

Dynamics of the Placement Process

Association of Nazarene Sociologists and Researchers

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God has been calling forth women and men to serve as ministers in the Church of the Nazarene. In recent years hundreds have responded and begun the discipline of preparation. In the United States and Canada during the last decade the average number granted their first district license has been more than 500 each year. In 2002 the number of newly licensed ministers reported by the General Secretary was 582. Over the last several years newly licensed ministers have been about 20% to 25% women and 75% to 80% men.

Those of us who are called to ministry in the Church of the Nazarene are different in many ways. We come from different backgrounds. We differ in personality. Our academic skills and our levels of discipline vary. Some of us do our educational preparation through a liberal arts program followed by seminary while others prepare through college alone, at Bible college, by directed study, in district centers, or on-line. We may serve as missionaries, evangelists, chaplains, administrators, associates, or senior/solo pastors. We are each unique in many ways, but we share a great commitment to the heavenly calling and a deep desire that our ministry would be significant.

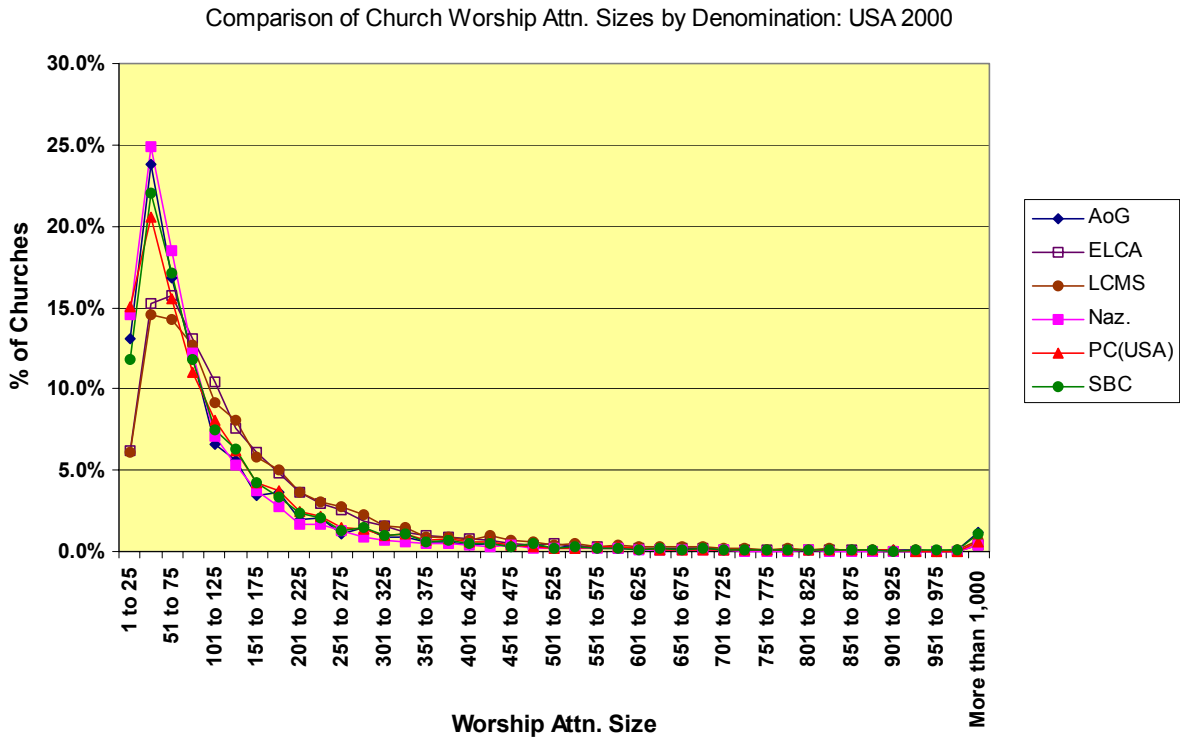
This paper looks at deployment of ministers, particularly pastors, in the Church of the Nazarene. As with other presentations at this conference, we hope that consideration of the system will contribute to positive change. We especially desire that the church will become more effective in placing women in ministry. In addition, we hope that some new ministers seeking placement, both women and men, will be helped as they seek to obey God and find fulfilling ministry within the Nazarene system.

SIGNIFICANT MINISTRY

Placement and fulfillment will be more likely in a denominational culture that affirms a broad understanding of legitimate expressions of congregational life. If significant ministry can only be found as a senior pastor of a large, suburban church, most Nazarene pastors will invest their lives in unimportant ministry. Indeed, this is true not only for Nazarenes, but for most protestant ministers. On the occasion of his retirement from Duke Divinity School, Jackson Carroll said, "Protestant clergy will mostly be pastors of small to mid-sized congregations—often in small town and rural areas where 52 percent of all congregations are located" (.) (Jackson Carroll, Williams Professor Emeritus of Religion and Society, Duke Divinity School, *Reflections of a Clergy-Watcher*, Retirement Lecture, April 18, 2001, pages 8-9).

Carroll's description is supported by Richard Houseal's comparison of the distribution of congregations in several denominations by the size of their Sunday morning worship attendance. The most striking thing about the resulting graph, below, is the similarity in distribution of Assembly of God, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Church of the Nazarene, Presbyterian Church (USA), and Southern Baptist Church congregations. There are interesting differences, but perhaps most interesting is the fact that the Nazarene pattern is not unique.

Figure 1



Those of us who live in large cities or worship in large churches have some tendency to discount the legitimacy and advantages of smaller communities. We are naturally inclined toward the ethnocentric question, Why can't they be more like us?

One of the most enjoyable books I (Kenneth) read in the last year was Bob Greene's *Once Upon a Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen*. A large part of my enjoyment was his very positive descriptions of the people and places of my youth. During World War II people in the small and medium sized towns in western Nebraska brought some joy and relief to soldiers on military trains headed toward an uncertain future. I liked his descriptions of the fulfillment people found in service. I liked the fact that he recognized the value of normal life in these communities. Among other positive descriptions of this part of the country he said, "In a lot of ways, it is a country that many of us seem always to be searching for" (2002, page 9).

But I did not like his introduction. Greene evidently lives, like a majority of the population of the United States, in one of the relatively few very large urban centers or within about fifty miles of a coastline. Unfortunately, even when he is writing a book of praise for Midwestern people living in smaller communities, Greene joins those who seem to think their life is better, somehow more significant than life and service in smaller, inland communities. He says, "North Platte, Nebraska, is about as isolated as a small town can conceivably be. It's in the middle of the middle of the country, alone out on the plains; it is hours by car even from the cities of Omaha or Lincoln. Few people venture there unless they live there, or have family there" (page 5). "There is no reason for anyone to pass through North Platte anymore—the jet age has done away with that. If a person wants to get from one end of the United States to the other, he or she now likely does it five miles in the air, high above the country—high above Nebraska. All the small towns flash by in an instant—on a cloudy day, it's as if they are not even down there" (page 8).

Greene is not alone in this questioning of the significance of small and mid sized communities. Many of us assume that one city of 1,000,000 is obviously better than 100 cities of 10,000 and certainly better than 1,000 communities of 1,000. Similarly, when we think of communities of faith, many of us assume that a church of 1,000 is obviously better than 10 churches of 100 and certainly better than 20 churches of 50. Sociologists may have found that as group size increases, consensus about norms tends to decrease, deviance from norms tends to increase, and leaders tend to become more isolated from members (Johnstone, 1983, pages 69-70). However, most of us are more aware of the reality that economic viability, program possibilities, and professional prestige are better in one church of 1,000.

In fact, in the Church of the Nazarene over the last fifty years there appears to have been a shift in appreciation of the variety of legitimate congregational expressions. In the ANSR book, *The Smaller Church in a Super Church Era*, B. Edgar Johnson, who was then the General Secretary, described the transition. According to him, in the General Assembly in 1948 a general superintendent warned about the disadvantages of larger organizations and encouraged Nazarenes to choose smaller institutions in order, among other things, to locate churches strategically and to keep people close to leadership. However, by the 1980s this had changed. Now, Dr. Johnson said, “It is believed that small churches are *not* ideal”. “[D]uring these past 40 years small churches have succumbed to a less positive image. Their inherent value has been questioned. No longer are they elevated to the plateau of the ideal” (Johnston and Sullivan, 1983, pages 86-89).

Both of us are worship in large churches. We give thanks for the growth of many of our churches. We are encouraged by the strength of large Nazarene churches in many areas of the country. At the same time, we give thanks for the many small Nazarene churches. Our sociological studies suggest that there are advantages as well as disadvantages in small communities and churches.

As shown in table 1, almost half of the existing Nazarene churches in the United States are in rural areas and small towns; communities where there are fewer than 25,000 people living within five miles of the church.

Table 1

Nazarene Churches in the United States by Community Type

Community Type*	All Nazarene Churches		Churches with Under 50 Worshipers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Major Urban	1,315	27%	427	23%
Smaller Urban	1,239	26%	324	17%
Town & Country	2,302	47%	1,117	60%

*Major Urban – at least 100,000 population within 5 miles, Smaller Urban – at least 25,000 within 5 miles, but under 100,000, Town & Country – less than 25,000 within 5 miles

Table 2 shows most (69%) Nazarene churches in the United States and Canada have fewer than 100 worshipers on an average Sunday. Nearly one-third (32%) of those people who participate in worship in a Nazarene church do so in these smaller churches.

One-fourth (25%) of our churches have between 100 and 300 in worship. This is 39% of the people who worship in a Nazarene church on average Sunday morning.

We have fewer than 300 churches with as many as 300 worshipers. However, this 6% of the churches have 29% of the worshipers.

Table 2

Distribution of Congregations and Worshipers
Active Churches and NewStarts in 2002 in the
Church of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada

Worship Size	Churches			Worshippers		
	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 – 50	1,877	38.4%	38.4%	57,708	11.1%	11.1%
51 – 100	1,504	30.8%	69.2%	108,049	20.8%	31.9%
101-150	609	12.5%	81.7%	75,003	14.4%	46.3%
151-200	319	6.5%	88.3%	55,492	10.7%	56.9%
201-300	292	6.0%	94.2%	70,999	13.6%	70.6%
301-500	183	3.8%	98.0%	69,652	13.4%	84.0%
501-800	60	1.2%	99.2%	37,441	7.2%	91.2%
Over 800	38	.8%	100.0%	45,909	8.8%	100.0%
Totals	4,882	100.0%		520,253	100.0%	

Churches, unlike towns, have a mandate to make disciples, to enfold new people into the kingdom of God. Pastors and members in every church must be missional. Around every church there are surely some people who have not heard and experienced the good news of salvation. As those people become faithful Christians, they must be joyfully received into the fellowship of the church. Nothing less is acceptable.

However, sometimes the church will welcome them into existing structures and at other times we will create new structures. It may be that starting new churches is as legitimate an option as enlarging existing churches. This option was evidently more acceptable in the 1940s when the general superintendent encouraged smaller institutions and Nazarenes organized nearly 1,500 new churches.

If it is assumed that bigger is obviously better, it will be difficult to understand why some thoughtful people choose smaller communities. But, in spite of the wisdom of gifted city managers or pastors, some do. In fact, we were raised by a man who recognized and enjoyed the advantages of large cities like Los Angeles, Denver, and Johannesburg, but chose the advantages of a small community when he contemplated the influences he thought might be best for his task of raising sons. I did not make the same choice as I raised my children, but his choice was not obviously inferior to, or less rational than mine.

One reason we might reject the legitimacy of smaller churches is that larger churches are more viable economically. Certainly larger churches can afford better compensation for their pastors. However, as John Dart, news editor of *Christian Century* recently observed, while, “Most Protestant congregations are small” and changing them into larger congregations would be more efficient, “I don’t think that will happen, because congregations are communities of history, connection and value. Most will not give up that community for a more efficient operation.” (*Christian Century*, Vol. 120, No. 4, page 32).

Nazarene ministers are more likely to prepare appropriately and find fulfillment in ministry if they start out with realistic understandings of the places to which God has been calling Nazarenes to serve. The church, as it seeks to carry out its mission needs administrators, chaplains, deaconesses, educators, evangelists, lay ministers, ministers of Christian education, ministers of music, missionaries, and song evangelists, and others. We need gifted, dedicated, prepared pastors for the 281 (6%) churches that have more than 300 worshipers on an average Sunday morning. We also need gifted, dedicated, prepared pastors for the 1,877 (38%) churches with 50 or fewer worshipers. We need pastors for churches made up primarily of professionals where educational levels are high, as well as for those where the priesthood of all believers is more highly valued than a well-educated, professional clergy. We need pastors who will serve churches in neighborhoods that have aged from vibrant communities of young families to established neighborhoods of empty nest couples. We need pastors for churches in a rich variety of cultural settings. Some will serve in the suburbs, but we also need gifted, dedicated, appropriately prepared pastors for the variety of urban and rural communities to which God has called us.

Over the last century Nazarene women and men have accepted missionary and other assignments involving great sacrifice. Perhaps it is appropriate to challenge youth and students to prayerfully consider careers of service in circumstances they might otherwise consider as unsuitable or financially challenging. This might include small churches, rural communities, and bivocational situations, as well as missionary service or ministry in urban settings, minority churches, or blue-collar neighborhoods.

Having observed that, “Protestant clergy will mostly be pastors of small to mid-sized congregations—often in small town and rural areas where 52 percent of all congregations are located,” Jackson Carroll stated a value judgment. He said, “*Clearly there is nothing wrong with this. Such congregations deserve excellent leadership as much as any other, and they can be just as rewarding a context for a fulfilling ministry as a large urban or suburban congregation*” (Retirement Lecture, page 8, *emphasis added*). A few decades ago Nazarenes might have been more inclined to agree with Carroll’s value judgment than we are now. This may make it more difficult now for many Nazarene ministers to experience significance and fulfillment.

CORPS OF MINISTERS

Placement in any field is easier where there is a shortage of personnel. When there are more applicants available than there are positions to fill, those making decisions about placement are able to choose between several candidates. On the other hand, when there are more positions than applicants, candidates may choose between positions.

The Church of the Nazarene does not seem to be experiencing the kind of shortage of pastors that is troubling some other denominations. Jack Marcum, of the Presbyterian Church (USA) research services staff, examined some of the nuances of the perceived shortage of pastors in their denomination. His analysis suggests that rather than a literal shortfall in the number of ministers, there is a focused shortage. Their problem is finding pastors for the congregations, mostly small, that need them while many ordained ministers for various reasons, including dual career marriages and more second-career clergy, are limiting the kinds and locations of calls they will consider. In fact, the number of small Presbyterian congregations is increasing at the same time that Presbyterian ministers are less inclined to accept calls to small churches.

The distinction between a literal shortage in the number of ministers and a shortage of people willing to accept particular types of calls is important, Marcum said, because if we perceive a real shortfall in the number of ministers then the “logical response is to recruit more candidates for ministry.” “But given the complexity of the problem, a blanket ‘recruitment drive’ would do little to fill existing vacant pulpits and

might result in a large pool of alienated individuals unable to find suitable calls” (2001, *Parsing the Pastor "Shortage"*, page 1).

Table 3

Comparison of Pastoral Vacancy Rates
in Nazarene* and Presbyterian (USA)** Churches

Members	All Churches		Churches Without a Pastor	
	Nazarene	Presbyterian	Nazarene	Presbyterian
1 – 50	28.1%	22.8%	14.7%	76.6%
51 – 100	30.8%	21.2%	10.6%	46.9%
101 – 150	15.3%	13.8%	7.8%	24.7%
151 – 200	8.8%	9.5%	5.3%	16.3%
201 – 300	7.9%	11.8%	7.0%	12.1%
301 – 500	5.9%	10.6%	6.6%	9.1%
501 – 800	2.2%	6.0%	5.6%	4.5%
Over 800	0.9%	4.4%	8.7%	1.0%

* Active Nazarene churches in the United States reporting membership in 2001 with a pastoral vacancy on December 31, 2001.

**Percentages reported in “*Parsing the Pastor 'Shortage'*”
<http://www.pcusa.org/research/monday/shortg.htm>

In comparison to the Presbyterian Church (USA) a much smaller proportion of Nazarene congregations are without a pastor. On any given day about 10% of the Nazarene congregations in the United States do not have 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.

While the percentage of small Nazarene churches with vacancies is only 14.7% rather than the 76.6% of the Presbyterians, the Nazarene “shortage” of pastors is higher in this size category than in any other. As with the PC (USA), a general recruitment drive among Nazarenes might fail to fill existing vacancies and instead result in a pool of surprised and frustrated individuals unable to find “suitable” calls.

A significant number of Nazarene ministers retire every year. In the United States and Canada that number has been relatively stable at about 150 for the last ten years. Table 4 also shows that the proportion of ministers who are in the retired status has been around 20%. As the larger cohort of “boomer” age ministers reach retirement age beginning about 2010, the number of retirements might be expected to increase.

Table 4

Ten Year Pattern of Retirements and Retired Ministers
in the Church of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada

Year	Total Ministers	Retirements		Total Retired	
		Number	Percent*	Number	Percent*
1993	12,244	137	1.1%	2,501	20.4%
1994	12,423	156	1.3%	2,543	20.5%
1995	12,482	137	1.1%	2,580	20.7%
1996	12,582	143	1.1%	2,569	20.4%
1997	12,748	110	0.9%	2,636	20.7%
1998	12,789	137	1.1%	2,663	20.8%
1999	12,861	150	1.2%	2,625	20.4%
2000	13,144	170	1.3%	2,659	20.2%
2001	13,179	145	1.1%	2,693	20.4%
2002	13,239	142	1.1%	2,664	20.1%

Source: General Secretary's annual summary

*Percentage of all U.S.A. and Canada Ministers

Over the last ten years the number of newly licensed ministers has averaged almost 550. During this time period, there have been an average of about 250 newly ordained elders and 30 newly ordained deacons.

Table 5

Ten Year Pattern of Additions to the Corps of Nazarene Ministers in the United States and Canada

Year	Total Ministers	Newly Licensed		New Elders		New Deacons	
		Number	Percent*	Number	Percent*	Number	Percent*
1993	12,244	506	4.1%	240	2.0%	32	0.3%
1994	12,423	534	4.3%	239	1.9%	37	0.3%
1995	12,482	518	4.1%	251	2.0%	36	0.3%
1996	12,582	550	4.4%	240	1.9%	19	0.2%
1997	12,748	499	3.9%	282	2.2%	32	0.3%
1998	12,789	533	4.2%	245	1.9%	28	0.2%
1999	12,861	556	4.3%	260	2.0%	35	0.3%
2000	13,144	619	4.7%	253	1.9%	37	0.3%
2001	13,179	574	4.4%	270	2.0%	33	0.3%
2002	13,239	582	4.4%	283	2.1%	26	0.2%

Source: General Secretary's annual summary

*Percent of total ministers

The pattern of losses from and additions to the Nazarene corps of ministers over the last decade has resulted in a relatively stable total number of elders and licensed ministers. There are fewer deacons, however the number increased by more than 100% over the decade.

Table 6

Nazarene Ministers in the United States and Canada

Year	Elders	Deacons	Licensed Ministers	Total Ministers
1993	9,600	170	2,474	12,244
1994	9,681	208	2,534	12,423
1995	9,767	242	2,473	12,482
1996	9,781	244	2,557	12,582
1997	9,907	276	2,565	12,748
1998	9,973	300	2,516	12,789
1999	10,012	319	2,530	12,861
2000	10,166	346	2,632	13,144
2001	10,191	357	2,631	13,179
2002	10,206	379	2,654	13,239

Source: General Secretary's annual summary

BELIEFS AND POLICIES

When asked to describe the Church of the Nazarene, I (Chuck) most often say that we have a Wesleyan doctrine similar to the old Methodists and that we run a program similar to the Southern Baptists but that we have a representative form of government similar to the Presbyterians. I believe it is an accurate description, and I believe it contributes to many types of misunderstandings for people who join our churches. Those with a Methodist background are quickly comfortable with our doctrine, but may expect a more formal method of placing pastors. Those with a Baptist background are quickly comfortable with our calendar of events and order of service, but may also assume that we are part of the Fundamentalist movement. Those coming from a Presbyterian background will quickly understand our representative form of government but may take some time getting accustomed to our doctrine and program.

These issues provide some insight for our discussion at this meeting. While we officially believe that women may be ordained and hold any office in the church, many of our people do not understand this position. People who have come to us from Baptist backgrounds are comfortable in our program but many of them really do not believe that women should be in certain leadership positions. At the same time people who understand our doctrine may be inclined to believe that we should be able to just appoint women to positions.

The Church of the Nazarene is in the middle of a continuum of organizational models that stretches from congregational to centralized. We are best described as connectional. This is an important issue to address because our history is a history of inclusiveness. We are a merger organization. When you read our history it is filled with the richness that came to the movement as we merged with each new group.

We do not have a centralized operational system. We do not have a Bishop who appoints pastors. While a district superintendent can appoint a pastor to a very small or very new church, it is the hope of the appointment that the church will grow to self-sufficiency and move to the regular method of calling and reviewing pastors. A pastor can be appointed to a church that is declared to be in crises, but when the crises passes the review of the pastor is carried out in the way all other pastoral reviews are carried out. We do not have a centralized system that can promise a position to every ordained minister.

On the other hand, we do not have a congregational system. Our churches are not free to ordain individuals on their own and they are not free to call a person to a ministry position without the approval of the district superintendent.

Each of these systems has pluses and minuses. The denominations that have the most ability to assure ordained ministers a place of service also have the most rigorous requirements for ordination. Most of them require the Master of Divinity degree and probe much deeper into the psychological and spiritual qualities of each candidate.

The independent congregations that ordain ministers based on their own criteria have the least ability to assure the minister that the ordination would be recognized by other congregations and that they would be able to find a place of service in another church. Independent churches ordain their own ministers but they also are able to hire individuals ordained in some denomination.

The requirements for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene seem to reflect the inclusive nature of our founders. While there are standard requirements, there are a variety of ways to meet those requirements. For instance, a candidate must complete a required course of study. However, that may be accomplished by home study, college, seminary, or a combination of these. Much of it can even be completed on-line now. A candidate is not required to attend a particular school or even a denominational school. They must simply find a way to complete the course work that satisfies the board of ministerial studies on their district.

Candidates are required to demonstrate their abilities and commitment to a lifetime career of ministry in the Church of the Nazarene by actually finding an assignment and serving successfully. The standard has long been a minimum of two years full time service as a pastor. In recent years allowances have been made to demonstrate ministry by serving on a larger church staff for at least three years full time. The latest Manual makes provision for the district credentials board to consider an extended period of part time service. Generally however, the reason for part time service would need to be because the position itself is part time and not because the candidate wants to avoid committing to full time service. Full time is defined as “full livelihood for 30 or more hours a week, 30 or more weeks a year as your primary occupation.”

The two year minimum was established years ago as a method of being sure that the church did not “lay on hands too quickly.” During this time of service the members of the credentials board must find the commitments, characteristics and abilities that give them the confidence to believe that the candidate intends to spend his or her life and career in ministerial service within the church. The best way for them to do that is to see the person active in ministry. Recommending the candidate for ordination is a recognition of his or her ongoing success as a full time minister.

Graduating from the course of study and serving the specified amount of time establishes the minimum for the board of ministerial credentials to be able to recommend a candidate to the district assembly and to the presiding General Superintendent for ordination. They are not required to do so just because the minimum standards have been met. It is not an automatic process.

Unlike a teaching certificate, ordination is not a credential that must be obtained before a minister can get a job. It is not the end of a journey. It is an “in progress” recognition of ongoing full time service. With a few exceptions such as the District Superintendency and the General Superintendency, there are no positions that would be available to a minister who was ordained that are not available to district licensed ministers.

Finding a place of service is assumed to be the responsibility of the minister. Our organizational structure works best for entrepreneurial individuals. Dr. Bill Burch, who was my district superintendent several years ago, commented that only about ten percent seem to create a demand for their services. The remainder really have to get involved in the process of finding places to serve. When I asked him what he meant by creating a demand for their services, he said that these are the people that will get calls from district superintendents and churches without initiating anything. I believe he was being optimistic. The list of people that I know who have received an unsolicited call from a church or district superintendent this year is very short. Although it is true that some people get calls without asking for them, it is not particularly helpful to anyone who is just beginning their ministry.

While I was in seminary in the late 1960's I took care of Dr. Samuel Young's horse and had the unique experience of being asked to ride with him on a number of occasions. I suspect he liked to teach and I was a very interested student. It was a rich experience.

On one such occasion, he got to talking about politics in the church and after considerable grumbling about the inappropriateness of it all, he stopped and said: "You know, an honest leader wouldn't recommend somebody they didn't know. In fact, it's foolish to recommend somebody you don't know. When it is proper, politics is the process of becoming known. Your job is to get to know people well enough that they can recommend you with confidence."

On another occasion as I was getting close to graduation, he advised me to be very careful about who I worked for first. "Your first district superintendent or your first senior pastor if you work on a staff, can make or break your career. Don't pick a district because it is a nice place to live. Pick a person to work for who can help you get your feet on the ground and your ministry headed in the right direction."

The district superintendents play a pivotal role in the placement of pastors. They serve both the ministers and the churches. They are continually working at the process of finding and recruiting the "best and brightest" to serve on their district team.

Placing a candidate in a ministry role that is "full livelihood" and "primary occupation" is what our father, E. J. Crow, would have described as a three-legged stool. All three legs have to be solid for it to work. The local church boards work with the district superintendent to find a suitable pastor. The district superintendent works with ministers to find suitable ministry assignments. While we prefer to talk about churches "calling" pastors, the uncomfortable reality is that most church boards are talking in terms of "hiring" a pastor.

The most common "placement process" in the Church of the Nazarene is actually the replacement of a pastor. When a pastor resigns, the district superintendent contacts the church board secretary to arrange a meeting with the board. At the first meeting, arrangements for an interim pastor or pulpit supply are made. In addition the district superintendent works with the board to help them articulate what they are looking for in a pastor. In what generally is a series of meetings, they look at available candidates and the district superintendent arranges for the board to interview some of them. The process goes on until the board votes to recommend a particular person to the congregation for a vote. Pastors are actually called to serve a church by this vote of the people.

The first month after Dr. Jesse Middendorf became district superintendent on the Northwest Oklahoma district he met with the board one of our smallest churches and with the board of Bethany First Church to help them initiate a pastoral search. After sessions in which they listed what they were looking for, he reports it occurred to him "they both were looking for the same pastor."

In surveying the district superintendents I asked several open-ended questions about church boards.

About one half of them responded. Their responses are compiled in a separate document. The following will provide a summary of those responses and some observations.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS AND CHURCH BOARDS

1. *“Would it be accurate to say that most of the church boards are made up of both male and female members and a mix of ages?”*

Church boards are surprisingly alike in their makeup. Every district superintendent who responded to the survey indicated that most church boards are made up of both men and women and that there is generally a mix of ages. For example:

- Yes, however the ages are weighted towards middle to older ages.
- In (district) the boards are predominantly middle-aged to older women.
- Yes in almost all cases. There are almost no exceptions to this in our district.
- Almost all of the church boards with whom I work are made up of both male and female members, more older than young adults.
- In most cases, church boards have both male and female members, but the majority tend to be male. The distribution of ages tend to be: few younger than 30, most 40 to 55, some more senior. (This district superintendent included a table of the last 10 churches he met. Combined they had 26 females and 49 males, 34.6% female. 2 churches had a majority of females and one had an equal number. 3 churches had only 1 female.)

Very few Nazarene church boards in North America would be comprised entirely of men. In some cases women are actually in control, but even where they are not, it would be incorrect to suggest that they have no voice or authority in most churches.

2. *Do church boards ask about the possibility of a woman as pastor?*

Thirteen of the district superintendents simply said “no” and another three said “rarely.” Almost without exception, the district superintendent is the one who brings up the subject. Some examples:

- No, I have to bring it up.
- We have an ordained elder (lady) on our district I have been trying to place for 2 years. They say ‘yes’ until it comes time to vote. So far I have had no success getting her placed.
- Supply - yes, special meetings - yes, pastor - no.
- Seldom. But periodically a statement includes the possibility of a lady pastor. This comes more easily, since we currently have 5.
- In 18 years - 3 times.
- Rarely, but occasionally, yes.
- In 9 years of district superintending, I have never had a congregation specifically request a female pastor.
- Seldom do churches ask about the possibility of a woman as pastor.
- I have had only two or three ask of the possibility of a woman in my ten and one-half years as superintendent. It was in relation to a woman that they knew who was pastoring at the time on the district.

3. *Do you suggest the possibility of a woman as pastor?*

All of the district superintendents who were interviewed or responded to the survey indicated they regularly suggest that the board consider a woman as pastor.

- Absolutely, when I have adequate resumes.

- I always ask if they would accept a female if we could find an appropriate individual.
- I have done so and have personally called 2 of the 5.
- Yes, when there is a good match possible.
- I always mention that possibility.
- Yes, I have done so especially when it involved a woman pastor who was serving on my district. I suggested the possibility at least once with a young woman graduating from NBC. The church called her and a 3-4 year pastorate followed.
- Almost always.
- Yes, often.
- Yes, request that a board give God a ‘blank page’ (race, age, experience, etc.) as to whom He might want in the job. Then remind them that we have several capable women in Ministry.
- Yes, depending on the church.
- In some situations. Currently I have three lady pastors.
- Yes. Another church selected a woman pastor for their first consideration, but she declined the invitation for an interview. (This district superintendent had recently placed a woman pastor)
- Yes, most of the time. Sometimes just to plant a seed for the future.
- When there is a viable candidate.

4. *When you mention the possibility of calling a female pastor, how open do you experience church boards to be?*

The district superintendents indicate that when they bring up the possibility of calling a female pastor, only some church boards actually express an openness to having a woman as their pastor.

- Mostly closed, surprisingly from women board members.
- Not very, they are initially guarded in their exchange with me.
- Most often it is with hesitance, and about 80% say it would be OK if they were competent.
- Not very open as a rule – usually the women are most resistant, next to the fundamentalists that we now have.
- I get mixed reactions. About one-third of the time, the board dismisses the idea without consideration. “A woman preacher won’t work here” is the comment I get. About one-third of the time, I get polite consideration. I can’t tell if they are serious about the candidate or not. The outcome however, is that the female pastor does not make the final cut. And about one-third of the time, I think I get serious consideration and the female pastor is viewed from the same perspective as the male candidates. It does not always result in a call to the female pastor, but I’m satisfied that the consideration was fair and equal. (District has 3 female pastors.)
- They are not usually open to the suggestion. They are polite, but usually want to review other names of men. Oddly enough, the hesitance on the part of the board members is often from women on the board.
- I have sensed more resistance from women on the board than from men.
- Usually very open. Boards naturally are concerned about qualifications, experience, training, etc. There aren’t many woman pastors available for mid size churches and up. The need to establish themselves just like male pastors, usually starting in very small churches.
- They say they are open until we present the resume and ask for the vote. When they see I am serious, it becomes a time of some serious backing up.

5. *Have you been able to place any women pastors on your district?*

Placing women as pastors in our churches is apparently easier in some areas than others. Ten of the District Superintendents simply said “Yes” but seven simply said “No.”

- Yes. Our district has had the reputation of being female clergy friendly. Currently, I have four senior pastors who are female. A fifth just retired. We have three female associate pastors.
- We have two women pastors, one of whom I placed.
- Yes. At one time, four women pastors were serving on our district. I am in contact now with a woman who desires to return to the district from a recent retirement from one of our churches. She had previously served in 3 different churches very effectively in South Arkansas. I was able to place women at least 7 times in the past 10 years.
- No. Close on two or three occasions - one an appointment. We have several women in staff positions. Seems the staff positions pay better.
- Yes. We currently have three. Plus, a wife who is an associate. Her husband the pastor. In a former district, I once had seven lady pastors at the same time.
- Yes. Janine Metcalf at El Cajon.

6. *What do you think is the biggest obstacle we face in placing women in ministry?*

The problems we face seem to be related to two areas. First of course, is tradition. The churches who have had a woman as pastor and churches close to where women have been successful are far more open to calling a women than others. Perhaps because tradition is such an important part of why people attend church, it is quite difficult to get church boards to consider doing things differently than they have in the past.

The second problem is that we are significantly influenced by Fundamentalism. Many of our people do not really know that the Church of the Nazarene is not a part of the Fundamentalist movement. The issue is described well by the district superintendent who would advise his daughter to “Accept the fact that 1) God calls females, and 2) that the church is still the frail vessel that must affirm such a call. Remember that the Christian culture is more open at the leadership level toward females in ministry than it is at the volunteer level.” He is correct. At the leadership level of the Church of the Nazarene there is a broad acceptance of women in ministry. Unfortunately, that is not true in many of the boardrooms of local churches.

- People from a Calvinist background who have come to our churches that do not accept women in pastoral leadership roles.
- In my opinion: Competency ...a female must be two to four times more competent than a male counterpart in order to be accepted and “successful.”
- I would say “tradition.” Most pastors are male and that is what the churches have mostly had. A female pastor is going “outside the box” for them. A second concern is the sense that we need strong male leadership in our churches and the question of whether a female pastor can attract and relate to male leadership. A third concern is the question of whether female clergy are validated by the New Testament in respect to the passage about women being silent in the church. This later reason supports the first reason. I would say that those who use this rationale have not studied the passage. They simply accept it at face value, uncritically.
- Women members 59 years of age and older.
- Misunderstanding of scripture. (and) ...a lack of successful and visible models.
- Some areas in our state still believe that it is not biblical for a woman to have a position of authority over men.
- Cultural prejudice and biblical fundamentalism.
- Probably, convincing church boards to give the ladies a chance. I also think strong apologetics need to be done to continue to explain why women in ministry are acceptable in light of Paul not allowing women to have authority over a man.
- Lay people do not have a history of women pastors.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS' INITIAL CONTACT

1. *"How do you find out about ministers who are looking to make a move?"*

District superintendents are constantly searching for quality candidates. The word "Resumes" was used by nearly every district superintendent. Most went on to speak of other district superintendents and pastors and friends. Some apparently go to one or more of our schools to interview student prospects.

- Usually from resumes and phone calls. Occasionally a district superintendent will call me about a pastor.
- Resume, other district superintendents, etc.
- Resumes, friends and colleagues, schools, etc.
- I normally receive a letter/resume indicating their interest.
- By referral, by my observation and inquiry, or by the candidate's initiation of a contact.

2. *"How many contacts/resumes do you receive from ministers do you receive in the average month?"*

District superintendents receive an average of 5 to 10 resumes a month. The location seems to play a big role. A Florida district superintendent said he receives 15 in an average month and 20 - 30 in January and February. On the other hand a Canadian district superintendent said he receives about 2 a month. If not the most important step, the resume is at least the most common piece of the process and critically important.

- Ten to twelve
- Perhaps 4 - 6
- 4-5
- Probably 10-15 average
- One
- About two per week. 10-15
- 15 per month 20-30 in January and February, God seems to call a lot of Northern folks to Florida in the winter!

3. *"How long do you keep such a contact/resume in your "active" file?"*

- About three to six months
- About 18 months
- one year
- 1 year
- Depends. I try to clean out my files every 6-9 months
- I keep almost every resume that I receive and file them according to the strength and size of the church. I may actually return to a resume years later even if they have moved in the meantime.
- Depending upon whether I have churches available or soon to be available, I will keep them "active" for up to 6 months.

4. *"About how many (total men & women) do you have in your 'active' file right now?"*

Depending on how long they normally keep resumes, they may have a very large file. Thirty to 100 seems to be a pretty average number and one has over 1,000 on file.

- About 50
- I wouldn't know....perhaps 50 -75
- One woman, twenty men
- Guesstament 100 men 7 women

- Ten
- I have about 100 Nazarene pastors' resumes requesting consideration as a senior pastor. I have about 15 Nazarene pastors' resumes requesting consideration as an associate pastor. I have about ten non-Nazarene pastors' resumes who want to pastor a Nazarene church (about 3/4 are willing to transfer credentials).
- 150

5. *“How many contacts/resumes have you received from females in the past year?”*

Most district superintendents receive less than 5 resumes from women in a whole year. About one resume out of twenty is from a woman.

- Two
- 2 or 3
- One
- 7
- One. Also interviewed one at NTS.
- About four. I placed one. One remains in an associate position on our district and I continue to look for a senior pastorate for her. A third was a seminary graduate (I did not have a match for her profile). The fourth was an ordained elder who was married to an ordained elder. She was interested in pastoring her own church if her husband was called to our district (that consideration is still pending).
- Only a few, less than half a dozen. Probably 4 and 3 of those were for associate positions
- Let's say 12-15.
- 3-5
- Three or four.
- Two
- 5-8
- Three or four.
- I've received 2 resumes from females within the last year.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS' ADVICE TO PROSPECTS

1. *“If your daughter was wanting to find a ministry assignment, what advice would you give her?”*
 - Start in associate position to gain name recognition
 - Be positive, friendly, and don't have a female "chip on your shoulder"
 - Send your picture with resume' and have it professionally done. Have someone you have worked for call the district superintendents ahead of time to recommend you.
 - If the assignment she sought was pastor - I would tell her what I have experienced and what I know. I would advise her that the road ahead would probably have lots of rejection because she is female - but that she must persist in what she believes the Lord has called her to do and that I would help her any way I could.
 - Look for a staff assignment or a parachurch assignment.
 - Visit prospective district superintendents personally. Have references call the district superintendents on your behalf. Get staff experience first. Be exceedingly professional.
 - Communicate with the district superintendent as to his heart and compassion, including method. Communicate the interest : Church Plant, established – rural or city, etc., Anything you can discover about the district superintendent's method. Check your referrals to see who might be personally acquainted with that district superintendent.
 - Get to know influential pastors and some district superintendents – starting some time before you

are ready for a call. Be active in a local church and on the district. Don't wait until you are ready for a church and finished with education to begin to be a Christian minister.

- Find a mentor relationship and succeed there. The system works by sponsorship. One's best shot is to have a backer.
- First thought, go to the Episcopal Church. Ministry opportunities are still scarce in the Church of the Nazarene for women preachers.
- Make personal contacts to become known.

2. "Would your advice be the same for a son?"

Almost without exception, the district superintendents said that their good advice for their daughter would be essentially the same for a son.

- Yes, probably begin with the staff assignment.
- Similar
- Advice same for a son.
- Yes, except it might not be essential to establish himself in a staff position first.
- Yes, but I would probably talk more to him about planting.
- Yes. I would vary the advice only according to the individual questions that they might ask of me.
- My advice would be the same for a son.
- Same
- ABSOLUTELY
- No - I don't have a son
- Though the dynamics are somewhat different, YES! Some young men have pretty high opinions of themselves and their abilities for ministry. But, most of them are woefully ill prepared for real pastoral work and the administration of a church when they come out of the U or Bible School or even the Seminary. That's why we started a mentoring program on the district a couple of years ago. Too many of these fine young men and women fail when it comes to practics. This is not a negative observation necessarily, it is simply to say male or female, if their sights are on a church of 150 or 200 when they graduate, someone has failed them along the way to reality.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Some Nazarene leaders discriminate against women. This is not consistent with our beliefs and heritage. Other presentations at this conference are helping us find ways to deal with this part of the problem. However, the Nazarene problem, unlike that of the Roman Catholic Church, is probably not that most general leaders, district superintendents, and educators believe women should not serve as pastors and leaders. There is some problem at this level, but achieving total support here will not solve the problem of attitudes held by the local church boards who must vote to call a woman pastor.

Many of our people in church board positions apparently do not understand the Nazarene position that women may be ordained and hold any office in the church. People who have come to us from Baptist backgrounds may be particularly comfortable in our program but uncomfortable with our beliefs about women in ministry. Among other things we may be able to address this tendency to Fundamentalism from a positive perspective. For example, perhaps we could increase the number of articles in *Holiness Today* featuring successful women in ministry and dealing with basic Nazarene doctrine.

In the Roman Catholic Church, leaders are appointed by other leaders. Because we have a representative form of government, virtually everyone is elected or reelected to the position they hold. Women are voting at every level. Frequently there are more women voting than men in local church elections and at district assemblies. Those who are well known are more easily elected, but becoming well known in the

Church of the Nazarene involves building a track record of success and service in entry level situations. Dr. Young was right. "...an honest leader wouldn't recommend somebody they didn't know."

Like other denominations, most Nazarene ministers will spend their careers in medium to small churches in non-metropolitan areas. This is valid, God ordained, essential, and highly significant ministry. The presence and power of God in the smallest of congregations is as valid and significant as in the largest. The Church of the Nazarene experienced its' greatest growth while medium to small churches were held in high esteem. We started the most new churches when we were willing to start churches that would never grow to one hundred. We could address ways to re-elevate the parish pastor and the smaller church to a position of high esteem.

The system that evaluates ministers by the size of the churches they have served is a flawed system. It is just as flawed for women as it is for men. We equate size with significance and we seem to be most willing to elevate persons who have been able to lead a church to size and significance.

Women are not as aggressively proactive as men in the competition for positions. Surprisingly, we have close to the same percentage of women serving as pastors as the percentage of resumes received from women by district superintendents. About 4% of our churches have women pastors and about one out of every twenty resumes is from a woman. This is an area we can improve.

Other presentations are dealing with identifying flaws in, and ways to change the system. On the practical level for a woman seeking to find a place of significant ministry in the Church of the Nazarene, the district superintendents' insights offer some practical strategies for women and men just starting their ministry:

1. Choose a good, influential mentor
2. Use the time of your educational preparation to develop and demonstrate skills in ministry.
3. During your educational experience, develop an effective network of supporters including superintendents.
4. Prove yourself as an associate on a staff that will help you succeed or in a small church on a district that supports and celebrates women pastors.
5. Understand and use the resume and recommendation process.

While this paper has most specifically addressed the issues of women in the process of finding places to serve in professional ministry, the process is the same and many of the problems are the same regardless of gender. Ultimately every minister is evaluated on the basis of their demonstrated ability to do the work that is desired. The nature of the desired "work" is significantly different between the academic environment and job market of professional ministry.

In the academic environment, students find their ability to process and master information and concepts highly valued and rewarded. While these skills are used in the process of effective ministry, the focus of the desired "work" shifts to organizational development. The ministers who are able to demonstrate an ability to help the churches they serve achieve their organizational goals are highly valued and sought after by other churches and district superintendents.

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