



**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS  
TO THE  
85<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL BOARD  
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

**February 2008**

***“CALLED UNTO HOLINESS – A NEW CENTURY”***

In this, the Centennial year (1908-2008) of the Church of the Nazarene, I welcome you on behalf of the Board of General Superintendents to the 85<sup>th</sup> meeting of the General Board.

It is a privilege to formally greet each member of the General Board, officers and directors of International Headquarters, regional directors, special guests, and visitors in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Grace and peace be to you all.

One year ago in our report, Nina Gunter asked for a fresh anointing of God upon the Board of General Superintendents and our beloved church around the world. The members of the General Board and guests in attendance gathered around us, and John Bowling, president of the General Board, anointed each general superintendent as we knelt at a sacred altar.

As we gather early in this our Centennial, each member of our Board can bear witness that God continues to answer that prayer. We have, indeed, sensed a fresh moving of the Holy Spirit in our personal lives and in the life of the church.

We are grateful for this fresh touch of His Spirit and long for Him to move more powerfully among us as these days are filled with great challenges as well as great opportunities.

This Centennial year is the opportune time to express our gratitude for what God continues to do through the Church of the Nazarene.

On behalf of my colleagues I want to express appreciation for the commitment to Christ and the faithful service in His Kingdom that is so characteristic of the people called Nazarenes.

To the dedicated employees who serve our Lord and His church at International Headquarters and to all who serve around the world, we say, "Thank you!"

We welcome David Wilson as our new General Secretary; he is proving very capable in one of the most complex and demanding assignments in the denomination.

This year we say "farewell" to Education Commissioner Jerry Lambert and the director of USA/Canada Mission Evangelism, Tom Nees.

Jerry Lambert has given 47 years of faithful service to the Church of the Nazarene as pastor, district superintendent, and college president. For the past

14 years he has provided extraordinary leadership to the International Board of Education, taking the IBOE to new levels of effectiveness.

Tom Nees served the church for 45 years as a pastor and as founder of Hope Community Church of the Nazarene in Washington, D. C. before coming to International Headquarters 12 years ago.

We want to express our gratitude for these good men and wish them both continued success in the next phase of their ministry.

### **The Nazarene Past**

Having just entered into this Centennial year, perhaps it would be helpful for us to reflect on our beginnings.

The Holiness Movement was born in great revivals. To a large extent it prospered from the newly-employed energies of laymen and women preachers; and it was in large measure centered in the cities. Urban pastors and evangelists, who ranged freely over two continents, gave the awakening its original impetus and direction.

According to the late church historian and scholar, Timothy Smith, the spiritual awakening into the Midwest and South of the United States produced two distinct groups.

One, largely rural, was more emotionally demonstrative and tended to emphasize outward standards of dress and behavior.

The other group was urban and somewhat less zealous about the outward standards of holiness. Its leaders were eager for alignment with established churches who would share their central aims.

Neither the origin nor the subsequent history of the Church of the Nazarene can be understood without knowledge and appreciation of these two holiness traditions: urban and rural. The founders came from both. Both had great gifts to offer the fledgling denomination.

Undoubtedly, there are scores of individuals responsible for making the Church of the Nazarene what it is today, but two are noteworthy: Phineas F. Bresee and Hiram F. Reynolds.

Through their passion for God and their clear testimony to the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives, they are largely responsible for most of what the Church of the Nazarene has become since its earliest days:

*Phineas Franklin Bresee—Western U.S.A.*

- Former Methodist pastor and presiding elder
- Board member of the University of Southern California
- Founder and pastor of Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene
- A founder of the Church of the Nazarene
- General Superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene (1907-1915)

*Hiram F. Reynolds—Eastern U.S.A.*

- Able home mission evangelist
- Effective fundraiser

- World mission visionary
- General Missionary Secretary
- General Superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene (1907-1932)

These gifted servant-leaders set in place the genesis of our Nazarene Core

Values:

1. A priority to reach the unchurched.
2. The “gathering of the poor to the cross”—but not to the exclusion of others.
3. Preaching and teaching the gospel of full salvation with an emphasis on the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification.
4. A strong *world* mission emphasis.
5. An emphasis on education and youth.
6. A system of organization to “conserve the gains” and “organize the workers.”

Just about everything the Church of the Nazarene has done for nearly ten decades is grounded in the priorities established by these two godly men.

While Phineas Bresee was more focused on organizing the church in the U.S.A., H. F. Reynolds was giving his attention to expanding the denomination beyond its home base.

A full decade before the Pilot Point merger, the Association of Pentecostal Churches (1897-1907), a group that became a part of that merger, formed

a missionary committee with H. F. Reynolds as its executive. Their goal was launching an “overseas missionary program.”

Nazarene missions began with the deployment of five people to India in 1898:

- Rev. and Mrs. M. D. Wood
- Carrie Taylor
- Lillian Sprague
- Fred Wiley

Soon after, in 1901, Reynolds sent John Diaz to Cape Verde, and in 1902 Reynolds organized churches in Canada. There would be no turning back!

The heart of the young church was forever focused on the nations of the world. The long and notable march of missionaries continues today in our regions and will be repeated once again in this session of the General Board.

H. F. Reynolds was in Scotland in 1914 touring the country with George Sharpe, pastor of the Parkhead Church in Glasgow. While he was there, the Pentecostal Church of Scotland voted to join the Church of the Nazarene. This decision was ratified by the General Assembly in 1915 in Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A.

Along with the eight churches and 665 members from Scotland came the conception of and vision for an “international holiness communion.”

At critical moments in our history God has raised up Spirit-filled leaders, men and women of prayer and vision, to steer the church in the right direction.

Others would make great contributions in the improvement and expansion of this mission and movement, but none more heavily influenced the Nazarene beginnings than Bresee and Reynolds.

From time to time the question is asked, "Where did the church get its name?" Our church's name came from Bresee's long-time friend, J. P. Widney, a physician and president of the University of Southern California in the U.S.A.

Widney explained that the name came to him after a night of prayer. At daybreak the word "Nazarene" seemed to symbolize the "toiling, lowly mission of Christ." And so we are *the* Church of the Nazarene.

This is our beginning:

- Called to holiness
- Called to evangelize the world
- Called to be and to make disciples
- Called to compassionate care for others
- Called to value education

Within this framework the Church of the Nazarene would plant congregations; send missionaries around the world; establish Nazarene Publishing House; open Sunday Schools and preaching points; focus on children and youth; sponsor schools, colleges, and seminaries; build medical clinics and hospitals; and establish compassionate ministry centers to serve those in need.

None of these has been accomplished without formidable challenges, personal sacrifice, and, most of all, the help of Almighty God.

With the perspective of time and distance it is possible to see mistakes and miscalculations along the way. In ***Called Unto Holiness, Volume II***, the late W. T. Purkiser made these observations about the end of the second 25 years of our history:

The Church of the Nazarene is totally committed to the holiness message with its inherent potential for spiritual renewal. It is a message that is being purified from some of the extreme interpretations that at times have been given. The tendency of folk theology to confuse ideals with standards, to ignore the human elements in the sanctified life, and to expect in the epoch of entire sanctification that measure of sanctity that comes only with Christian maturity is gradually being corrected.

But through it all—financial crises, world wars, famines, economic depression, and even disagreements over doctrine and polity—God has remained faithful to the Church of the Nazarene. To Him be the glory!

We are convinced that our Wesleyan-Holiness heritage is our best hope for the future!

## The Nazarene Present

### Our Mission

Our mission is to make Christlike disciples in the nations. Now retired district superintendent Keith Wright, is known for saying, “Lost and broken people matter to God; therefore lost and broken people must matter to us!”

In Matthew 9:35-38 our Lord called on His disciples to be aware of the lost and broken people around them, to see them in the way that He was seeing them. In verse 36 it says:

*. . . when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

May God give us eyes with which to see and hearts with which to embrace the lost around us. Jesus was aware of the needs of the people because He was going into the villages and cities, interacting with people, all the while teaching, preaching, and healing.

Let us unite in prayer that our churches will be centers of biblical teaching and God-anointed preaching where lost and broken people find healing for their broken hearts and hurting souls.

Oh, may God renew our hearts to reach the lost, to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ, to lead them into a definite experience of entire sanctification, and to disciple them—mentor them—in the ways of Christ until they, too, learn to make Christlike disciples.

## Our Core Values

*We are Christian!*

Jesus is Lord! God has given to Him “the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

We are united with all believers in proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that God loves all people and, through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit offers us forgiveness of sins, restored relationship with God, and reconciliation with one another.

We believe the Bible to be the primary witness to these divine truths.

We stand with Christians everywhere in affirming the historic creeds of the Christian faith, and we embrace our heritage in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition.

We are Christian!

*We are holiness!*

On October 5, 2008, we will celebrate, *Out of Many One, Out of One Many*, in over 20,000 congregations in 151 nations of the world. Nazarene pastors are being asked to preach from 1 Peter 2:4-10. Verse 5 says: “. . . you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

A holy priesthood! “You also”—that includes each one of us.

We have embraced the radical optimism of grace! Through the experience of entire sanctification believers may enter into a deeper relationship with God through Christ in which the heart is cleansed from all sin and believers are enabled to love God with their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and their neighbors as they would love themselves.

We confess that we believe in a continued radical transformation by which the perfecting work of God continues throughout the life of the believer. We are holiness!

*We are missional!*

To be missional is to be about the mission—our mission is to make Christlike disciples in the nations. We accomplish this by developing healthy local churches of all sizes; through planting new churches; through revivals, camp meetings, and retreats; through discipling and mentoring; through small groups and Sunday Schools; through worship and celebration; through compassionate ministries; through leadership development; through schools, colleges, and seminaries intentionally and strategically located around the world.

Our mission is important. We have developed and continue developing new strategies for mission accomplishment. We are missional.

### 2007 Statistical Highlights

The newly-merged Church of the Nazarene in 1908 began with 10,034 members, 228 congregations, 11 districts, and 19 missionaries, according to historical records. Total raised was \$140,000 with \$12,000 going to foreign missions—the term used at that time.

The Lord was blessing the young denomination as holiness groups came together taking advantage of talent and scale to do even more for the Kingdom.

What does the Church of the Nazarene look like on the eve of its Centennial?

According to the General Secretary's official report, the 2007 district assembly year closed with:

- 1.7 million members, a nearly 7 percent increase over 2006, located in 151 world areas
- 170,045 new Nazarenes (144,643 by profession of faith)
- 136,888 new Nazarenes in World Mission areas and 33,157 in the U.S.A. and Canada
- 20,958 churches of which 15,359 are organized
- 1,032 newly-organized churches
- 774 General Board-funded missionaries and volunteers

- A record number of men and women being ordained as elders and deacons.

Additionally, total membership is now spread over seven geographic regions as follows:

| World Area                   | Total Members | Percent |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| • Africa                     | 364,698       | 21%     |
| • Asia Pacific               | 100,965       | 6%      |
| • Caribbean                  | 146,884       | 8%      |
| • Eurasia                    | 129,796       | 7%      |
| • Mexico and Central America | 148,559       | 9%      |
| • South America              | 186,920       | 11%     |
| • U.S.A./Canada              | 655,950       | 38%     |

Each geographic area of the church is unique. There is a distinctiveness, which if fully appreciated and engaged, strengthens the denomination.

These trends are worth noting:

- A New Testament movement of God's Spirit continues unabated, reaching scores of non-Christians in nine countries that we have chosen not to identify for security reasons. The gospel of Jesus Christ creates the church, and the church spreads the gospel. New pastors often come from the most recent converts, making theological education and training a high priority.

These results are the answer to a century of prayer, fasting, and sacrificial giving. All movements of the Spirit are original by

design. Some movements are observable while others are not. God is always at work.

- This very day, as we are gathered in this safe, comfortable facility, there are Nazarenes who ventured out to worship in places posing great risk to human life. They are a source of inspiration and courage to all of us.
- While many things contribute to the vitality of the denomination, starting healthy churches is the single biggest measurable difference in membership and attendance growth in the Church of the Nazarene.
- The majority of Nazarene pastors are now bi-vocational.
- Most of the large congregations continue to get larger, and there are more of them. In 1980 there were seven congregations over 1,000. Today, 51 congregations report 1,000 or more in worship attendance.
- While the U.S.A. appears to be leveling off in terms of its rate of growth, it remains the single largest region in the General Board structure with almost 643,000 members and 525,000 in weekly worship attendance.

It has added 30,000+ new Nazarenes annually over the past seven years with some congregations growing at a rate of

10 percent or more each year. Nearly \$47 million was given to the World Evangelism Fund (WEF) in 2007 from the U.S.A.

- Worship attendance continues to lag behind membership. It is not enough to have a name on a roll; we must have that person assimilated into church fellowship, disciplined, and engaged in ministry.
- Sunday School attendance continues to trend downward. We call upon our pastors and local church leaders to give renewed attention and emphasis to this vital arm of the church. Sunday School and small discipling groups are essential in “closing the back door” in the local church.
- A combined total of \$75.2 million was received for the World Evangelism Fund and Mission Specials. Of this amount, \$48.5 million was designated for the World Evangelism Fund, a 1.2 percent increase over the prior year. This is the lowest increase of the last five years. Mission Specials received came to \$26.7 million.
- The total paid for all purposes was \$923.4 million, a 57 percent increase in the past 10 years.

We are grateful for all that is given to advance the Kingdom of God through the Church of the Nazarene. Each of us is aware that the vast majority of money given comes through a measure of self-denial, if not personal sacrifice.

The funding of the world mission of the church is likely to become an even greater challenge in this age of point-to-point giving and personal involvement on the part of growing numbers of our people.

Identifying WEF priorities within the denominational system is the responsibility of church leadership. The Board of General Superintendents is well aware of its responsibility to shepherd the resources entrusted to the church and to more clearly “tell the story” so that our people will continue to joyfully fund the mission.

Our mission is not merely to sustain the life of an organization but to make Christlike disciples in the nations.

### **The Nazarene Future**

By all assessments the Church of the Nazarene is in a period of extensive change in general leadership. It is a noteworthy time of transition, but the church has weathered change before.

For example:

Three of the four general superintendents elected at the 1915 General Assembly died within three years, leaving H. F. Reynolds as the only continuing general superintendent. The vacancies caused by the deaths of Phineas Bresee, W. C. Wilson, and E. F. Walker were filled by new, able leaders: R. T. Williams and John Goodwin.

Again, of the four general superintendents elected in 1940 (R. T. Williams, J. B. Chapman, H. V. Miller, and O. J. Nease), all four died in office between 1945 and 1950. Only one reached the age of 63. Capable leaders took their places: G. B. Williamson, Hardy Powers, Samuel Young, D. I. Vanderpool, and Hugh Benner.

Changes in the church today are not confined to the Board of General Superintendents any more than they were between 1915 and the early 50s.

Transition is being experienced throughout the denomination as another generation of officers and directors at International Headquarters, missionaries, district superintendents, pastors, laity, and college presidents and faculty retire or move on to other assignments.

Organizations run on memory; the church is no exception. It is safe to say that a significant amount of historical understanding and connection are reduced or lost as these individuals become less active in church life.

Thus, developing leaders who are Spirit-filled, indigenous, and Nazarene must be a priority. The church needs to be intentional in creating meaningful opportunities for service, responsibility, and authority, making them available to a new generation just as Paul did with Timothy.

This menu of options should include all positions in the Global Ministry Center, the regions, serving on district advisory boards, and being delegates to the General Conventions and General Assembly.

The sooner qualified individuals gain exposure to the wider ministry of the church and begin taking ownership and responsibility for it, the better off the church will be.

Every member of the General Board and the Board of General Superintendents should consider this part of their job description. Even our meetings are opportunities for development and assimilation of new leaders from the regions. This new generation should see themselves as inheriting a long conversation to which they must now contribute as well.

Some areas of transition deserve special mention:

*Global Ministry Center – A New Location*

Construction is moving ahead at the Global Ministry Center (GMC) in Lenexa, Kansas, U.S.A., with occupancy scheduled for August or September 2008.

In September 2007 a donor event was hosted by the Board of General Superintendents and spouses. One hundred potential donors attended with fifty church leaders and guest speakers. Other special guests included Nazarenes from Korea and Japan who have inspired us by their sacrificial gifts.

By the end of the weekend \$1.4 million was pledged and/or given. This is in addition to a \$1 million pledge from a foundation matching another \$1 million

challenge gift. Total pledged or given to date is just over \$7.5 million against a goal of \$10 million.

We continue working with potential donors. A growing number of districts and local churches from around the world are committing to this important project.

*We must continue to emphasize that no WEF dollars will be used to fund this building.*

The Paseo property in Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A., remains on the market with interested parties continuing to inquire and tour the site. The ideal situation would be to time the sale with the move to Lenexa.

The GMC is not just another building. It is intended to be a center of leadership and improved service to the church at the beginning of a new century.

#### *General Board Structure – A New Design*

There are two things driving reconsideration in the design of General Board structure:

1. The first is a need for systemic change throughout the departments, ministries, and services. We are moving toward a philosophy, purpose, and practice that place the local church as the primary unit of mission and internationalize the new Global Ministry Center. Our Board wants to take

advantage of increasing collaboration now taking place within the General Board structure—a greater sense of “one” mission. The new building in Lenexa lends itself to this concept, and the physical change from a multi-building campus to one center of ministry is a positive factor. Relocation contributes to rethinking how the Board of General Superintendents, officers, and ministries and services relate to one another, and in turn, to the church we serve.

2. The second reason to consider a new design is 2005 General Assembly Resolution 310, referred to the General Board, which calls for combining World Mission and USA/Canada Mission Evangelism Departments into one global entity. The Board of General Superintendents continues praying, studying, and reflecting on this realignment of responsibilities within the structure of the General Board.

We have prayerfully implemented the following significant changes, which do not require General Board approval:

- The chair, on behalf of the Board of General Superintendents, will assume jurisdiction for all International Headquarters (Global Ministry Center) departments and Nazarene Publishing House on 1 March 2008.

- The chair of the Board, again on behalf of the other general superintendents, will facilitate the monthly meetings of the Global Ministry Team (GMT), giving executive and strategic leadership to this body.
- The Board of General Superintendents will meet quarterly with the Global Ministry Team and regional directors in order to give leadership to the mission of the church.

As you heard in our special session on Saturday morning, additional recommendations are forthcoming that will require action by the General Board.

We recognize the air of uncertainty that accompanies such conversations; for this reason we are in continued conversation with the GMT and regional directors. Our Board will continue to seek the counsel and wisdom of the Executive Committee of the General Board as we move forward.

It is important to note that the context for ministry continues to change:

- The U.S.A. was the world's largest democracy at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with 88 million people—today India is the largest democracy with a population of 1.1 billion
- The world's population then was 1.6 billion—today it is 6.6 billion
- Only 1 in 7 resided in urban areas—now nearly half the world's population lives in cities

- According to historian Philip Jenkins, the growth of Christianity continues moving from first world to developing areas of the globe, from north to south and east
- Global economics and Internet technology are dramatically changing the way people live, work, and relate to one another
- At the beginning Nazarenes were nearly all Anglo, from the U.S.A., and largely from existing churches—in 2008 a majority of the members in the Church of the Nazarene are from a variety of people groups, non-Anglo and non-North American—and a large number are new Christians
- The turn of the last century was a time of revivals and holiness evangelism—now we are witnessing a profound shift from a religious-minded culture to a culture with a secular orientation

This is indeed a day like no other with evangelistic and disciple-making opportunities found in all regions of the world.

Leadership, however, must distinguish between the essential and the peripheral—between what must be done and what is merely desirable.

We have looked at the Nazarene Past, the Nazarene Present, and the Nazarene Future. Ours is an ongoing story being written by our constituency around the world on a daily basis.

These times of transition require that we have certain fixed points of reference so that we know where we are going and have guidance along the way.

We would affirm once again truths and principles that should guide us in these days of incredible opportunity:

- Dependence upon God

In Matthew 6:9 Jesus instructed His disciples to pray; “In this manner, therefore pray:” In His own life He modeled prayer and time alone with God. To this end the Board of General Superintendents has launched a series of Prayer Summits that will eventually circle the globe. We pray that a “prayer movement” will sweep across the church.

- The inspiration and authority of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 says: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” We are and will continue to be a people who celebrate the inspiration and authority of the Holy Bible.

- The doctrine and experience of entire sanctification

“We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.”

*(2005–2009 Manual)*

- This is who the Church of the Nazarene is and plans to be in the future. There is always the need to use language that speaks to new generations.

At the same time, the Articles of Faith introduce biblical language to a world that no longer understands that language.

- The local church

The local church, the body of Christ, is the representation of our faith and mission. The local church is the Church of the Nazarene. Local congregations are the primary but not exclusive unit of mission. God bless our pastors and laity for all they do in the name of Jesus.

- New church evangelism

This may be one of the best ways not only to reach people for Christ but also to make disciples. Future pastors, missionaries, teachers, and general superintendents are all possible when God moves through His people to establish the church.

Our deepest appreciation goes to those who are sponsoring churches and to the pastors and their families, most of whom are bi-vocational. They are making great sacrifices to expand the Kingdom. We strongly urge you to support and pray for our church-planting efforts.

- Internationalization

The Church of the Nazarene had an international dimension from the beginning. By the uniting assembly in 1908 Nazarenes served and witnessed not only in North America but also as missionaries in Mexico, the Cape Verde Islands, India, Japan, and South Africa.

We continue seeking the leadership of God as He teaches us what it means to be an “international” church. Our vision is clear and our purpose is right. Future generations will be blessed by our struggles to understand what it means to be a part of a holiness church in many different cultures with leadership that reflects our international family. It is a vision we will continue to pursue.

### **Summary**

Phineas Bresee, H. F. Reynolds, and so many others were used of God to lead the Church of the Nazarene in our very early, formative years. We owe them a debt of gratitude. Today we are standing on the shoulders, as it were, of thousands upon thousands of dedicated Nazarenes who have gone before us.

We have found them faithful to the mission and have inherited a vibrant and growing church.

Phineas Bresee was forever encouraging his fellow ministers to “keep the glory down;” that is our prayer for this new century—let us “keep the glory” upon our hearts and our churches! The Holy Spirit leads, and we will follow!

So we have come to such a time and place—*the Church of the Nazarene: a disciple-making church, an international community of faith, in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition.*

As we take time to give thanks for our past, we look to our future with great anticipation—our best days are before us! We, like those who have preceded us, offer ourselves as living sacrifices, going forth in the power of His Spirit!

*“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

Hebrews 13:20-21 (NKJV)

Respectfully submitted,

Board of General Superintendents

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Note:

This report has drawn on the **MANUAL; Called Unto Holiness, Vols. I & II; A Prince in Israel** and the Nazarene Archives for historical background.