and codes for some schools. For example, there are 29 different codes for Southern Nazarene University and the institutions from which it has developed. For this study an extensive effort has been made to identify and systematically code all of the Nazarene institutions.

The computerized record does not include all ministers who have ever served in the Church of the Nazarene. It does include all ministers who have served in the last decade or two. In late 1997 this record included nearly 42,000 entries. Many of the ministers have reported more

than one educational institution attended. More than 16,000 of these entries included the report of a degree earned.

The fact that the General Secretary’s records are dynamic, continually updated, presents an additional complication. Data selected a month apart would yield similar, but different results. Therefore, it should be remembered that the numbers reported here are probably suggestive and approximate rather than precise and definitive.

Table 1 addresses the general question, where has ministerial preparation taken place? All ministers in the United States and Canada are included. Since ministers report attending more than one school, many ministers are counted more than once in table 1. Nazarene Theological Seminary provides an example. Most, if not all, of the other institutions include ministers who subsequently attended NTS, which is reported more often than any other.

| Table 1 | |
|--|---------------|
| Educational Institutions Attended by Nazarene Ministers | |
| Institution | Number |
| Canadian Nazarene College | 230 |
| Eastern Nazarene College | 922 |
| MidAmerica Nazarene College | 761 |
| Mount Vernon Nazarene College | 679 |
| Nazarene Bible College | 2,006 |
| Nazarene Bible College Extensions | 305 |
| Nazarene Indian Bible College | 44 |
| Nazarene Theological Seminary | 2,920 |
| Northwest Nazarene College | 1,049 |
| Olivet Nazarene University | 2,055 |
| Point Loma Nazarene College | 1,098 |
| Southern Nazarene University | 1,877 |
| Trevecca Nazarene College | 1,300 |
| International Nazarene Institutions | 227 |
| Total | 15,473 |

Source: General Secretary’s records

In table 2 institutions are combined to present current pastors in the United States and Canada who have chosen three of the four approved ministerial preparation tracks: Nazarene Bible College, Liberal Arts Colleges, and Nazarene Theological Seminary. Ministers pursuing

their educational preparation through the directed study track have usually not had that information included in the General Secretary's records as a school attended.

As in table 1, many ministers are included in more than one of the categories. For example, 230 of the pastors who report attending Nazarene Bible College report pursuing further education at a Nazarene liberal arts college, and 39 have also attended Nazarene Theological Seminary.

It is particularly interesting that 21% of the current pastors have not reported including any Nazarene institution in their educational preparation. These pastors range from those whose only educational entry is high school, many of whom may be using the directed study option, to those who have earned college and seminary degrees at institutions other than Nazarene.

The 11% who have no educational record are primarily those pastors who have not yet applied for a ministerial credential – 513 of the 531 have no credential. Applications for credentials are the primary means of obtaining educational data. It seems likely that many of these pastors have not attended any Nazarene school, although many may be enrolled in the Nazarene Bible College extensions. Therefore, the proportion of pastors with no Nazarene educational preparation is probably higher than the 21% reported in table 2.

| Table 2 | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Educational Institutions Attended by Current Nazarene Pastors | | |
| Institution | Number | Percent |
| Nazarene Bible College | 796 | 16.6% |
| Nazarene Liberal Arts Colleges* | 2,445 | 51.9% |
| Nazarene Theological Seminary | 1,022 | 21.3% |
| No Nazarene Institution | 999 | 20.8% |
| No Educational Data Record | 531 | 11.1% |
| Totals** | 5,793 | 121.7% |

Source: General Secretary's records

61 pastors attended Nazarene international institutions. 132 pastors indicated an extension, NIBC, the course of study, or other U.S. alternatives.

* CNC, ENC, MNU, MVNC, NNC, ONU, PLNC, SNU, TNU

** Totals equal more than the total number of churches and more than 100% since many pastors attended more than one institution.

In table 3 the worship participation size of pastors' current congregation is related to their education experience. Again, pastors may be counted in more than one of the educational categories.

It is clear that there is a relationship between educational tracks and the sizes of congregations served. While some ministers from each of the tracks now pastor congregations of more than 200 worshippers, NTS alums are significantly more likely to serve these churches. Similarly, while at least 20% of the alums from each track serve congregations of 50 or fewer, these churches are more likely to be served by NBC alums than by pastors who attended either one of the liberal arts colleges or NTS.

Two-thirds of the pastors with no educational record serve in congregations with 50 or fewer worshippers. Pastors with no record of Nazarene educational preparation are also more likely to serve smaller congregations, although the widely varying levels of non-Nazarene education may be seen the numbers serving larger congregations.

| Table 3 | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|----------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Educational Institutions Attended by Current Nazarene Pastors | | | | | | | | |
| | 1-50 | | 51-100 | | 101-200 | | Over 200 | |
| Size | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Nazarene Bible College | 329 | 42.6% | 272 | 35.2% | 134 | 17.4% | 37 | 4.8% |
| Nazarene Liberal Arts Colleges* | 627 | 26.2% | 772 | 32.2% | 613 | 25.6% | 385 | 16.1% |
| Nazarene Theological Seminary | 200 | 19.8% | 322 | 31.8% | 285 | 28.2% | 204 | 20.2% |
| No Nazarene Institution | 421 | 43.4% | 337 | 34.7% | 159 | 16.4% | 54 | 5.6% |
| No Educational Data Record | 318 | 66.7% | 126 | 26.4% | 26 | 5.5% | 7 | 1.5% |

Source: Church Growth Research Center, 1995

Numbers total more than the total number of churches since many pastors attended more than one institution.

Table 4 summarizes the highest degree earned by the current pastors. In this table only the highest degree is reported. A pastor who earned an associates degree at Nazarene Bible College, then a bachelors degree at MidAmerica Nazarene University, followed by a Master of

Divinity degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary would only be counted among the 738 M.Div. degree holders.

Not all of those who attend an educational institution complete their degree. Some of those who report attending one or more of the schools in table 2 accepted pastoral assignments and left before completing the degree program. Table 3 indicates that 28% of the current pastors do not have any degree in their educational record. It seems likely that many of the additional 11% with no educational record also have no earned degree.

| Table 4 | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Degrees Earned by Current Nazarene Pastors | | |
| Institution | Number* | Percent |
| Associates degree | 355 | 7.4% |
| Bachelors degree | 1,253 | 26.1% |
| Masters degree | 438 | 9.1% |
| Master of Divinity (B.D.) | 738 | 15.4% |
| Doctors degree | 150 | 3.1% |
| No Degree Reported | 1,339 | 27.9% |
| No Educational Data Record | 531 | 11.1% |
| Totals | 4,804 | 100.0% |

Source: General Secretary's records

*Only the highest level degree is counted here. Therefore, a pastor who earned an associates degree at NBC, a bachelors degree at MNU, and a M.Div. at NTS, is only counted here at the M.Div. level.

Table 4 shows the relationship between the highest degree earned by the current pastors and the sizes of the congregations they serve. Pastors with no degree and those whose highest degree is at the associates level are most likely to be serving in the smallest congregations. Ministers who have earned a doctors degree are most likely to be pastoring churches with more than 200 worshippers.

| Table 5 | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|----------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Highest Degree Earned by Congregation Sunday Morning Worship Size | | | | | | | | |
| | 1-50 | | 51-100 | | 101-200 | | Over 200 | |
| Size | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| Associates Degree | 156 | 44.8% | 118 | 33.9% | 56 | 16.1% | 18 | 5.2% |
| Bachelors Degree | 416 | 33.9% | 388 | 31.6% | 285 | 23.2% | 138 | 11.2% |
| Masters Degree | 76 | 17.8% | 133 | 31.1% | 125 | 29.3% | 93 | 21.8% |
| Masters of Divinity (B.D.) | 152 | 20.9% | 243 | 33.4% | 208 | 28.6% | 124 | 17.1% |
| Doctors Degree | 21 | 14.2% | 45 | 30.4% | 31 | 20.9% | 51 | 34.5% |
| No Degree Reported | 583 | 45.2% | 448 | 34.7% | 196 | 15.2% | 64 | 5.0% |
| No Educational Data Record | 318 | 66.7% | 126 | 26.4% | 26 | 5.5% | 7 | 1.5% |

Source: Church Growth Research Center, 1995

Numbers total more than the total number of churches since many pastors attended more than one institution.

Nazarene ministers have pursued a variety of educational paths. It may be assumed that educational decisions were prayerfully made in obedience to their understandings of God's will. It might also be that in some cases God's will was misunderstood.

The patterns observed in the preceding tables raise some questions. For example, how accessible were the various Nazarene education options? As decisions were made concerning educational preparation, how aware of the implications or consequences were these ministers? If 21%, or more, of the current corps of pastors have not used any of the Nazarene colleges or the seminary, is that a problem or an appropriate response to the variety of congregations our pastors serve? If many ministers in preparation leave school before completing their educational degree program, is that a personal and denominational failure or an appropriate adaptation of ideals to the realities of available ministry assignments?

Contexts of Ministry

It is probably impossible to adequately describe the extensive variety of contexts in which Nazarene pastors serve. However, it is possible to describe some of the continua of cultural characteristics along which Nazarene congregations are located. The following tables summarize the location of our churches and laity along a few of those continua.

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It might be argued that in the twenty-first century a larger proportion of Nazarene congregations must and will be located in the major urban areas. Furthermore, some of the struggling congregations in small towns and rural areas may need to be allowed to die with dignity. In anticipation of these changes and as they take place, ministerial preparation must be adjusted to meet the changed need. However, at least in the near future, there will continue to be a need for many pastors in smaller communities.

| Table 6 | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Community Types in Which Nazarene Congregations are Located | | |
| Community Type | Number | Percent |
| Major Urban | 1,186 | 24.7% |
| Suburban or Small City | 1,218 | 25.3% |
| Small Town | 1,498 | 31.1% |
| Rural | 907 | 18.9% |
| Totals | 4,809 | 100.0% |

Source: Church Growth Research Center, 1995

Community type was not available for 198 of the congregations.

Table 7 summarizes the locations of congregations by size and community type. Average Sunday morning worship attendance is used as the measure of size since the definition of membership tends to vary and may not be the same for large congregations in major urban areas as it is for small congregations in rural areas.

Large congregations (over 250 participants) tend to be found in the cities. However, 16% of these churches are in small towns or rural areas. As might be expected, 58% of the small churches (1-100) are located in small towns and rural areas. However, 42% of these churches are in cities or suburbs.

| Table 7 | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|----------|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Community Types in Which Nazarene Congregations are Located | | | | | | |
| | 1-100 | | 101-250 | | Over 250 | |
| Community Type | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Major Urban | 705 | 21.0% | 319 | 28.8% | 144 | 46.9% |
| Suburban or Small City | 709 | 21.1% | 392 | 35.4% | 113 | 36.8% |
| Small Town | 1,132 | 33.7% | 314 | 28.4% | 46 | 15.0% |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-----|--------|
| Rural | 815 | 24.2% | 82 | 7.4% | 4 | 1.3% |
| Totals | 3,361 | 100.0% | 1,107 | 100.0% | 307 | 100.0% |

Source: Church Growth Research Center, 1995

Congregations for which both community classification and A.M. worship data were not available were excluded from this table.

Table 8 compares the range of income levels reported by all Americans with the people who identified themselves as Nazarene in the City University of New York study of religion in America. While some variation in family incomes would be found within any Nazarene congregation, it might be expected that churches would tend to be made up primarily of people from similar economic circumstances. Therefore, it seems likely that a significant proportion of the Nazarene congregations in the United States are composed primarily of families with incomes below \$15,000. It also seems likely that the proportion of relatively wealthy congregations is somewhat smaller.

| Table 8 | | |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| Before Taxes Total Annual Household Income From all Sources | | |
| Family Income | Adult Americans | Adult Nazarenes |
| Less than \$15,000 | 22.9% | 24.1% |
| \$15,000 but less than \$30,000 | 28.8% | 34.0% |
| \$30,000 but less than \$50,000 | 20.6% | 25.0% |
| \$50,000 and over | 13.7% | 6.0% |
| No Response | 14.0% | 10.9% |
| Totals | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source:City University of New York EXCEL survey – telephone interviews with 113,000 American households in the continental United States

Table 9 is also drawn from the City University of New York study. It compares formal educational between Nazarenes and other Americans. Again it might be expected that some variation in education would be found within any Nazarene congregation, but that churches would tend to be made up primarily of people from similar educational levels. Therefore, it seems likely that significant proportions of the Nazarene congregations are composed primarily of members with a high school education or less.

| Table 9 |
|----------------|
|----------------|

| Formal Education | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Education Level | Adult Americans | Adult Nazarenes |
| High School or Less | 58.7% | 65.2% |
| Some College | 21.1% | 17.1% |
| College Graduate or more | 19.7% | 16.4% |
| No Response | .5% | 1.3% |
| Totals | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: City University of New York EXCEL survey – telephone interviews with 113,000 American households in the continental United States

Table 10 presents the distribution of Nazarene congregations by size. The most common size is 50 or fewer participants on an average Sunday morning. Some of these congregations are small through failure. Others are small because the lay members strongly prefer what they perceive as the benefits of a family style church. For those of us who prefer to worship and mature in large congregations, it is very difficult to imagine that some sincere Christians prefer smaller settings. It is almost inconceivable to us that God would call many people to serve all of their careers in small churches. Even if we can imagine that reality, we find it difficult to believe that those pastors and the churches they serve are worthy. Therefore, we find it very difficult to design educational programs tailored to these settings even though they are the most common expression of the church.

As noted above, pastors from all three of the educational tracks serve congregations in each of these size groups. Personal educational choices neither ensure nor prevent service as pastor of the largest or smallest churches. However, educational strategy does influence the probability that ministers will pastor larger or smaller churches.

| Table 10 | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Size of Nazarene Congregation | | |
| Type of Community | Number | Percent |
| 1 – 50 Worshippers | 1,938 | 38.7% |
| 51 –100 Worshippers | 1,586 | 31.7% |
| 101 – 200 Worshippers | 970 | 19.4% |
| Over 200 Worshippers | 514 | 10.2% |
| Totals | 5,008 | 100.0% |

Source: General Secretary's records, 1997 average Sunday morning attendance

Table 11 summarizes responses to a question on the 1993 Quadrennial Church Census which asked, "Are you bi-vocational?" 31% of the pastors responded to this question said, "Yes". While individual definitions of "bi-vocational" may vary, the 31% is consistent with the Pensions and Benefits USA 1996–97 summary of "Compensation Benefits for Parsonage Families" for all U.S. districts which reports that the average total salary and housing for pastors of churches with fewer than 50 members in 1996–97 was \$9,483.

The Nazarene culture appears to be ambivalent regarding bivocational ministry. A significant number of pastors are bivocational – either by necessity or choice. Some of our churches require bivocational pastors – either by design or irresponsibility. Stigma is often attached to bivocational pastors of small churches, but rarely to educators and denominational leaders who are bivocational – teaching and pastoring, for example.

This ambivalence makes us uneasy in considering important educational issues. For example, what are the most appropriate second vocations? Would it be appropriate to maintain some existing second vocations while obtaining the educational preparation for the ministry vocation? What levels of educational debt are acceptable in bivocational settings?

| Table 11 | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| Bi-Vocational Ministry: Pastors' Response to their Question, "Are you Bi-vocational" | | |
| Response | Number | Percent |
| No | 2,342 | 68.9% |
| Yes* | 1,056 | 31.1% |
| Totals | 3,398 | 100.0% |

Source: Quadrennial Church Census, 1993, Pastors' Questionnaire, item 5b.

* "Yes" responses included "Yes, it is necessary to supplement our family income," "Yes, the extra income is not necessary, but my second career makes my ministry more effective," and "Yes, other"

Denominational Strategy

The educational system of the Church of the Nazarene exists in part to prepare:

- the leadership elite of the church
- chaplains, deaconesses, educators, evangelists, lay ministers, ministers of Christian education, ministers of music, missionaries, and song evangelists
- pastors for the 10% (514) of the congregations with more than 200 worshippers on an average Sunday morning

- pastors for the 39% (1,938) of the congregations with 50 or fewer worshippers on an average Sunday morning
- pastors for the congregations made up primarily of professionals where educational levels are high.
- pastors for the congregations where the priesthood of all believers is more highly valued than a well-educated, professional clergy
- pastors for the congregations where a bivocational ministry will be the appropriate strategy and any educational debt the pastor brings will limit or prevent ministry
- pastors for congregations in urban, suburban, and rural settings

This list could, and probably should be extended. However, it may be long enough to suggest the variety of need. The educational system of the denomination must provide ministerial preparation appropriate to a wide range of settings and subcultures.

One of the problems I share with some other educators and leaders is an ethnocentrism that makes me want to teach students to be what I am, do what I do, or at least pastor the churches I would want to attend. In most ways I fit popular American Nazarene ideals: urban, privileged class, educated, white-collar, member of a large congregation. My ethnocentric view would be that congregations that are large, highly educated, professional, urban, and wealthy are better – not merely different.

Still, I believe the alternatives to large, wealthy, privileged, urban, and highly educated are also legitimate, worthy, and worthy of the support of the church and its educational institutions. I believe it is important to overcome personal biases. Therefore, over the last several years I have espoused the legitimacy and worthiness of alternative congregational settings and forms. I have been amazed at the strong, negative responses I have encountered. These experiences have reminded me that ethnocentrism is not lightly held. Therefore, I feel some need to make it clear that my personal preferences and ethnocentrism are probably similar to those I am most likely to offend.

I prefer to live in a large metropolitan area. It has been 25 years since I have lived in a town smaller than 60,000 people.

I believe ministry is very demanding and requires as much education as possible. While pastoring, I worked through the course work for a doctor's degree in sociology because I perceived my need for more information, skills, and challenge. I value extensive education.

I prefer to worship and grow in my faith in a large congregation. I want a well-educated pastor who feeds me the strong meat of the Bible and theology, challenging me to prayerfully consider the implications of my faith. I prefer the music, program, fellowship, and specialists that are possible in a large church.

As a pastor I resisted the concept of bivocationalism. I accepted the belief that the role was so important that I should not choose a bivocational strategy even when my choice required my family to make extraordinary sacrifices. In fact, I was not bivocational until after I became an

educator in the Nazarene system of higher education. It is interesting to me that the stigma attached to bivocational ministry for pastors of small churches is often not associated with bivocational ministry for educators and other Nazarene leaders.

In spite of my personal preferences, I believe there is strength and validity in most of the forms and settings of the church. I also believe the denomination and its schools should design and make accessible educational preparation which is appropriate to the various organizational forms and subcultural contexts in which God calls us to minister.

This opinion is somewhat at odds with the assumption that most people who are well educated will be able to cross from their own into most cultures, or subcultures, without much trouble or loss of effectiveness. The spirit, knowledge, and skills of our missionaries provide some helpful examples and insights. The success of Nazarene missionaries certainly demonstrates that it is possible to cross significant cultural boundaries and carry out effective ministry. However, the commitment of our missionaries to developing local ministers from within the culture suggests their conviction that a cultural outsider is rarely an adequate substitute for ministers who know the culture from within.

My preferences are not significant, of course, in understanding either individuals' or the denomination's strategies for the educational preparation of ministers. They may, however, provide a better understanding of my discomfort in stating some of the questions these data raise for me.

First, I wonder if we could, or should, make the ministry career implications of the four tracks more available to ministers who are making decisions regarding their educational preparation?

The church and its schools face some real dilemmas in this regard. For one thing, while most of us recognize that earning a degree generally expands ministry opportunities, table 5 makes it clear that some of the pastors of the largest congregations are ministers who apparently have not earned a degree. Still, the directed study option would generally be understood to limit ministry career options.

Furthermore, no one wants to advise ministers in preparation in ways that limit them or deny the legitimacy of any of the institutions. While it seems clear that the church's strategy must not limit or prevent ministers from fulfilling God's will for their lives because education was not accessible. It also seems clear that ministers must not become alienated, by too much or inappropriate education, from the subcultures to which they are called.

In spite of these difficulties, it may be possible and desirable to help educational decisions by explaining at least some of the consequences of those choices. The following notes are an attempt to begin such an explanation.

The Church of the Nazarene values education. The ideal for its ministers is as much education as is possible and appropriate. It has formally approved four ministerial preparation tracks: (1) directed study, (2) Bible college, (3) liberal arts baccalaureate programs, and (4) a liberal arts degree plus a seminary masters program. All four tracks are understood to provide legitimate initial preparation for ordination and ministry that will be followed by lifelong

continuing education. While the tracks requiring less initial preparation are appropriate to particular cultural and economic situations and meet ordination requirements, they have the obvious disadvantages for the minister that they limit opportunity for personal and career development.

The denomination has not formally specified its ministry strategy for, or the implications of, the four tracks. However, it is possible to describe the implicit strategy of the four approaches. First, the directed study track is particularly valuable for contextual education in those sub-cultural settings where financial limitations and cultural values make any of the three on-campus tracks impractical or undesirable. The ministers who choose this method of preparation are understood to be limited in their ability to accept assignments in other settings without additional education. The NBC extension centers were created to improve the preparation provided by this track.

The second ministerial preparation approach formally approved by the denomination is Bible college. This track was established particularly for adult students, called to ministry later in life, for whom prior academic preparation in other fields or life experience and circumstances make a concentrated program in Bible, theology, and professional ministry the most appropriate preparation. By denominational support and a more concentrated approach than a liberal arts plus seminary program, the Bible college track is able to prepare ministers who begin their ministry with lower levels of educational debt. This is especially important for the many ministry assignments in the Church of the Nazarene where salaries are quite limited.

The third track, a liberal arts program without seminary, appears to be the denominational strategy particularly designed for young people. Their age, life experience, and prior education make a liberal arts education appropriate. The financial limitations or sub-cultural expectations of the ministry assignments for which they are preparing may make seminary education impractical or inappropriate.

The fourth track is a combined liberal arts and seminary degree program. This is the ideal preparation in the Church of the Nazarene. It is the most extensive preparation provided by the denomination and is particularly well suited for those ministry assignments and sub-cultures where graduate education is desired and financially feasible. Ministers who choose this educational approach are understood to be best prepared to accept denominational leadership assignments and are probably better prepared to minister effectively in unfamiliar sub-cultures and settings.

Second, I wonder who should take, or be given special responsibility for the 2,000 pastors who will serve congregations with 50 or fewer worshippers?

Third, and perhaps closely related, is the question of where the education of the 1,500 or so bivocational ministers should take place? Would it be appropriate to maintain some existing second vocations while obtaining educational preparation for the ministry vocation? Are some second vocations more appropriate than others? Should some students be advised to include education for a second vocation as a part of their ministerial preparation? What levels of educational debt are acceptable in bivocational settings?

Fourth, are ministers being appropriately prepared educationally for the roles available? Table 12 presents the numbers of ministers serving in several roles. The number of ministers serving as pastors, for example, on the day of the report each year is not precisely the same as the number of opportunities, or ministry positions, available. However, the number of positions filled may be a good indicator of the number of positions available.

The number of positions filled by pastors has decreased slightly over the last ten years. There has been an overall increase of 518 in ministers serving in all of these roles. The numbers of pastors, evangelists, and missionaries have also declined. On the other hand the numbers of ministers serving as chaplains and associates have increased significantly.

| Table 12 | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Numbers of Ministers in Various Roles in the United States and Canada | | | | | | | | |
| Year | Pastor | Associate | Evan- gelist | Chaplain | Adminis- trator | Educator | Missionary | Total: These Roles |
| 1988 | 4,509 | 912 | 329 | 124 | 216 | 207 | 192 | 6,489 |
| 1989 | 4,585 | 914 | 322 | 134 | 226 | 203 | 226 | 6,610 |
| 1990 | 4,533 | 1,039 | 309 | 148 | 237 | 199 | 191 | 6,656 |
| 1991 | 4,582 | 1,050 | 313 | 164 | 234 | 219 | 184 | 6,746 |
| 1992 | 4,572 | 1,128 | 309 | 153 | 216 | 210 | 184 | 6,772 |
| 1993 | 4,583 | 1,193 | 298 | 162 | 224 | 208 | 181 | 6,849 |
| 1994 | 4,491 | 1,280 | 292 | 174 | 228 | 212 | 189 | 6,866 |
| 1995 | 4,493 | 1,297 | 296 | 185 | 233 | 220 | 187 | 6,911 |
| 1996 | 4,486 | 1,341 | 293 | 191 | 245 | 213 | 174 | 6,943 |
| 1997 | 4,453 | 1,429 | 290 | 197 | 253 | 213 | 172 | 7,007 |
| Change Over 10 Years | -56 | 517 | -39 | 73 | 37 | 6 | -20 | 518 |

Source: General Secretary's annual summary.

Conclusions

21% of the current pastors have not reported including any Nazarene institution in their educational preparation. Another 11% are serving as pastors but are so early in their ministry career that they have not yet applied for a credential and established a record of educational experience. It may be that the denominational strategy does not serve one-fourth or more of our ministers. Changes in the strategy might make it possible to serve more of these pastors.

28% of the current pastors do not have any degree in their educational record. Withdrawing rather than graduating from one of the educational institutions appears to be a common experience among Nazarene ministers. Furthermore, it seems likely that many of the additional 11% with no educational record have no earned degree. Denominational strategies for continuing education should probably include continuing education with degree potential for ministers already in the field who have not completed baccalaureate degrees. The strategy already includes several programs to earn masters degrees while remaining in the field for ministers who have earned baccalaureate degrees. The strategy also includes the Doctor of Ministry program for seminary graduate ministers who continue to serve in the field.

50% of the Nazarene congregations in the United States and Canada are located in small towns and rural areas. 39% of the churches have 50 or fewer worshippers on an average Sunday morning. The cultures of these and other settings differ significantly from the cultures of Nazarene educational institutions. In fact, Nazarene congregations are found in a variety of subcultural settings. The appropriate educational preparation for one of those subcultures will not be the most appropriate for another. When we prepare ministers to serve as missionaries, we teach them the significance of culture and prepare them to study the cultures in which they will serve. Perhaps more missionary-like preparation should be included in the denominational strategy for pastors.

31% of our pastors are bivocational. It may be that the relatively large proportion of ministers without degrees, and perhaps many of those who have no Nazarene education or no educational record, are in part a consequence of the weakness of the denominational strategy for educating those who will serve as bivocational pastors.

Delivery of higher education is changing in America. The centralized, fixed schedule campus is becoming less important while in the field education including electronic classrooms, concentrated seminars, and apprenticeships are becoming more common. Some of the ministers' and congregations' needs are apparently not being served by the current denominational strategy. If we could reform the Nazarene ministerial education strategy to be the best that God can help us develop for the 21st century, what would we need to modify? What would